



The Role of Curriculum in Enhancing Digital Media Literacy Among Secondary School Students

Parul Srivastava

Research Scholar

Department of Journalism and Mass Communication,
Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University, Prayagraj, India

Abstract : This study is focused on exploring the role of curricular design in enhancing digital media literacy among the secondary school students. Digital media literacy, which encompasses the ability to access, understand, and create digital media content, and is increasingly vital in today's highly technology friendly generation. The objective of this study is to understand what role does curriculum plays in enhancing the digital media literacy among the secondary school students. This study is conducted on the basis of a qualitative approach using content analysis and secondary data collection. The curriculum of class 'IX' of CBSE and the State Board of Uttar Pradesh is studied in this paper. Findings highlight the importance of curriculum for the students and how it influences their development.

Index Terms – Digital Media Literacy, Curriculum, Secondary school students, development .

INTRODUCTION

In today's technology-driven generation, digital media literacy has become an inevitable skill that navigates the landscape of technology. The importance of technology is supported by many scholars, such as Marshall McLuhan, who introduced the idea of the **"global village"** in his book "The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man (1962). He also used the term in his 1964 book Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man. The term 'Global Village' signifies "a situation where modern technologies would connect all people worldwide." In this paper, the syllabus of class 'IX' students of CBSE and the State Board of Uttar Pradesh has been covered for this study. This paper explores the significant influence of syllabus or curriculum frameworks in fostering digital media literacy. This study emphasises the need for an integrated approach that evolves the digital media literacy among the secondary school students. The term 'digital' derived from the Latin word 'digitus,' which means 'fingers' and 'toes,' was first originated in the late 15th century. The word digital refers to an electronic system that uses binary numbers, which are 1 and 0, to store information. On the other hand, the term 'literacy' is from the Latin 'litteratus,' which means 'learnt.'. The term 'literacy' means the "ability to read and write." Digital media literacy, in an overall sense, can be described as the ability to access, understand, and create digital media content easily and efficiently. According to the report of Dattopant Thengadi National Board for Workers Education & Development Ministry of Labour & Employment, Govt. of India, only 38% of households in India are digitally literate, out of which the urban areas of digital literacy are relatively higher than the rural areas. Hence, the topic "The Role of Curriculum in Enhancing Digital Media Literacy Among the Secondary School Students" has been taken. In this paper, the key elements of curriculum are studied, such as content selection, assessment methods, and overall digital content in the syllabus. This study aims to contribute towards increasing awareness of digital media literacy and its importance through the curriculum design for secondary school students.

Process of Curriculum Design:

The process of curriculum design of CBSE and the State Board of Uttar Pradesh has been covered for this study.

Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE): It is a national education board in India. Established in 1929, CBSE is responsible for setting guidelines and standards for its affiliated schools. The central board of secondary education aims to provide an education system that ensures uniformity and good quality in both teaching and learning in its affiliated schools. CBSE promotes academic excellence and overall development of students. It operates under the Ministry of Education, Government of India. CBSE has around 29,000 affiliated schools, both national and international. It comprises 17 regional offices across the country, with an additional office in the UAE. The headquarters of CBSE is located in Delhi, India. Although there are many guidelines and standards on which the board works, a general regulation that the board follows while preparing the curriculum design is given below:

- 1. Guidelines:** The CBSE follows the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) developed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), which is an autonomous body established by the government of India in 1961. The curriculum aligns with the educational goals that are outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP).
- 2. Involvement of the Stakeholder:** Experts from the various different fields collaborate to design the curriculum, for example, educationists, particular subject specialists, policymakers, etc. The feedback of teachers, students, and school administration is also considered for more reliability.
- 3. Curriculum Objective:** CBSE keeps their objective in focus while preparing the curriculum. The objective is to achieve knowledge, skills, and values; to develop skills and emotional intelligence; and to promote critical thinking among the students.
- 4. Subject Framework:** There are core and elective subjects in CBSE; their core subjects include languages, mathematics, science, and social science. The elective subjects may include computer science, fine arts, physical education, etc.
- 5. Development of Syllabus:** National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) develops textbooks and learning resources based on the approved curriculum. The syllabus outlines learning objectives, topics, assessment, and time allocation for each topic.
- 6. Integration of Skills:** Technologies, Communication, and Digital Literacy is also integrated in the curriculum design for vocational and skill development.
- 7. Assessment inclusion:** CBSE incorporates CONTINUOUS AND COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION methods. It includes formative assessments, summative assessment patterns, internals, externals, practical, and project work.
- 8. Review:** The curriculum is reviewed and updated periodically to stay effective. Feedback from school authorities is also taken from time to time.
- 9. Implementation in Schools:** CBSE provides particular guidelines and training to schools for effective implementation.
- 10. Monitoring and Evaluation:** CBSE inspects the implementation through monitoring programs; feedback is given, and the effectiveness of the curriculum is evaluated based on the performance of students and learning outcomes.

Uttar Pradesh (UP) Board: The UP Board operates under the Uttar Pradesh Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad (UPMSP) established in 1921 under the United Provinces Legislative Council act. It is a government agency, that conducts high school and intermediate examination in the state of Uttar Pradesh. It includes several steps for the curriculum design while ensuring to follow proper guidelines. Following is the given process of curriculum design in UP Board:

- 1. Policy Framework:** Same as the CBSE, the state board follows the National Education Policy standards for the curriculum design while addressing regional needs such as languages.
- 2. Curriculum Committee formation:** The committee includes subject experts, academic officers, educators etc. from different institutions such as NCERT and SCERT (State Council of Educational Research and Training).
- 3. Curriculum Design:** The curriculum of the state board consists of core subjects and the inclusion of local content such as the state's history, geography, and culture.
- 4. Following the Standards:** The curriculum is designed to the NCERT standards to ensure alignment with the central and other state boards.
- 5. Expert Recommendations:** Subject experts, teachers, and school authorities give their opinion on the curriculum design for a broader perspective.
- 6. Preparing the Draft:** Draft curriculum is prepared before the final design and is experimented with in a few selected schools to assume its effectiveness before the final implementation.
- 7. Approval and Finalization:** The draft curriculum is reviewed by various educational authorities before the final implementation.
- 8. Textbook Development:** After the final approval, textbooks are finally prepared, often with the collaboration of NCERT or SCERT. Both digital and printed material are prepared for the distribution.
- 9. Teacher Training:** Just like the CBSE, the state board also trains the teachers for the implementation of the prepared curriculum; workshops and refresher courses are organized for the familiarization of the content.
- 10. Implementation and Monitoring:** The curriculum is rolled out across the UP board schools, and periodic reviews are conducted for the required updates.

Review of Literature.

Following is the given literature review that has been conducted for this study:

1. Bhardwaj, D., Tyagi, H. K., & Ameta, D. (2015). This study focuses on the critical role of value education in shaping the moral and ethical development of students. Training the staff and teachers is required in order to gain more growth. Teachers and parents are the central value of growth and healthy development of a student, both morally and academically. The elementary stage is crucial for developing self-discipline and cultural sensitivity among the students. The study suggests curriculum restructuring and specialised teacher training to integrate value education effectively at all educational levels.
2. Vala, V., (2023). The paper highlights the importance of aligning the government education with the preference of students, including offering free courses and high-quality content. Creating diverse online and offline platforms for the teaching-learning process may contribute to the enhancement and development of the education system in our society. The focus is placed on the regular feedback and proper communication. Additionally, the role of digitalisation in education is also explored,

showcasing its potential to enhance access. The study recommended the need for adaptive strategies that could support the educational demands effectively.

3. Hobbs, R. (2010). This study emphasises the importance of fostering digital and media literacy as a societal development initiative. It focuses on the role of digital and media literacy in developing skills. This study addressed the gaps in students' ability to work, such as conducting effective online surveys, evaluating information credibility, etc. The study advocates for collective efforts to empower the individuals as informed media consumers and users. Digital literacy must also be improved in order to balance the society for its own good.
4. Verma, V., & Verma, R. (2022). This study aimed at collecting data from students and educators of both schools and colleges to identify the digital technologies widely used, the practical challenges they encountered, the strengths and weaknesses of this method, to discover the effectiveness of teaching-learning in digital mode, to know the preferences of students and educators on teaching-learning methods and to comprehend the potential of digital teaching-learning to be used in the future from their experiences of teaching-learning during the pandemic.
5. Eng, T. S. & National Institute of Education, Singapore. (2005). This review seeks to examine and understand the methodology used by researchers to study the impact of ICT on learning. The findings from these research studies will help to evaluate its effectiveness on students' learning outcomes and implications for education and further research. Most of the studies reviewed are limited to the United States and the United Kingdom, where research in this field has been more consistent and well documented. Two periods of research have been suggested in this review.
 - Research findings and their implications from 1960s to 1980s;
 - Research findings and their implications from 1990s to 2000s, and future research.

3.1 Objective

To find out whether there is sufficient content in the curriculum of CBSE and UP Board for the enhancement of Digital Media Literacy among the secondary school students (class IX).

3.2 Hypothesis

Curriculum of both the board contains sufficient content for the enhancement of 'Digital Media Literacy' among the secondary school students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative approach of research is used for this study, secondary data is used for the data collection, curriculum of class 'IX' of CBSE and UP board is studied in this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. CBSE Curriculum: As per the official webpage of CBSE https://cbseacademic.nic.in/curriculum_2025.html, the curriculum of 'IX' is mentioned in the secondary curriculum, which also includes class 'X' curriculum. The syllabus is divided into different subjects, including 'Languages,' 'Main Subjects,' 'Other Academic Electives,' and 'Subject of Internal Assessment.'. Although the term 'Digital Media Literacy' is not widely mentioned in the curriculum, an overall overview of how digital media literacy is incorporated in different subjects of the latest session, 2024-2025, is given as follows:

1. Computer Applications (other academic electives) CLASS IX (Code No. 165): This subject directly promotes 'Digital Media Literacy.'. Some of the important content in the computer applications that

is related to digital media literacy is 'Fundamentals of IT, Internet Basics,' 'Cyber Safety, and Word Processing and Presentation Tools.'

2. English Language and Literature (Code No. 184): Although there are many languages in the curriculum in accordance with different regions, English has been taken for this study as it is the common language in almost every region. In languages, content such as 'Evaluating Themes,' 'Writing Blogs, and Activities including various digital podcasts, videos, and online debates' increases digital media literacy and its awareness among the students.
3. Social Science (Code No. 087): Subjects in social science include 'History,' 'Geography,' and 'Political Science. 'In history, the evolution of communication indirectly indicates digital media literacy. Geography includes using digital tools such as maps and GIS for learning. Political science involves understanding the role of digital media in today's society through democracy, propaganda, and public opinion.
4. Science (Code No. 086): Science is again one of the main subjects in the curriculum of CBSE. Science fosters digital media literacy through 'research projects for online data collection, for gathering scientific information,' 'data analysis for using digital media tools such as spreadsheets, graphs, documents, and presentations,' and 'animations for visual communication through digital media sources.'
5. Mathematics: Using 'graphic tools,' 'problem-solving apps,' and 'data interpretation' may promote digital media literacy among the secondary school students.
6. Other Subjects: Other elective and practical subjects also promote 'Digital Media Literacy' both directly and indirectly. Developing posters, videos, digital media campaigns, online digital art, etc., is mentioned In various parts of the curriculum of CBSE.

2.UP Board Curriculum: According to the official website of Uttar Pradesh Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad (UPMSP), the latest syllabus of class 'IX' curriculum indirectly includes 'digital media literacy' widely. Subjects such as

1. Computer application involves 'computer fundamentals,' use of 'operating system,' 'programming technique,' 'computer communication and network,' etc.
2. Language: Communication, analysis, and technical comprehension promote 'Digital Media Literacy.'
3. IT-ITES: This subject promotes 'Digital India'; it includes 'computer introduction,' 'Internet,' 'spreadsheet, communication, and web browsing,' etc.
4. Mathematics: Use of graphs and digital charts promotes 'Digital Media Literacy' among the students.
5. Commerce: This subject consists of content that develops 'digital media literacy' among the secondary school students, learning about various digital media tools such as SEO, SEM, understanding consumer behaviour through analytics, etc. It develops digital insights among the students.
6. Other Subjects: The UP board curriculum consists of many other subjects that not only encourage 'digital media literacy' in different ways but also develop 'skills' among the students.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, both the CBSE and UP board curriculum for class 'IX' incorporate elements of 'Digital Media Literacy' through various subjects. Both the boards focus on skill development through the medium of 'Digital Media.' Even though a particular term or subject dedicated to 'Digital Media Literacy' is not mentioned in any curriculum of both the boards, yet the indirect approach to promote 'Digital Media Literacy' is clearly visible. The curriculum of Computer Applications of both subjects includes enough digital media content for student learning. Other than the computer and ICT, other conventional subjects such as mathematics, science, commerce, social science, etc., also cover topics that may enhance 'digital media literacy' among the secondary school students. Overall, both boards aim to equip the students with essential 'Digital Media Literacy' skills, fostering an understanding of today's technological society in the form of education. Both the boards are properly developing a curriculum that substantially involves 'Digital Media Literacy.' Hence the 'Hypothesis 'Curriculum is playing a positive and strong role in enhancing digital media literacy among the secondary school students.' Is accepted. The curriculum of other classes may be selected for further studies. The perspective of teachers on 'Digital Media Literacy' may also be considered for additional work.

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