

Status of Media Education in India: A Review Study

Mr. Rajat Pandey (rajat.pandey@dsvv.ac.in),  <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-9281-6497>; Research Scholar,
Dept. of Journalism and Mass Communication, Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar, India

Dr. Smita Vashishta (smita.vashishta@dsvv.ac.in), Associate Professor,

Dept. of Journalism and Mass Communication, Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar, India

Ms. Deepshikha Kumari (deepshikha.kumari@dsvv.ac.in), Teaching Associate,

Dept. of Journalism and Mass Communication, Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar, India



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Abstract: *This study examines the significance and role of media education in India, acknowledging the swift expansion and impact of the media sector throughout the nation. As an interdisciplinary field, media education equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities essential for thoughtful and responsible media engagement. The ongoing study examines the state of media education in India today, while also highlighting the increasing demand for skilled professionals in the emerging media sector. Educational institutions that are acknowledged for their media programs at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels are identified, accompanied by an examination of their curricula that encompasses both theoretical foundations and practical training elements. The article adopts a conceptual approach rooted in an extensive review of pertinent literature, detailed at the article's conclusion. The objective is to function as a significant resource for scholars, researchers, and individuals looking for insights into media education in India. Additionally, the article provides pertinent perspectives for educators and policymakers involved in shaping educational strategies in the country.*

Keywords: FTII, IIMC, Journalism, Mass Communication, Media Education in India

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1. Introduction

The media sector is among the most rapidly expanding industries in India. As a result, media education has emerged as an essential topic in the current landscape, especially in India. This has led to a notable increase in the significance, value, and acknowledgment of media education in recent years, driven by the swift development and impact of the media industry within the nation. It is an interdisciplinary field that focuses on equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities necessary to engage with media in a thoughtful and informed manner. In a world where media is omnipresent, media education plays a crucial role in equipping individuals to understand and engage with the intricate media environment. This education empowers them to be discerning consumers and innovative creators of media content. As the media industry continues to expand rapidly within the country, the demand for proficient professionals who can adeptly handle and contribute to these complexities is on the rise. Media education in India covers a diverse array of media disciplines, such as journalism, mass communication, advertising, public relations, film studies, television production, and digital media. It involves comprehending how media influences the development of society, analyzing media messages, developing media production skills, and promoting media literacy and citizenship. Media education equips individuals with a comprehensive understanding of the media's power, its role in shaping public opinion, and its effects on social, cultural, and political landscapes. Furthermore, the objective of media education is to cultivate critical thinking abilities through hands-on training and experiential learning, which are essential elements of media education in India. Students are motivated to engage in internships, industry projects, and workshops to gain practical experience and understand the real-world facets of media production and journalism. Opportunities of this nature enable students to establish professional connections and acquire several years of hands-on experience in the fields in which they have cultivated their skills. By promoting questioning, analysis, and interpretation of media content, media education empowers individuals to become discerning consumers capable of distinguishing between fact and fiction, recognizing misinformation and disinformation, and making informed decisions based on reliable information. Media education extends beyond formal educational settings. This can occur in educational institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities, as well as in community centers and across a range of media platforms. It involves the collaboration of educators, media professionals, policymakers, and parents to create a safe space that supports media education and critical engagement. These programs are available at both undergraduate and postgraduate tiers across numerous

universities, colleges, and institutions nationwide. Consequently, the curriculum integrates theoretical knowledge with practical training, equipping students with a comprehensive understanding of media principles alongside essential skills in media production, reporting, and analysis.

2. Media Education in India

Media education in India boasts a nearly ninety-year history; however, it continues to grapple with a persistent dichotomy, often viewed as either a technical or ideological pursuit. This dualistic perception, characterized by a conflict between technology and ideology, has marginalized institutions that seek to introduce innovative courses in media education. Although a diverse array of media education programs is now available, a cohesive model for media education has yet to be established since the country gained independence. This gap, exacerbated by institutional neglect, significantly influences our current comprehension of media education. The increasing prominence of media has overshadowed the critical need for media education, leading to its widespread yet unstructured expansion. Additionally, governmental indifference and the disengagement of media institutions further complicate the media education landscape.

A retrospective examination of the evolution of media education in India reveals that its advancement has not fulfilled its potential. While there has been a notable increase in the quantity of media education offerings, concerns regarding quality persist. Furthermore, limited resources present a considerable obstacle to the development of media education in the nation. As previously noted, media education continues to struggle to meet established educational standards, often receiving less focus than other academic disciplines. Despite its fundamental connection to human sensibilities and social responsibility, media education in India has yet to achieve the recognition and development it rightfully deserves. These are many causes of such disparity, and so in this study, researchers looked at various reasons that would explain such phenomenon. Over the last several decades, the evolution of information dynamics and communication has significantly transformed the methodologies employed within the media industry. This shift has brought a deeper quest for professionalism and sense of captivative presentations within the media accrument.

The ongoing discussion concerns the contemporary relevance of this novel feature of media and the relative amount of responsibility in society. However, it is disheartening to note that discussions about media often neglect their roots. Despite carefully inspecting many aspects and components of media, little to no attention has been paid to the very general thrust of issues and challenges that shape media education. Media education in the contemporary landscape faces numerous challenges that are arguably as significant, if not more so, than those experienced by professional media at its core. The rapid pace of global change has led to the emergence of new educational disciplines, prompting institutions to create innovative courses in media education. A diverse array of media education programs is now accessible in the marketplace, which is a positive development. However, it is regrettable that, despite the passage of time since independence, a cohesive model for media education has yet to be established. This omission, coupled with departmental ignorance, forms our understanding of media education today. The rapid commercialization of the media has brought to the foreground the vitality of media education, and therefore the rendering of institutions has been on the increase with no musical background. Journalism education was initiated in a variety of universities after independence. However, the absence of a structured model for media education persists. The allure of the media has fostered the belief that individuals can easily transition into journalism without the necessity of comprehensive training.

In contemporary times, media education has evolved into a sophisticated and intricate discipline that extends beyond the mere study of journalism. The challenge lies in creating conducive environments where these diverse dimensions can flourish. In fact, most if not all, of the mainstream media groups dealing with journalism education have realized that the general institutions universities, cannot sustain the dynamic media stream. Questions regarding the expectations from contemporary media professionals, their proficiency with modern technologies, and the availability of needed resources are significant factors crossing the divide between commerce and the academe. Recently, broad discussions on the condition of media education as it is today have been ongoing issues related to methodology, curriculum frameworks, and more. The significant expansion of the media industry in the last ten years has led to an increase in the availability of media education programs. However, this surge raises concerns regarding the predominance of quantity over quality in these offerings. Consequently, it is imperative to assess the effectiveness and standards of media education in the current landscape. With new departments/courses in media opening in

most prestigious universities of the country, beginning with the introduction of Mass Communication departments in most of the Central universities established in 2009, one sees a rat race of sorts between public and private universities to establish media departments.

The expansion of media education in India has largely been characterized by an increase in quantity rather than an enhancement in quality or pedagogical approaches. The landscape of media education is intrinsically connected with the media academia and the media industry. Speaking retrospectively, the eighties and nineties proved to be the boom time for media education in India, yet it has failed miserably in achieving the position of professional education. The landscape of media education in this country presents a duality, often characterized as professional, traditional, or vocational. A significant concern arises from the divergent paths taken by media academia and the media industry, which exacerbates the disconnection between educational outcomes and industry expectations. Furthermore, media institutions are frequently criticized for their failure to align curricula with the practical demands of the media sector, resulting in graduates who possess insufficient knowledge as they transition into the workforce. This situation has prompted advocates to call for a multidisciplinary framework and a redefinition of media education, advocating for its establishment as a distinct discipline rather than merely a subset of Arts and Social Sciences. In response, media education institutions must develop syllabi and curricula that effectively address the authentic needs of the rapidly changing media landscape.

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3. Objectives of the Study

- To assess the status of Media Education across various forms.
- To review the Various Proposal recommendations for improvement of Media Education.
- To explore the importance of Media Education, especially within the context of the expanding media industry.

4. Review of Literature

Media Education aims to assist students in cultivating an informed and critical comprehension of the mass media's nature, its employed techniques, and the ensuing impacts. (*Pungent, Ontario Media Literacy Resources Guide, 1989*)

In 2001, UGC recommended model curricula, it recommended nomenclature as a subject of academics as —Mass Communication meticulous. (UGC, 2001)

For instance, in 2000, nearly half of all Indian villages were connected by telephone, a big difference compared to the 4 percent in 1988. (*Singhal & Rogers, 2001*)

Some communication education research factors in the needs of media and communication education against the effectiveness of media training, that is the skill efficiency required to meet market expectations. (*Sanjay, 2002*)

Explaining the media industry nature and organization was seen to be as important as meeting manpower needs. (*Sanjay, 2002: 38*)

In 1977, UGC recognized —Journalism as a subject of academics. The panel confirmed the subject of academics as —Journalism and Communication. *AMIC, 2002, P.5.*

The media industry of India has grown at an immense pace and its achievement is appreciated throughout the world. (*Guru & Veena, 2005*)

According to Muppidi, Education in Journalism has been made available in India at various levels, and in more than a few hundred institutions, public and private: Muppidi, S. R. (2008)

If we look back in history, then it is found that in the eighties and nineties, there was a flourishing of media education in India. (*Desai, 2008*)

By the establishment of *Indian Institute of Mass Communication* (IIMC), New Delhi, *Film and Television Institute of India* (FTII), Pune and other institutions give their contribution towards enriching media education in India. (*Desai 2008*)

By the creation of the *Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi, the Film and Television Institute of India* in Pune and other institutions give their contributions towards enriching media education in India. (Desai, 2008)

As for media literacy covered by information literacy, it would be interesting to mention a survey conducted among future experts in the sphere. (Fedorov, 2008)

This is evidenced by the suggestion of CS Murthy, after gazing at the current status of Media education in India based on perception surveys of media educators and professionals, that the curriculum should be updated in order to keep it relevant to the media sector.

Proper education and training of mass communication and journalism have become a very essential task in order to develop media systems, professionals or activities vigorously so that we can uphold or maintain the standard of media studies in India which can nurture Indian students to get matched with international standards. (Parihar, 2012)

Comparing the media education experiences in India to that of the United Kingdom, Gaur (2013) mentioned that the range of journalism courses in Indian universities is very limited, outdated and rigid in nature; hence students tend to lose interest.

Centre for Media Studies, 2015 is concerned that the mushroom growth of media institutes during recent times has resulted in a host of complications in the absence of a separate media education accreditation framework.

Singh (2015) enlightened upon the present scenario of media education in India and emphasises that only the collective efforts of media academics, professionals, media industry, media universities, and professional media bodies can fend off the challenges in media education.

Following the demolition and dispersion, there should be a focus on evaluating media education. Naturally, with the expansion of media institutions, it is now time to assess media education.

As far as pedagogy and professionalism are concerned in terms of media education, critical thinking is the demand of today. Many years down the line, media educators of India and neighboring countries were on the way or followed the U.S. orientation of Media Education. The courses offered presently lack a clear purpose. Even among the teachers associated with media education, clarity about the courses is missing. (Singh, 2015)

More importantly, since 1990, new media, television news channels, and Broadcast Journalism have been enthusiastically working for media education. (Desai, 2017)

5. Discussion

The Current Landscape of Media Education in India

The current landscape of Media Education in India is undergoing a transformative evolution, marked by substantial growth and increasing acknowledgment in recent years. Several pivotal aspects serve to highlight the contemporary status of media education within the Indian context:

Increased Demand: The necessity for media education in India has significantly escalated. As the media industry continues to expand and diversify, there is a corresponding surge in the need for skilled professionals who are adept at navigating various media domains, such as journalism, advertising, public relations, film, television, and digital media.

Established Educational Institutions: India is home to numerous esteemed institutions that provide media education at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. These establishments encompass universities, colleges, and dedicated media schools, all of which offer extensive programs across a range of media disciplines. Among the prominent media institutions in India are the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), the Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication, the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), and the Asian College of Journalism (ACJ).

Curriculum: The media education curriculum in India generally combines theoretical subjects with practical training. Students study media ethics, media laws, journalism principles, media research, media management, and various aspects of content creation and production. Additionally, many institutions emphasize digital media, social media, and new media technologies to stay aligned with industry trends.

Industry Collaboration: Indian media education institutions frequently engage in collaborations with media agencies to effectively connect academic curricula with industry practices. These collaborations involve internships, guest lectures, industry projects, and mentorship programs. Industry professionals contribute their expertise, provide practical insights, and facilitate networking opportunities for students.

Research and Innovation: The discourse surrounding media education in India is progressively anchored in research and innovation. Both faculty and students actively partake in research initiatives, contribute to academic publications, and engage in various conferences. These research endeavors frequently focus on contemporary media trends, the impact of media, media policy formulation, representation within media, and the cultivation of media literacy.

Government Initiatives: The Indian government has undertaken numerous initiatives aimed at enhancing media education. It has established specialized institutions, including the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) and the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), which focus on providing comprehensive training in media studies. Additionally, the University Grants Commission (UGC) plays a pivotal role by offering grants and formal recognition to various media education programs.

Career Opportunities: In India, the field of media education offers a vast spectrum of career opportunities for graduates specializing in journalism, advertising, public relations, film and television production, digital media, media research, as well as content creation and management. The sector provides a wide range of employment prospects across both established and burgeoning media industries.

6. A Survey on Media Education in India

Media literacy is essential for fostering personal critical thinking and enhancing comprehension of the media environment. This literature review seeks to explore the state of media education in India, focusing on its historical context, present practices, challenges faced, and opportunities for advancement.

A Historical Overview of Media Education in India

- **Early Initiatives:** The research explores the initial initiatives to incorporate media studies in India, focusing on the creation of media studies departments within universities and colleges.
- **Impact of Western models:** Discusses how western models and methodologies, adapted to the Indian context, have influenced the study of journalism in India.

Media Literacy Initiatives and Programs

- **Analysis of Media Literacy Initiatives:** The review discusses various media literacy initiatives and programs introduced in India, both by government and non-governmental organizations, aiming to enhance citizens' media literacy and critical thinking skills.
- **Impact and Effectiveness:** An assessment of the impact and effectiveness of these initiatives, including challenges faced in measuring their success.

Role of Schools and Universities in Media Education

- **Inclusion in Curriculum:** This section explores the integration of media education into the formal education system at various levels, from primary school to university.
- **Faculty and Infrastructure:** The study ensures that trained faculty are the necessary resources for comprehensive media education in educational institutions.

Media Education and New Technologies

- **Digital Media and Challenges:** This section explores the challenges posed by digital media in media education and how educators are adapting their approaches to address these challenges.
- **Opportunities for Innovation:** It discusses how new technologies offer innovative ways to deliver media education and enhance learning experiences.

Media Education for Social Change

- **Addressing Media Bias:** The review explores how media education can mitigate media bias and foster a more balanced and impartial media environment in India.
- **Media and Social Issues:** Examines the role of media education in promoting critical social engagement, encouraging inclusion, and addressing stereotypes and prejudices.

Policy and Regulation

- **Government Policies:** An examination of the role of Government in media education programs and initiatives in India.
- **Regulation of Media Content:** The study discusses the relationship between media education and media content law and how the former can contribute to informed journalists.

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7. Strategies for Advancing Media Education in India

Several visionary strategies and initiatives can be envisaged to effectively promote media literacy in India. Now, several pivotal initiatives have been undertaken to advance media education in India.

- **Define Core Values:** It can start by determining the fundamental values that correspond with the institution's mission and vision. These values may include integrity, objectivity, empathy, inclusivity, social responsibility, and critical thinking.
- **Faculty Development:** Organize workshops and training programs aimed at faculty members to highlight the significance of values within media education. Provide them with resources and methodologies to incorporate value-oriented pedagogical practices into their academic curricula.
- **Media Literacy and Ethical Awareness:** Create a dedicated module focused on media literacy and ethical awareness, designed to empower students to critically assess media content and recognize the societal implications of their contributions.
- **Service Learning Projects:** Promote the involvement of students in service learning initiatives that incorporate media communication aimed at advancing social causes. Develop a specialized curriculum centered on media literacy and ethical consciousness, intended to equip students with the skills necessary to critically evaluate media content and understand the broader societal impacts of their contributions.
- **Research and Publications:** Encourage both faculty and students to engage in research pertaining to media ethics and values. Foster the publication of their findings in academic journals and media platforms to enhance awareness and contribute meaningfully to the ongoing discourse.

Collaborations and Partnerships

- **Education for a Digital World 2.0:** Establish partnerships with media organizations and NGOs that promote ethical media practices. This collaboration can provide opportunities for internships, projects, and joint initiatives.
- **Ethics and Social Responsibility:**
 - i. Highlight the significance of ethics and social responsibility in journalism as a crucial element of media education.
 - ii. Promote values such as objectivity, fairness, and accountability in media content creation and dissemination.
 - iii. Encourage journalism students to participate in community-based projects that use media for social issues and raise awareness of important issues.
- **Regional and Cultural Relevance:** Media studies must recognize and honour the diverse regional languages, cultures, and media environments present in India. It is essential to create educational resources in these regional languages to enhance accessibility to the subject matter. Furthermore, fostering research and critical examination of local media is crucial for comprehending and tackling the challenges faced by regional media outlets.

• **International Collaboration:**

- i. Encourage international collaboration in media education through the sharing of best practices across diverse geographical areas.
- ii. Establish partnerships with reputable global media education organizations to facilitate the transfer of expertise and specialized knowledge.
- iii. Actively participate in international conferences and workshops dedicated to media education to stay abreast of current global trends and advancements.

8. Conclusion

Media education plays a pivotal role in contemporary society, which is increasingly influenced by media. It equips individuals with the skills necessary to traverse the intricate media environment, engage in critical analysis of media content, and contribute to media production. By fostering media literacy and enhancing critical thinking abilities, media education cultivates informed and active citizens in the digital era. Despite significant advancements in media studies within India, several challenges persist. These challenges encompass the necessity for continual curriculum updates to align with evolving industry standards, the integration of hands-on training with real-world industry experiences, and the need to address the digital divide that affects access to media education across various regions of the country.

The literature review concludes by encapsulating the current landscape of media education in India, highlighting its successes as well as the challenges it faces. It explores potential advancements and underscores the necessity for ongoing research and support to foster media literacy and critical thinking within the Indian populace. Furthermore, it may offer suggestions for policymakers, scholars, and stakeholders aimed at strengthening media education across the nation. In summary, the status of media education in India appears optimistic, characterized by broad acceptance and a growing demand. It is instrumental in cultivating a proficient workforce and encouraging critical thinking and ethical standards within the media sector.

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AUTHORS' BIO-NOTES

Rajat Pandey is a Research Scholar with a specialization in media education in Uttarakhand. He has experience in teaching journalism, media production, and intercultural communication. His academic interests include television journalism, media literacy, and communication theories.

Dr. Smita Vashishta is an Associate Professor with over two decades of teaching and research experience. Her expertise lies in women's journalism, radio and television, and the global media landscape. She has guided multiple research scholars and contributed significantly to media academia.

Ms. Deepshikha Kumari is a Teacher Associate with a keen interest in media education, she specializes in Print Media and Radio Journalism. Her academic pursuits extend to research in media studies, where she explores evolving trends and the impact of communication on society.