Chapter 10

Promoting Global Competencies in India: Media and Information Literacy as Stepping Stone

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ABSTRACT

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines global competence as the capacity to analyze global and intercultural issues critically and to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions. Since media forms the basis for attaining and sharing information, formulating ideas and opinions about people, events and situations, exploring different cultures, perspectives, rejecting notions as well as accepting truths, media and information literacy (MIL) is an effective and essential way to attain this global competence. As MIL competencies are closely aligned with global competencies, interlinking the two helps in attaining true global citizenship. This chapter explains the problems, prospects and possibilities for MIL training in India. The history and evolution of media and its regulatory structure in India and how this has impacted and continues to influence the spectrum of media and information literacy is the core of this study.

INTRODUCTION

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) says that global competence is the capacity to analyse global and intercultural issues critically and from multiple perspectives, to understand how differences affect perceptions, judgments, and ideas of self and others, and to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with others from different backgrounds on the basis of a shared respect for human dignity in its proposal on Global Competencies for an Inclusive World (OECD, 2016).
Since media forms the basis for attaining and sharing information, formulating ideas and opinions about people, events and situations, as well as exploring different cultures, perspectives, rejecting notions and accepting truths, media and information literacy (MIL) is an effective and essential way to attain this global competence.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines media and information literacy as essential competencies (knowledge, skills and attitude) that allow citizens to engage with media and other information providers effectively and develop critical thinking and lifelong learning skills for socializing and becoming active citizens.

MIL facilitates in communicating across religious, cultural, social, political and economic barriers. This enhances cultural exchange and helps in maintaining plurality. It helps in overcoming disinformation, fighting stereotypes, rejecting biases in physical and virtual spaces. It also becomes an important watchdog that can observe ethical or moral violations by the media. Thus the competencies required to be a global citizen are closely aligned with MIL competencies. MIL can be a stepping stone to attain global competencies. This chapter explains the problems, prospects and possibilities for MIL training in India.

BACKGROUND

Potter (2004, p. 58-59): has said that,

Media literacy is the set of perspectives from which we expose ourselves to the media and interpret the meaning of the messages we encounter. We build our perspectives from knowledge structures. The knowledge structures form the platforms on which we stand to view the multifaceted phenomenon of the media: their business, their content, and their effects on individuals and institutions. The more people use these knowledge structures in mindful exposures, the more they will be able to use media exposures to meet their own goals and the more they will be able to avoid high risks for negative effects.

It constitutes three major elements.

- Having access to media
- Understanding the media
- Creating/expressing oneself using media

The interest in media literacy practices has risen ever since the UNESCO Declaration on Media Education, by representatives of 19 nations at Grunwald in 1982, exaggerated the ‘undoubted power of the media’ and the role they could play in the process of development, and as ‘instruments for the citizen’s active participation in society’. It called for ‘political and educational systems to recognize their obligations to promote in their citizens a critical understanding of the phenomena of communications’ (UNESCO, 1982).

A media and information literate person will be a keen evaluator of content as well as a credible, responsible creator of information or expression. Though the definition and goals of media and information literacy seem to be very simple, they require creation of many competencies. These competencies are a pre-requisite for surviving in the complex, media saturated environment of today.

UNESCO (2013, p.157) defined MIL competencies as ability to