

Enhancing Media Literacy in Indian Higher Education: A Strategic Approach to Incorporate Media Literacy into School Curricula

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Abstract

This study examines the advantages and significance of integrating media literacy education into school curricula, highlighting its increasing role in education. In an age when misinformation spreads through social media, news outlets, and advertising, equipping students with the skills to recognise, analyse, and ethically engage with media has become essential. Despite growing academic and societal interest in media literacy, there remains a notable lack of rigorous research on its effective inclusion in secondary school syllabi. To address this gap, we reviewed existing literature. We analysed the curricula for 11th and 12th grades from India's National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). Using narrative analysis, we examined how media literacy education is integrated within these curricula, focusing on its objectives, pedagogical approaches, and assessment strategies. Our key findings emphasise aims such as enhancing media literacy and weaving it throughout the curriculum. Additionally, our review revealed significant inconsistencies across Indian curricula, including sporadic references to media concepts without clear progression or depth, and identified promising areas for development, such as the addition of modules on Media literacy. These enhancements could greatly improve student learning by fostering deeper engagement with real-world issues, sharpening critical thinking through evidence-based reasoning, and promoting responsible digital citizenship—equipping adolescents for responsible participation in a hyper-connected world. The study also highlights opportunities for educators and policymakers to incorporate media literacy components and prioritise media literacy education.

Keywords: Curriculum Integration, Indian Education System, Media Literacy, Media Literacy Education.

Introduction

The ongoing transformation, driven by rapid technological advancements and the convergence of media platforms, is catalysing a significant educational revolution in various developed countries. At the core of this revolution lies the recognition of media literacy as an essential skill. This ability extends beyond simply navigating the complex media landscape within educational settings; it acts as a crucial mechanism for ensuring equitable access to information and empowering individuals.

The fundamental role of media literacy in modern education highlights its ongoing importance in developing informed citizens. Competence in the media and information landscape requires more than just the ability to operate various digital devices and software applications. It calls for a pedagogical approach that acknowledges the increasingly mediated and uncertain environment in which students and educators

operate, prompting a reassessment of the educational strategies needed to thrive in such an ecosystem (1).

Media literacy can be regarded as a set of survival tactics, requiring the development of skills for protection, critical assessment, and active participation to skillfully manage the risks and phenomena emerging from this shifting media environment (2). The review critically examines the urgent need for the Indian educational curriculum to adapt and align with the rapidly evolving media landscapes, with a strong emphasis on incorporating media literacy. As academic institutions aim to prepare students for a media-saturated professional environment, employing evidence-based strategies for media literacy education is not just important but essential for creating a robust curriculum.

The literature reveals a shifting conceptual landscape in media literacy education, with

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scholars increasingly recognising the interdependence of media, information, and digital literacies. This convergence emphasises the need for integrated competencies that include technical proficiency, critical analysis, and ethical reasoning, all of which are vital for enhancing students' media literacy. However, this overlap in concepts presents significant challenges for developing standardised assessment tools, making it difficult to measure and compare media literacy interventions. Ongoing ambiguities in literacy constructs that hinder the practical evaluation across studies, underscoring the complexity and significance of this task (3).

A notable trend is the incorporation of AI and data literacy into traditional media literacy frameworks. AI can serve both as an educational tool and as a subject for critical analysis, enabling students to recognise issues such as algorithmic bias and automated content creation (4). However, this integration also presents challenges, including the need for educators to stay informed about rapidly evolving AI technologies and the ethical considerations involved in teaching AI within the context of media literacy. This reflects a broader consensus that modern media literacy must engage with the algorithmic mediation of information.

In parallel, research emphasises the urgent need for improved data sensemaking skills following COVID-19, highlighting how crisis-driven contexts require the integration of technical and critical skills within media literacy education (5). The pandemic has accelerated the digital transformation of education, making media literacy more vital than ever. These studies support a multimodal approach to competency development, incorporating text, audio, visual, and interactive media. Research has begun to explore the pedagogical potential of immersive platforms and new technologies, although ethical and privacy issues are still emerging in this area. The opportunities and challenges of immersive technologies in higher education, emphasising their potential for experiential learning in media literacy, have been identified in various classroom projects (6).

The literature mainly advocates active, student-centred pedagogical approaches that combine critical analysis with practical content creation. Assignments focused on producing media

artefacts—such as podcasts, videos, and digital narratives—are shown to improve rhetorical awareness and technical skills while strengthening communication abilities. For example, researchers demonstrate that podcast creation in pharmacy education can enhance both subject mastery and media production skills (7).

Emerging game formats and interactive assessments are being created to teach algorithmic literacy and ethical reasoning. Algorithmic literacy, the ability to understand and critically evaluate the algorithms that influence our digital experiences, is becoming increasingly vital in media literacy education. Researchers have developed card games that promote role-playing and reflective dialogue about AI systems, showing how gamification can make abstract concepts more accessible (8).

Moreover, there is a growing emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches that link media literacy to students' core academic disciplines. Flexible interdisciplinary frameworks that balance conceptual understanding, technical skills, and ethical considerations while accommodating various educational backgrounds are gaining importance. This approach emphasises the broad scope and depth of the subject, clarifying that media literacy is not an isolated concept but one that impacts multiple academic disciplines (9).

Current pedagogical trends emphasise integrating ethical reasoning and professional responsibilities alongside technical skills. Strategies supported by past studies that effectively prepare students for professional settings while encouraging critical perspectives on media systems recognise that media literacy education must equip students with tools not only for technical challenges but also for ethical issues related to privacy, misinformation, and algorithmic bias in their careers (10).

Although there is growing recognition of the importance of media literacy, its implementation faces significant institutional hurdles. Research shows that ongoing resource shortages, infrastructural issues, and conflicting curriculum priorities are key obstacles. Educators often lack the experience, training, or methodological guidance needed for effective media literacy integration (11), creating bottlenecks that individual enthusiasm cannot address systemic gaps in preparation.

The development of standardised operational definitions and assessment tools is recommended to enable reliable comparisons across different interventions and institutions (12). The absence of standardised measures hampers the identification of best practices and the expansion of successful approaches in media literacy education.

In India, media literacy remains largely marginalised within higher secondary educational frameworks, particularly under the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE). Current educational paradigms mainly emphasise rote memorisation, thereby neglecting the critical engagement skills necessary for navigating an increasingly digital landscape (13). While the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 promotes digital literacy, it inadequately tackles the urgent need for social media literacy, given students' extensive dependence on these platforms. Initiatives such as CBSE's mass media module for grades VI-VIII do introduce essential concepts such as cyber safety and nonviolent communication; however, there remains a clear lack of compulsory media literacy at the higher secondary level (Central Board of Secondary Education, 14).

Several critical deficiencies impair the media literacy landscape in India: inadequate teacher training, significant urban-rural disparities, and ineffective strategies for fighting misinformation. Research shows that about 80% of young voters have encountered instances of fake news (15). Moreover, while existing media education may emphasise practical skills such as reporting, it often does not align with industry needs and overlooks the development of critical analytical skills (16).

In contrast, many European secondary education systems, influenced by directives from the European Union (EU), such as the Audio-visual Media Services Directive, require the inclusion of media literacy in various subjects, including civics and information and communication technology (ICT) (17). Notably, Finland exemplifies a holistic approach to media literacy that encourages critical participation, supported by extensive teacher training and proactive engagement from national agencies (18). The shift from protectionist to empowerment strategies is reinforced through initiatives such as Erasmus+ and Creative Europe. Additionally, efforts to combat disinformation are

supported by programmes such as the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO), which facilitates the dissemination of resources and the formation of networks (18). Evaluative research highlights the successful outcomes of school-based projects, despite ongoing inconsistencies that need further attention (19).

India's focus on a syllabus-driven, protection-oriented model sharply contrasts with Europe's empowerment-centric and integrative approach (20). While India has introduced initiatives like Media Clubs, these remain largely extracurricular and lack the comprehensive curriculum integration and robust teacher training seen in their European counterparts (21). Although urban-rural disparities are also present within Europe, EU funding initiatives actively aim to reduce these inequalities (22). Comparative analyses suggest that the structured policies of developed countries could provide valuable insights for India, though cultural adaptations will be essential (23).

Overall, teacher training in India is significantly inadequate (16), especially when compared to the structured, lifelong support systems found in several European countries (18). This disparity contributes to low media literacy levels amid high media consumption in India (21), while European students demonstrate greater resilience against disinformation (23).

Notable research gaps include a lack of comparative empirical studies between India and Europe, which often favour Eurocentric narratives, underscoring the need to decolonise discourse to include Indian contexts (20). Additionally, there is an urgent need for comprehensive longitudinal evaluations of these educational frameworks, including cultural adaptations and the effects of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) (23). Further gaps remain concerning teacher preparedness and the practical application of relevant policies (18).

Media literacy integrates diverse disciplines, including critical thinking, psychology, linguistics, and ethics. It empowers individuals to access, analyse, evaluate, create, and act upon information across all communication forms. These competencies involve identifying content origins (Access), decoding and interpreting messages (Analyze), recognising embedded goals and biases (Evaluate), crafting meaningful responses

(Create), and making informed decisions about disseminated information (Act). These skills enable critical engagement with media, prompting questions about time spent consuming content, from scrolling through a phone to reading an advertisement.

Media literacy equips individuals with vital skills to assess, analyse, evaluate, and create media content. These skills are essential for combating misinformation and promoting responsible digital citizenship. Incorporating media literacy education into higher secondary schools is crucial for preparing students to navigate a media-rich world. This analysis compares India's limited approach, where media literacy is often offered as an optional subject, with Europe's more comprehensive, policy-driven strategies. It highlights important research gaps that future studies should address, such as the insufficient focus on cultural context and the challenges that hinder effective teaching. Additionally, there is potential for cross-national studies on media literacy to be integrated into existing curricula.

Recognising the fragmentation of perspectives and the lack of comprehensive reviews on integrating media literacy education within educational contexts, this research aims to address this gap. Therefore, the main aim of this literature review is to examine how media literacy education is incorporated into secondary education systems. The key research question guiding this study is: How can media literacy education be effectively integrated into the curriculum? To answer this, the review will evaluate the current state of media literacy education in the curricula of major European countries and India, and identify insights India could gain from the European experience to develop media literacy education further.

Methodology

The methodology used in this study was a systematic narrative review, a structured and interpretive approach aimed at synthesising existing literature on a given topic without the strict quantitative limitations of meta-analysis. This method was adapted from the qualitative and thematic analysis framework proposed by, which emphasises an iterative, reflexive process (24). This enabled the identification, analysis, and reporting of patterns within the data, balancing descriptive richness with analytical depth. By

employing this approach, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the research landscape while critically engaging with the content to reveal underlying insights, rather than merely aggregating findings.

The review process comprised three interconnected stages, each building upon the previous one, to ensure methodological rigour, transparency, and relevance. Although these stages were conducted sequentially, there were opportunities to revisit earlier phases to refine the analysis as new insights emerged.

Data Collection and Analysis

The establishment of strict inclusion criteria was vital for selecting relevant studies that match our research aims. After the initial search, the literature was carefully screened to pick out documents specifically about the implementation of media literacy education and its integration into curricula. The final studies cover a wide range of countries, including Austria, China, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States, highlighting an extensive international perspective on the subject.

Stage 1: Comprehensive Literature Search

The initial phase involved a thorough academic literature search centred on the 11th and 12th-grade curriculum, utilising databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, ERIC, Scopus, and Web of Science. Relevant keywords included "11th grade curriculum," "12th class syllabus," "STEM education," and "pedagogical reforms." The search strategy was enhanced by employing Boolean operators and publication date filters. Additionally, grey literature, including government reports and conference proceedings, was incorporated. Techniques such as backward and forward citation searching further broadened the scope of pertinent literature, all meticulously documented in a detailed search log.

Stage 2: Selection of Relevant Literature

Following the search, a rigorous screening process was implemented to select high-quality sources based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria emphasised relevance, peer-reviewed content, and thematic elements such as equity and innovation, while the

exclusion criteria focused on irrelevant materials and outdated publications. This screening involved both abstract and full-text reviews, alongside inter-rater reliability checks to mitigate bias, resulting in a diverse and robust core literature base.

Stage 3: Thematic Analysis

The final stage involved conducting a thematic analysis of the curriculum, which included familiarisation with the data, coding, and organising themes. This analysis specifically examined the strengths and limitations of the 11th and 12th-grade curricula, guided by both inductive and deductive approaches. Ethical considerations, including proper citation practices, were consistently maintained throughout the entire process.

Results

Media literacy education within Indian curricula varies significantly compared to other countries; however, the primary aim of incorporating these best practices into programmes remains the same: to enhance media literacy skills, promote media creation and critical thinking, and foster a sophisticated understanding of media in today's world.

English

In India, the English curriculum for 11th and 12th grades emphasises the development of various skills by incorporating extensive reading across a range of literary genres and a variety of writing exercises, including notices, posters, advertisements, letters, emails, and reports. The listening section features recorded presentations that support the teaching methods. Project work involves creating podcasts, interviews, and both video and audio productions, each accompanied by scripts and reports ranging from 800 to 1,000 words, thereby improving digital communication skills.

Compared to the UK curriculum, media elements are integrated across the Speaking and Listening, Reading, and Writing strands (25, 26). The curriculum introduction clarifies the aims of English education, stating that "In studying English, pupils develop skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing, enabling them to express themselves creatively and imaginatively and communicate effectively." It details specific learning objectives and core content areas for each

strand, often including examples of suitable study materials to help achieve these goals.

In Sweden, the curriculum prioritises the production, analysis, and communication of visual content, supporting the study of popular culture as a legitimate academic pursuit (25). In contrast, the United Kingdom's approach focuses on enabling students to become critical consumers of media, equipping them with the analytical skills necessary to navigate today's media landscapes (26). Finland's educational framework emphasises developing communication and media skills, ensuring students can effectively engage with various forms of media (27).

Students in Germany engage in a systematic analysis of media structures and messages, gaining insights into content creation tailored to specific audience interests (28). In France, the curriculum encourages the cultivation of a critical approach to both media consumption and production (29). Meanwhile, educational frameworks in Hungary and Turkey focus on understanding the impact and mechanisms of electronic media (30).

In Ireland, the main aim of media literacy education is to offer a thorough understanding of media systems and their impact on society (31). These best practices can also be incorporated into higher education, which mainly focuses on teaching students about media and its application within the school system, such as integrating mobile devices into education (32).

Although the curriculum aims to improve writing skills, it insufficiently covers the critical analysis of advertising effectiveness and the strategic use of posters. To better equip students for practical tasks and enhance their media literacy, it is recommended to include modules that focus on utilising online platforms and social media for feedback management, along with evaluating the wider implications of smartphone use that go beyond traditional email communication. Students are often required to utilise media content or information from the Internet and television, engaging with cartoons, advertisements, pamphlets, and other primary sources that shed light on both historical and modern contexts (33). The importance of media literacy education within the English curriculum is complex.

The Indian curriculum encourages creative writing through essays, articles, and literary analysis. Project designs include podcasts, documentaries,

video scripts, and multimedia reports. Although media tools like films and digital platforms foster critical thinking, a considerable gap still exists in developing soft skills related to technological proficiency and advertising critique. It is crucial to address these deficiencies to enhance media literacy within this educational framework.

To address this challenge, instructional methodologies prioritise analytical processes, discussions, and the articulation of ideas through verbal, visual, and graphic mediums. The use of critical questioning to stimulate active reading responses is becoming increasingly prevalent in classroom practices. This approach has also broadened to encompass texts from popular culture, including television, film, and contemporary music (34).

History

The history curriculum for 11th and 12th grade often includes projects that require in-depth research on various topics, such as archaeological sites, the genealogy of rulers during the Dogra dynasty, and traditional artistic crafts like papier-mâché and Basohi paintings. Students mainly use mobile devices for research at home, utilising online resources to broaden their knowledge.

The current Indian curriculum covers various themes, including early societies, empires, cultural traditions, and processes of modernisation. It highlights archaeological sites and different dynasties, from Roman to nomadic empires, and explores the effects of technological interventions on historical narratives. Students are encouraged to use internet sources, primary documents, and multimedia tools—especially video content—to enrich their learning while critically examining the authenticity of these sources and addressing inherent biases in historical accounts.

The interaction between politics and media has become increasingly complex, especially during electoral periods in India, where the media's portrayal of campaigns greatly influences public perception. Although credibility and disinformation are emphasised in educational guidelines, the syllabus notably lacks specific chapters dedicated to media literacy. It also examines major shifts in Indian history—colonialism and independence—prompting students to utilise internet tools for source evaluation and analyse the development of communication methods, particularly within

contexts like Jammu and Kashmir. The global issue of disinformation, as outlined by researchers as information disorder, highlights the need to develop citizens' skills in fact-checking and distinguishing between reliable and unreliable information (35).

The curriculum also explores the media's influence on key contemporary issues, such as environmental concerns, gender relations, and health topics, with teachers emphasising the importance of recognising credible information. Media literacy has become an essential pedagogical focus due to its strong impact on students' understanding of history, politics, culture, and the dissemination of knowledge, as well as their diverse learning styles (36).

Ultimately, the history curriculum emphasises the study of evolving cultural traditions while highlighting the profound implications of technological interventions through media tools. This integration has led to significant developments within the traditions and cultures examined. A nuanced understanding of the changes brought about by technological trends enables students to critically evaluate their impact on existing paradigms. The idea that media literacy education enhances critical thinking—a meta-cognitive process that thoroughly analyses and evaluates information—is well recognised in both communication and educational literature. Researchers continue to explore how critical thinking as an outcome of media literacy practices is assessed across various subject areas (37-39). While self-expression remains a key goal in media arts education, studies suggest that this skill can enrich students' academic, cultural, civic, and intellectual lives, as democratic principles require the contribution of diverse opinions, insights, and ideas within public communicative contexts (40).

Political Science

The revised Political Science curriculum of NCERT and CBSE now emphasises a focused assessment of "Elections in India," requiring a nuanced understanding of electoral dynamics. However, the inconsistency in coverage of electoral and political events across different news outlets highlights an urgent need for impartial journalism. It is essential to enhance students' media literacy to reduce the risk of adopting biased perspectives linked to specific media platforms. Importantly, the current curriculum does not include dedicated segments

on media literacy, leaving the responsibility to educators to address this vital gap.

Media literacy aims to foster an informed and critical understanding of the nature, techniques, and implications of mass media (41). This skill not only emphasises the importance of public interest in advancing socio-political conditions but also enables citizens to participate actively in public discourse and fulfil their civic duties.

The media presents both compelling narratives—both fictional and nonfictional—about people, places, and events, significantly shaping young people's perceptions of the world. Furthermore, the media play a crucial role in influencing youths' attitudes and opinions towards historical, governmental, and political constructs. Teaching media literacy skills is especially beneficial, as it enhances students' abilities to decode media messages and navigate India's complex electoral landscape.

The 11TH and 12th grade curriculum covers essential subjects such as the Indian Constitution, electoral processes, and governance frameworks. Assessments focus specifically on "Elections in India" and the media's role in campaigning and shaping public opinion. Incorporating current events into project-based learning can support critical analysis of various media platforms. However, the absence of a systematic approach to media literacy and bias analysis in the syllabus requires active involvement from educators.

Contemporary issues, such as the "Kashmir conflict" and "India-Israel relations," which have attracted significant media attention both nationally and internationally, require a thorough analysis of media narratives. Engaging students through multimedia presentations, debates, and virtual discussions can deepen their understanding of these complex topics while improving their argumentative skills.

Moreover, media literacy education improves students' analytical and reasoning skills (38) and provides a vital framework for analysing democratic citizenship and political processes. By integrating media tools with principles from political science, educators can create an interactive learning environment that mirrors the evolving landscape of modern politics. This pedagogical approach prepares students to participate in civic discourse actively, equipping them with the analytical skills necessary to

interpret and communicate political information effectively.

The Indian curriculum's analysis of major recent events, such as the Arab Spring and electoral realignments following the 2019 elections—particularly the BJP's rise and Congress's decline—highlights the importance of bias detection techniques in shaping opinions, despite the lack of formalised media literacy frameworks. In this context, media literacy becomes essential in fostering citizens' responsibilities, with promoting students' citizenship as a key aim of media literacy education. In France, for example, media literacy programmes aim to enhance students' social participation skills while encouraging critical engagement with media. The primary goal of media literacy education in France is to develop aware and responsible citizens within a democratic system (24).

Sociology and Psychology

The 11th and 12th grade sociology curriculum critically examines social institutions, focusing on mechanisms of social change. A key part of this is exploring the media's role as a vital agent of socialisation. At the same time, psychology studies the complexities of human development, cognitive processes, and social learning, often considering the effects of media, especially social media, on mental health outcomes. Promoting media literacy is crucial for protecting children's health and well-being, and for improving their participation in civic and economic activities within a democratic society. Media literacy equips individuals with the skills to interpret media messages and understand the systems in which they operate (39).

While foundational theories such as agenda-setting and framing may not always be explicitly discussed in sociological and psychological discourse, numerous research initiatives promote a critical evaluation of their influence on public perceptions and social dialogue. Sociology investigates the widespread impact of mass media on societal structures, analysing its implications for environmental debates, gender issues, and educational settings, while assessing both the advantages and limitations associated with social media platforms. The interaction between agenda-setting and framing theories is explored alongside social learning paradigms to improve media literacy. Pedagogical methods stress analysis, discussion, and the expression of ideas in various

formats—verbal, visual, and graphic. The use of critical questioning techniques to encourage active engagement with texts has become a common teaching strategy, extending to cultural artefacts such as television, films, and popular music (34). In the Indian curriculum, Psychology advances this exploration by analysing social influence mechanisms, attitude shifts, and the impact of media exposure on behavioural outcomes. This interdisciplinary approach promotes media literacy and understanding through thorough critical analysis, equipping both learners and educators with vital tools to navigate and interpret the complexities inherent in modern media interactions. As today's youth actively engage with emerging media formats alongside traditional outlets like television (25, 40), concerns regarding these platforms are mounting among adolescents. The media's influence affects areas such as aggression, violent behaviours, and criminal activity (41), sexual relationships (42), educational achievement (43), body image (44), dietary habits, the increasing prevalence of obesity, sedentary lifestyles, substance misuse, and alcohol consumption (45).

General Studies

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) includes General Studies as a key component of its curriculum, offering valuable opportunities to incorporate media literacy. This subject offers a comprehensive examination of India's extensive historical background, rich cultural traditions, and significant milestones in various fields, including politics, agriculture, science and technology, education, and industry. It helps students gain a deep understanding of their rights and civic duties, encouraging a sense of civic responsibility and inspiring them to engage actively in their communities.

The curriculum is carefully crafted to connect theoretical concepts with real-world situations, helping to develop critical thinking skills. Additionally, it enhances communication skills, enabling students to articulate their ideas and opinions clearly in both spoken and written formats. A strong emphasis is placed on current socio-economic issues, including challenges such as illiteracy, poverty, social disunity, and discrimination based on sex or caste.

Aligning with educational methods seen in Finland, media literacy education strives to develop

students into responsible communicators. This includes fostering skills in media critique, ethical thought, and aesthetic values within the context of communication frameworks. Moreover, it promotes participatory and interactive communication approaches, alongside competence in the technical aspects of media and communication as key learning objectives (46).

Current Indian General Studies provides a solid foundation for lifelong learning, equipping students with essential knowledge and skills for personal and professional success. The curriculum encompasses a broad range of topics, including workforce readiness, soft skills, digital literacy, domain-specific abilities, financial literacy, and human rights education. It emphasises the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and underscores the collective responsibility of individuals, communities, and businesses in its promotion.

Furthermore, the curriculum clarifies the links between human rights and sustainable development, promoting an understanding of Global Awareness, Conflict Analysis and Resolution, Representation of Global Voices, and Global Environmental Ethics through the perspective of Travel and Tourism. It explores the connection between Education, Media, and nation-building while recognising the inherent challenges and limitations associated with these dynamics.

A clear example of effective media literacy integration can be seen in Austria, where it is established as a core educational principle across all subjects rather than being treated as a separate discipline. This integration improves the educational experience, fostering comprehensive development in media literacy (27).

Discussion

Considering the current curriculum of 11th and 12th grades in India, there are several ways to quickly incorporate media literacy education into daily classroom activities. While NCERT and CBSE curricula are gradually integrating media tools, explicit media literacy remains underdeveloped, which limits students' ability to manage digital influences. Enhancing these areas will help cultivate discerning, engaged citizens, crucial for India's democratic society.

In the Swedish educational framework, there is a pronounced focus on the synthesis, critique, and

dissemination of visual media, alongside a robust endorsement of the scholarly analysis of popular culture as a legitimate academic discipline (25). In contrast, the pedagogical approach in the United Kingdom prioritises the cultivation of discerning media consumers, equipping students with critical interpretative skills necessary to navigate the complexities of contemporary media landscapes (26). Austria's instructional paradigm aims to empower students to become not only critical media consumers but also adept creators of original media content.

Finland's educational model emphasises the development of communicative capabilities and media literacy, facilitating effective interaction with diverse media forms (27). In Germany, students engage in a systematic examination of media structures and narratives, gaining insights into the strategic creation of content tailored to specific audience demographics (28). The French curriculum encourages students to adopt a critical perspective regarding both media consumption and production (29). Conversely, the educational strategies in Hungary and Turkey focus on analyzing the implications and operational mechanics of digital media platforms, preparing learners to navigate multifaceted media environments, discern relevant information, engage in prudent consumption practices, and cultivate awareness of harmful effects (30).

In Ireland, the central objective of media literacy education is to provide a profound understanding of media mechanisms and their societal impacts (31). This multifaceted approach underscores the critical role of media literacy in fostering informed and engaged citizens. Such exemplary practices could also be integrated into higher education, where the emphasis is placed on advancing students' understanding of media dynamics and their application in educational contexts—such as the integration of mobile technologies in learning environments (32). By adopting these methodologies, a more cohesive and thorough curriculum can be developed.

Media literacy is increasingly recognised as an essential element in developing students' critical thinking skills (46). It enables learners to analyse and assess messages shared across various media outlets, such as social media, television, and the internet. This analytical skill is crucial for individuals to understand the complexities of

modern society and to make well-informed choices. As a result, media literacy has gained considerable attention in educational curricula in recent years. One effective teaching method is project-based learning, which allows students to produce their own media content, thereby deepening their understanding of the production processes and the ethical considerations involved in media creation.

Furthermore, media literacy acts as a fundamental element for responsible technology use, guiding students on how to identify credible sources amidst misinformation. This ability is particularly vital in an era marked by an overwhelming flood of information, where not every piece of content can be trusted. By developing media literacy, educators can enable students to participate thoughtfully and responsibly in the modern world. Teaching methods that enhance media literacy often include critical discussions and analyses of existing media, allowing students to evaluate advertisements, news reports, and social media posts for bias, perspective, and hidden intentions. These activities encourage a deeper understanding of how media influences public opinion and personal beliefs.

In previous studies, the importance of systematically teaching media literacy skills has been emphasised (47). Several countries prioritise media literacy, with notable efforts in the United Kingdom, where the regulatory authority OfCom has conducted research and advocacy to enhance media literacy, and in Finland, where a national strategy has been implemented to foster these essential skills (47). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has also played a key role in promoting media literacy education worldwide (48).

Despite these efforts, educators continue to face challenges in the rapidly evolving media landscape. The ongoing emergence of new platforms and technologies complicates the task of ensuring that educators stay well-informed. To promote effective media literacy education, continuous professional development and access to up-to-date resources are essential. Additionally, disparities in technology access among students can lead to inequalities in media literacy education. Schools must proactively work to address these gaps by providing necessary resources and

support, ensuring that all students have equal opportunities to develop these vital skills.

To tackle the challenges mentioned above, it is essential to consistently integrate media literacy into the curriculum. This approach not only provides equitable learning opportunities but also recognises media literacy as a civic right. A comprehensive framework for media literacy education, as outlined by the Maryland State Department of Education (49), can span multiple disciplines, including social studies, health education, language arts, and the arts. For example, lesson plans within social studies can involve students in analysing journalistic processes, portrayals of historical figures, and representations in the media (50).

Integrating media literacy curricula offers opportunities for customisation while aligning with established educational standards. While traditional teaching methods may require significant time and resources, applying research-based frameworks allows educators to create modular curricula, increasing flexibility and boosting student engagement.

The level of media literacy education implementation varies considerably across European Union member states (25). These variations are particularly noticeable when comparing the approaches used by countries such as Hungary and Austria. Some nations offer media literacy as a dedicated course, while others integrate it into cross-curricular activities or specific subjects. Extracurricular programmes also play a significant role in developing media literacy skills.

Currently, there is no unified model for media literacy education, as efforts are mostly driven by individual educator initiatives. In Finland, for instance, teachers have considerable autonomy in choosing their pedagogical approaches to media literacy instruction (33). The effectiveness of media literacy education relies on comprehensive training programmes for educators that blend theoretical frameworks with practical applications.

To adequately prepare teachers for this dynamic landscape, training programmes should include a comprehensive understanding of contemporary youths' media consumption habits. Due to the rapid development of media environments, ongoing professional development is essential to

equip educators with the knowledge and skills needed for effective media literacy teaching (51).

This comprehensive literature review highlights a field in significant transition, moving from narrow skill-based approaches to integrated socio-technical competency frameworks that respond to modern media ecosystems. The evidence shows the clear benefits of media literacy education in higher education, especially when delivered through student-centred, experiential teaching methods that combine critical analysis with practical content creation. It also identifies notable impacts of media literacy education on online learning effectiveness, suggesting that media literacy skills enhance overall educational outcomes beyond media-specific contexts (49). This reinforces the case for integrating media literacy into curricula rather than treating it as a separate subject.

Conclusion

In today's intricate media landscape, where the influence of information on societal structures is increasingly profound, media literacy has become a vital component in nurturing civic competence. It empowers individuals with essential analytical skills, enabling them to engage thoughtfully with media content and navigate their roles as informed participants in a democratic society. This study explicitly assesses media literacy within the Indian education curriculum, focusing on the senior secondary level. The research objectives include evaluating media literacy integration, analysing their integration into curricula and proposing targeted strategies for effective implementation in educational practices.

Media literacy is not systematically integrated into the curriculum of senior secondary schools in India. It is neither offered as a standalone subject nor consistently incorporated into existing disciplines such as social studies, language arts, or information technology. Consequently, pedagogical practices often overlook media literacy, leading to missed opportunities for developing critical thinking and analytical skills related to media consumption and production. The absence of a structured framework for media literacy education limits its effectiveness and reach within the educational system.

However, significant challenges remain in standardising definitions, developing reliable

assessment tools, and expanding effective practices across various institutional settings. The integration of AI and data literacy offers both an opportunity and a challenge, requiring curriculum innovation while maintaining a focus on critical thinking and ethical reasoning. Media literacy involves a comprehensive understanding of media content, production methods, and their broader societal impacts.

The research has certain limitations, primarily its narrow focus on the Indian curriculum for grades 11 and 12, which fails to account for the vast diversity of educational contexts and variations in teacher training. Additionally, the narrative methodology employed lacks statistical measures, which diminishes the potential for generalisation and may overlook recent advancements such as the integration of AI in education. Future studies should aim to address India's regional and socioeconomic disparities and adopt inclusive strategies that cater to the varied needs of learners. Furthermore, methodological enhancements such as longitudinal studies and randomised trials are necessary, alongside a commitment to ongoing pedagogical innovation that prioritises critical thinking. Research efforts should focus on teacher training, interdisciplinary curriculum integration, and active learning strategies, while also emphasising standardised assessments and the development of sustainable frameworks.

In the Indian educational context, media literacy serves as a foundational tool for preparing students to tackle contemporary issues, including disinformation, privacy violations, mediated harassment, and ethical dilemmas in digital communication. It fosters critical thinking, promotes responsible media consumption habits, and encourages moral engagement in the face of rapid technological advancements. The pressing need for robust media literacy education is further emphasised by India's diverse sociocultural landscape, characterised by linguistic plurality, widespread mobile technology usage, and an increasing reliance on digital platforms for governance, education, and civic engagement.

The primary objective remains to equip students for lifelong engagement with media as analytical consumers and ethical creators in an increasingly complex information environment. The integration of media, information, and digital literacies highlights that modern skill

requirements go beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. Success in media literacy education will require institutional commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration, pedagogical innovation, and ongoing investment in both human and technological resources.

Abbreviations

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Author Contributions

All authors contributed equally.

Conflict of Interest

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest. The manuscript complies with the journal's submission guidelines, including the ethical standards for research involving human or animal subjects.

Declaration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Assistance

The authors declare that no artificial intelligence (AI) was used in the writing of the manuscript.

Ethical Approval

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