



SCHOOL OF LAW

TWO-DAY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON

MEDIA LITERACY, MISINFORMATION AND THE LAW

Challenges for Democracy in the Digital Age

29th & 30th October 2026

HYBRID MODE • VENUE: SCHOOL OF LAW, VISTAS, PALLAVARAM, CHENNAI

Organised in observance of
GLOBAL MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY (MIL) WEEK 2026
"We All Play a Part – Media and Information Literacy for the People"
Aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

SDG 4
Quality Education

SDG 5
Gender Equality

SDG 9
Industry & Innovation

SDG 16
Peace & Justice

SDG 17
Partnerships

08

SUB-THEMES

20 SEP

ABSTRACT DEADLINE

TOP 3

CASH-PRIZED PAPERS

CALL FOR PAPERS NOW OPEN

SCHOOL OF LAW, VISTAS • PALLAVARAM, CHENNAI, INDIA

About the Host

AT A GLANCE

- **Dates:** 29 & 30 October 2026
- **Mode:** Hybrid — physical and virtual participation
- **Venue:** School of Law, VISTAS, Pallavaram, Chennai
- **Abstract deadline:** 20 September 2026
- **Full paper & registration deadline:** 15 October 2026
- **Recognition:** Top 3 papers receive cash prize, memento & certificate

About VISTAS

Vels Institute of Science, Technology & Advanced Studies (VISTAS) is a Deemed to be University established under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956. Located in Pallavaram, Chennai, VISTAS is committed to excellence in education, research and innovation across multiple disciplines. The University strives to create an ecosystem that nurtures intellectual curiosity, ethical values and social responsibility among its students and scholars, while fostering international academic collaborations and contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals through education, research and outreach.

About the School of Law

The School of Law, VISTAS, is dedicated to imparting quality legal education with a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches, practical skills and research. The school offers undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes in law and regularly organises academic events to engage with contemporary legal issues of national and international significance. Through conferences, seminars and workshops, the School of Law provides a platform for meaningful dialogue among students, academicians, practitioners, policymakers and international experts on questions of justice, democracy and the rule of law.

THE CONFERENCE

About the Conference

In the digital age, the rapid proliferation of information through social media platforms, OTT services and online news ecosystems has transformed the nature of public discourse worldwide. While digital media has democratised access to information, it has simultaneously given rise to unprecedented challenges, including misinformation, disinformation, deepfakes, and the erosion of public trust. These developments pose significant threats to democratic processes, electoral integrity, judicial fairness and the informed exercise of citizenship across jurisdictions. Media and Information Literacy (MIL) has emerged as a critical competence for citizens navigating the complex information landscape. At the same time, legal frameworks — constitutional guarantees of free speech, intermediary liability regimes, content regulation norms and emerging rules on synthetically generated information — are being tested and reshaped globally.

This Two-Day International Conference is organised in observance of Global Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Week 2026 (24–31 October), an annual UNESCO and United Nations-recognised observance. By scheduling the Conference on 29 and 30 October 2026, squarely within Global MIL Week, the School of Law, VISTAS, contributes to the worldwide mobilisation of stakeholders and affirms India's engagement with the international MIL movement. The Conference seeks to bring together academicians, researchers, legal practitioners, media professionals, policymakers, civil society actors and students from India and across the world to deliberate upon contemporary legal, regulatory and policy responses. It provides an opportunity for scholarly engagement with both doctrinal and interdisciplinary perspectives, comparative experiences and actionable recommendations on one of the most pressing issues of our time.

Objectives of the Conference

- 01** To critically examine the constitutional, legal and human-rights dimensions of free speech, media regulation and media literacy in the digital age from comparative and international perspectives, in support of SDG 16.10.
- 02** To analyse the impact of misinformation, disinformation and deepfakes on democratic processes, electoral integrity and the administration of justice across jurisdictions.
- 03** To evaluate the efficacy of existing legal frameworks, including the Information Technology Act, 2000 and the IT Rules, as well as counterpart regimes elsewhere, in addressing platform accountability and content governance.
- 04** To explore media and information literacy as a legal, educational and policy response to digital threats to democracy, in alignment with UNESCO frameworks, Global MIL Week and SDG 4 of Quality Education.
- 05** To foster interdisciplinary and cross-border dialogue and generate actionable recommendations for policymakers, regulators, educational institutions and international organisations (SDG 17).
- 06** To contribute actively to Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2026 under the theme "We All Play a Part — Media and Information Literacy for the People" and to the realisation of the 2030 Agenda.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Conference Sub-Themes

Papers are invited on the following sub-themes. The list is illustrative and not exhaustive — comparative, regional and international perspectives, and explicit linkages to the Sustainable Development Goals, are especially welcome.

THEME 1

Constitutional Dimensions of Free Speech, Media Literacy and Democratic Discourse in the Digital Age

- a) Article 19(1)(a) and the evolving contours of free speech in the digital public sphere
- b) Reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2) and their application to online speech
- c) Media literacy as a constitutional value and its role in strengthening democratic citizenship
- d) Judicial approaches to balancing free speech and the need for informed public discourse
- e) Comparative constitutional jurisprudence on free speech and information integrity (SDG 16.10)

THEME 2

Misinformation, Disinformation and Fake News: Legal Frameworks and Challenges to Electoral Democracy

- a) Legal responses to election-related misinformation and deepfake political content
- b) Paid news, electoral propaganda and the Representation of the People Act
- c) Role of the Election Commission and social media platforms in curbing electoral misinformation
- d) Comparative approaches to regulating political deepfakes and synthetic media during elections

THEME 3

Intermediary Liability, Safe Harbour and Platform Accountability in Combating Misinformation

- a) Section 79 of the IT Act, 2000 and the evolving safe harbour doctrine post-Shreya Singhal
- b) IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 and subsequent amendments
- c) Due diligence obligations of social media intermediaries and OTT platforms
- d) Government advisories, content takedown orders and the challenge of executive overreach
- e) Global trends in platform regulation and intermediary liability (SDG 9 & 16)

THEME 4

AI-Generated Content, Deepfakes and Synthetically Generated Information: Threats to Truth, Privacy and Democratic Trust

- a) Legal regulation of deepfakes and synthetically generated information under the IT Rules and international frameworks
- b) Labelling obligations, watermarking and technical measures for synthetic content
- c) Privacy harms arising from non-consensual deepfakes and synthetic media — gendered dimensions (SDG 5)
- d) Evidentiary challenges posed by AI-generated content in judicial and electoral contexts

THEME 5**"Trials by Media", Sensationalism and the Right to Fair Trial in the Age of Viral Misinformation**

- a) "Trials by Media" and their impact on the presumption of innocence and fair trial rights
- b) Contempt of court jurisprudence in the context of online commentary and viral narratives
- c) Role of the judiciary in regulating prejudicial publicity in the digital age
- d) Balancing open justice, press freedom and the right to a fair trial (SDG 16)

THEME 6**Media and Information Literacy as a Legal and Policy Response**

- a) Media literacy education as a tool for democratic resilience and quality education (SDG 4)
- b) Privacy literacy and data awareness as components of media and information literacy
- c) UNESCO frameworks and Global Media and Information Literacy Week initiatives
- d) Role of educational institutions, regulators and civil society in promoting media literacy
- e) Integrating MIL into formal education and lifelong learning policies

THEME 7**Regulatory Approaches to Digital Misinformation: Self-Regulation, Co-Regulation or Statutory Intervention?**

- a) Efficacy of self-regulatory mechanisms for digital media and OTT platforms
- b) Content classification, age-gating and parental control mechanisms as regulatory tools
- c) The Press Council of India and its role in the digital media ecosystem
- d) Debates on a unified statutory framework for digital content regulation in India
- e) Lessons from co-regulatory models in other democracies

THEME 8**Comparative and International Perspectives on Media Literacy, Misinformation and Democratic Resilience**

- a) Comparative analysis of misinformation laws in democratic jurisdictions
- b) International human rights standards on freedom of expression and information integrity
- c) Lessons from the European Union's Digital Services Act and other global regulatory models
- d) Cross-border challenges in regulating online misinformation and platform accountability
- e) Global MIL Week, multi-stakeholder approaches and the 2030 Agenda (SDG 17)

CALL FOR PAPERS

Who Can Submit

The School of Law, VISTAS invites original and unpublished research papers from academicians, research scholars, legal practitioners, media professionals, policymakers, civil society actors and students from India and abroad on the theme and sub-themes of the Conference.

Eligibility

- a) Academicians, research scholars and faculty members from law and allied disciplines, from the national and international community
- b) Legal practitioners, judges and policymakers
- c) Media professionals, journalists and communication experts
- d) Undergraduate and postgraduate students of law and related disciplines
- e) Representatives of civil society organisations and international bodies working on media literacy, digital rights, information integrity and the SDGs
- f) Paper submission and presentation are mandatory, individually, for all faculty members, research scholars and PG students of the School of Law

Submission Guidelines

- **Abstract:** 250–300 words, accompanied by 4–5 keywords
- **Full paper:** Between 3,000 and 5,000 words, including footnotes
- **Format:** Microsoft Word (.doc/.docx); Times New Roman; font size 12 (main text) / 10 (footnotes); line spacing 1.5 (main text) / single (footnotes); 1-inch margins on all sides
- **Citation style:** The Bluebook (21st edition), followed uniformly — no in-text citations permitted
- **Originality:** Papers must be original and unpublished; similarity index must not exceed 15% (excluding footnotes and bibliography)
- **Co-authorship:** Permitted up to a maximum of two authors; each author must register separately
- **Submission mode:** Abstracts and full papers are to be submitted via email to imcvistas2026@gmail.com

Selection & Presentation

All abstracts will be subject to a double-blind peer review. Selected authors will be invited to submit full papers and present their research during the Conference, either in physical or virtual mode. All selected abstracts will be published in the Conference Proceedings. Selected papers may be considered for publication in an edited book or journal special issue with ISBN/ISSN, subject to further peer review and editorial decision. Outstanding contributions aligned with the Global MIL Week theme and the Sustainable Development Goals may be highlighted in conference outcomes shared with relevant stakeholders.

BEST PAPER RECOGNITION

The 3 best papers selected across sub-themes will be recognised with a cash prize, a memento, and a Certificate of Appreciation.

Important Dates

Particulars	Date
Last date for submission of Abstract	20 September 2026
Intimation of acceptance of Abstract	30 September 2026
Last date for submission of Full Paper & Registration	15 October 2026
Dates of the Conference	29 & 30 October 2026

PARTICIPATION

Registration Fee

The registration fee — inclusive of conference kit, certificate and refreshments for physical participants — is as follows:

Category	Physical	Virtual
Students (UG/PG) — Indian	Rs. 1,500	Rs. 1,000
Research Scholars / Ph.D. Scholars — Indian	Rs. 1,500	Rs. 1,000
Faculty / Academicians — Indian	Rs. 1,500	Rs. 1,000
Professionals / Advocates / Others — Indian	Rs. 2,000	Rs. 1,500
International Participants (all categories)	USD 50	USD 30
In-house Students (UG/PG)	Rs. 500	NA
In-house Faculty / Research Scholars	Rs. 750	NA

Note: Registration fee is non-refundable. Payment details and the registration form link will be shared upon acceptance of the abstract. Co-authors must register separately. International participants may pay in USD or equivalent INR.

Certificates & Recognition

- a) All registered participants will receive a Certificate of Participation
- b) Paper presenters will receive a Certificate of Presentation
- c) The best paper from each session will be duly recognised
- d) Top 3 Best Papers selected across themes will be acknowledged with a cash prize, a memento, and a Certificate of Appreciation
- e) Certificates will be issued in digital format for virtual participants, and in physical format for those attending in person
- f) Conference outcomes will be aligned with the spirit of Global MIL Week 2026 and the 2030 Agenda, and may be shared as a contribution to the global conversation on Media and Information Literacy and the SDGs

PROGRAMME

Tentative List of Academicians & Other Dignitaries

Expected participation from the following academicians, jurists and media professionals — the list below is provisional and subject to confirmation.

- 01 **Prof. (Dr.) G. B. Reddy** — *Vice-Chancellor, National University of Advanced Legal Studies (NUALS)*
- 02 **Prof. (Dr.) Manoj Kumar Sinha** — *Vice-Chancellor, Dharmashastra National Law University (DNLU), Jabalpur*
- 03 **Prof. (Dr.) Balakrishnan** — *National University of Advanced Legal Studies (NUALS)*
- 04 **Prof. (Dr.) Sachin Rastogi** — *Dean, School of Law, Jagran Lakecity University*
- 05 **Dr. Ramratan V. Dhumal** — *Associate Professor, Ajeenkya DY Patil University & Fellow, University of Johannesburg*
- 06 **Prof. (Dr.) Mark Pearson** — *Griffith University, Australia*
- 07 **Prof. (Dr.) Andrew Peukert** — *Goethe University, Frankfurt*
- 08 **Prof. (Dr.) Kokila Lankathilaka Konasinghe** — *Head of International Law and Relations, University of Colombo*
- 09 **Prof. (Dr.) Mohammad Towhidul Islam** — *Chairman, Department of Law, University of Dhaka*
- 10 **Prof. (Dr.) Geetha Pathak Sangroula** — *Executive Director, Kathmandu School of Law*
- 11 **Prof. (Dr.) Bernd Holznagel** — *University of Münster, Germany*
- 12 **Mr. Gaurav Sawant** — *Senior Executive Editor, India Today*
- 13 **Mr. Arun Ram** — *Resident Editor, The Times of India*
- 14 **Retired Judges of the High Court & Senior Advocates**

Note: The above list is tentative and subject to confirmation. Additional dignitaries may be announced closer to the Conference dates.

FORMAT

Conference Format

The conference will be conducted in hybrid mode and will feature Plenary Sessions, Technical Sessions and interactive deliberations. Distinguished academics, members of the judiciary, media professionals and researchers from India and abroad will contribute to the discussions.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR PARTICIPATION
in this significant academic endeavour
SCHOOL OF LAW, VISTAS
 Pallavaram, Chennai, India

For further details and updates, please contact the Conference Organising Committee.

For any queries, please contact:

Ajay Krishna S P — *Assistant Professor, School of Law, VISTAS* — **+91 6238979239**
Akhil Sajeev — *Assistant Professor, School of Law, VISTAS* — **+91 77363 11316**