

# The Problems And Prospects Of Using Social Media In Academic Library Services In India

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Received June 07, 2021; Accepted July 05, 2021 ISSN: 1735-188X

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## Abstract

Social Media has great importance in every spheres of today's life. Due to technological development and massive use of internet, social media tools are used in various purposes. Library as a social institution has tremendously affected by adopting various social media tools in its different services. Huge quantity of articles, journals, etc. are published regularly as a result of information explosion. The users are confused. By using these social media tools users can easily access their necessary demands quickly. This paper shows the importance of social media tools in modern academic libraries in India covering introduction, literature review, definition of social media, objective of the study, methodology, discussion like - social media platforms in library services, advantages, disadvantages, librarians' role etc., findings and recommendations.

**Keywords :** Social Media, Internet, Websites, etc.

## Introduction

Social media is an important tool that has changed every sphere of life. To search daily news, ongoing research of different fields, to interact with family members, it exists everywhere. It is an interactive platform where content can be created, distributed and shared to a large number of people in least time. Any type of information, text, videos, document, audios and photos or images are the content. It has a power and the people cannot avoid it as it strongly encourages the users to navigate in social media. Social media opens the face of the libraries specially the academic libraries and other business firm for easy and convenient marketing of their products and services. Presently many academic libraries in India also adopt social media channels to meet the users easily. Social media channels are freely available and easy to use. Only participation and content creation are important. By using their own desktops, laptops or mobile phones the users can access their library content anytime anywhere they need. In India, the academic library services specially the college, university and research library are influenced by social media. Most of the academic libraries in India are using social media to keep the balance between the recent advancement and the variety of users' needs.

Social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and blog are useful to provide and develop resources of learning materials, private messaging, discussion forums, multimedia uploading, cultural development and other resources.

## **Literature Review**

Srikanta Sahu & Pranoy Naik (2019) in their paper “Use of Social Media in Library Services: A Best Practice at Binghamton University Library” express that Social media denotes the websites and applications enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. In this digital era modern libraries use social media like Facebook, twitter, YouTube as a platform for knowledge sharing, information dissemination and communication.

Mr. Mehul Chauhan (2013) in his paper “Use of Social Media in Libraries” examined how libraries can leverage on social networking and Social Media skills to provide dynamic library services in the face of dwindling economic problems in India. In 21st century, Social Media has gradually crept into the library profession with different social sites.

Asif Altaf [et al.] (2021) in their paper “Use of Social Media in Libraries: A Perspective of a Developing Country” argue that Social Media provides a range of possibilities for libraries. Due to tremendous advancement of services given through the internet, libraries and information centers have to change and perform efficiently to convene the information needs of modern users. Libraries must use the modern SM tools to enhance and thrive in this age of the internet.

Bakare, Olatunji Azeez, Yacob, Haliso & Umar, Musa Yila (2018) in their paper “Use of Social Media Platforms to Promote Library Services and Profitable Librarianship” determined the use of social media platforms to promote library services and profitable Librarianship. They emphasize blogs and WhatsApp are used widely for promoting library services in libraries. The results also showed that the use of social media platforms facilitates two-way communication, ease communication with library users, provides a forum for feedback, increases library users and financially profit librarians through traffic generated as users visit their blog pages.

Alam, N. (2020) in his paper “Perception and Use of Social Media by Library Users of the Aliah University, Kolkata: a study” states that social media and its tools have great potential in building relationship between a library and its users, mainly by allowing users to participate in creating contents, access information, and disseminating the information more rapidly.

Shekharjyoti Neog (2020) in his paper “Library services through Social Media during lockdown due to COVID-19 with special reference to University Libraries of Assam” tries to depict the status of the University Libraries of Assam in providing library services through Social Media during lockdown. It is found from the results that WhatsApp is the most used social media for delivering library services during lockdown and the library users should make aware about the availability of social media services of the libraries for optimum utility of the service.

## **Definition of Social Media**

The term social media refers to a computer-based technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through virtual networks and communities. Social media is an internet-based and gives users quick electronic communication of content, such as personal information, documents, videos, and photos. Users engage with social media via a computer, tablet, or smartphone via web-based software or applications.

Social media are interactive technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, interests, and other forms of expression through virtual communities and networks.-

Wikipedia

Social media is a collective term for websites and applications that focus on communication, community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration.

“Social Media are primarily Internet-based tools for sharing and discussing information among human beings.” – Wikipedia

“An umbrella term that defines the various activities that integrate technology, social interaction, and the construction of words and pictures.” -Anvil Media

### **Objective of the Study**

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- i) To identify the kind of social media platforms can be used to promote academic library services in India.
- ii) To find out ways the librarians can use the social media in academic library services in India.
- iii) To identify the challenges librarians may encounter while using of social media platforms to promote library services through India.

### **Methodology**

No formal methodology like survey method, sample survey, etc is not used here. Only after consulting various literature on social media related in library services and some college librarians of West Bengal this paper is completed.

### **Social Media Platforms and Library Services**

Two types of variables are there - independent variables and dependent variables. Social media platforms like blog, Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp are independent variables. Whereas library materials - Books, Journals, Newspapers, Maps, CD/VCD and library services - Lending services, Referral services, Reference services, Internet based, Indexing, Abstracting, are the dependent variables.

### **Social Media Platforms used in Libraries**

#### **Facebook:**

Facebook messages provide a rich source of data for insight into how academic libraries are actually utilizing the medium, and how it offers possibilities for interaction with students different from other methods of communication. Librarians can interact with users to know their information needs. Libraries try to link some of these specialized library applications to Facebook.

#### **Myspace:**

It encourages the users to participate in social media. Social media opens the door for library and other business firm for easy and convenient marketing of their products and services. It is interactive. They get feedback from customers which helps them to understand what actually the customers' requirements.

#### **Blogs:**

Here, librarians can periodically post messages, share information on a particular subject or issue, and allow users to contribute to content. They can write articles, news on topical issues and expect an instant reaction from their users.

### **Wikis:**

Is a free online encyclopaedia that gives a background knowledge and definition of concepts. It offers a platform for users to access, edit and contribute to content. This is a collaborative web page for developing web content.

### **LinkedIn:**

Librarians can get patrons connected with specialists in their particular field of interest via LinkedIn. Librarians can use this platform to render specialized services such as Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI).

### **Twitter:**

A micro blogging application, to keep staff and patrons updated on daily activities, like frequently updated collections. Users can utilize this platform to type in short messages or status update. Librarians can use this platform to give users first-hand information on the on-going national elections. Users can send instant messages on complaints or ask questions on a particular issue and get a feedback on the spot using twitter.

### **WhatsApp:**

WhatsApp is a social media platform with instant free messaging and voice over telephoning services. Instant text messaging, voice calls, video calls, documents and media sending serves are all available on this platform (Tech Crunch, 2015). Librarians can send instant messages to users and get instant responses. Urgent information that requires Library users' attentions can be communicated to users, even documents and materials can be send to users at any time and even outside the Library working hours.

### **YouTube:**

YouTube is a free video sharing website that makes it easy to watch online videos. One of the possible uses for YouTube is a storehouse for instructional videos with a link that could take the viewer to the library's Web site for more information. Librarians can even create and upload your own videos to share with others.

### **Advantages of use of Social Media**

Social media are free and open websites that helps library users to simply sign in an account and participate in collaborative content creation and use. It creates many prospects for library to give effective services.

- i) Social media has the capability to capture the potential users of the library
- ii) It emphasises on more possibility of marketing library services rather than the traditional services.
- iii) It also helps the students to use library specially in locating library resources and quick

delivery of information.

- iv) The users can create, contribute, connect, converse, vote and share information by using social media.
- v) It helps librarians and library staff to become more closer to the users.
- vi) It is very useful for libraries to build collaborative network with the users.
- vii) It plays a vital role to grab the attention of new users.
- viii) Social media facilitates knowledge sharing and to feed the users with information.
- x) It encourages in promoting distance learning throughout the globe.
- xi) It is a popular platform to share new arrival, table of content of subscribed journals, research publication of institute through post.

### **Disadvantages of use of Social Media in Library**

Social media tools have some constraints also. These are-

- i) It is seen that tools like Twitter, Facebook are very much addictive and clienteles can waste their valuable time by using these.
- ii) It is difficult to gain the trust of the contents posted on social media platforms and also copyright issue.
- iii) Another difficulty is to control Spamming in social media.
- iv) Many people create fake accounts and post unhealthy comments on Facebook post and Tweet. It is very hard to review the comments.
- v) As Facebook, Twitter etc are open forum, so proper guideline and policy making should be done for the institution to manage these. Social media is also known for bias content, diversion can be created.
- vi) Data privacy and identity are not safe. It may be theft or hacked.
- vii) Most of the users have no adequate knowledge how to use or handle social media. It may cause great problems.
- viii) Installing social media services is costly. So, libraries with inadequate fund cannot think to enjoy the facilities of using social media.
- ix) Though it is open and free, sometimes it takes time to response for a particular query.
- x) Inability of the library staff to grasp the clear concept of social media also create problems and the users suffer from it.
- xi) sometimes, the interest of the librarians goes down to learn and utilize social media.
- xii) Speed of Internet goes ups and down hampers the interest of the users and the librarians also working with social media.

### **Future Role of Librarian**

Librarians play an important role in providing right information to right users in right time. Presently traditional environment is changed to social networking environment. Libraries or librarians are forced to accommodate the new advancements to meet the variety growing needs of the users. It will be the new challenges of the librarians specially the academic librarians of India for better services to the users. Keeping in mind this, the Librarians are responding and keeping themselves update about the popularity of social networking sites through their extending role in the creation, use, and sharing of information. They are busy to interact with

library users and providing them information and services as they require. The users can communicate, acquire and share knowledge in various ways. Librarians should follow the users' motive, interest, activities like posts, queries, updates, and events and pro-actively offer, advice and help. As the social networking tools are open and free for use, the librarians can easily take initiative for installing these in libraries to meet the growing needs of the users. Library Websites are to be linked with their catalogue, chat reference pages, research guides, calendar of events, news etc. The librarians should literate themselves by searching and navigating the web, creating social network space, teaching, and providing quality online library services.

### **Findings**

After careful analyses of related literature and above discussion it is clear that social media tools or platforms have many uses in library services in academic libraries. But it has some notable constraints which create challenges to academic librarians of India to manage and maintain library activities. Sometimes users also may confuse either they use social media tools or not in their academic purposes. Besides in India, most of the academic users live in remote places. They face some problems like financial, inadequate knowledge to handle social media etc. As a result, the academic users in India cannot able to get the full benefit by using social media.

### **Recommendations**

Here are some recommendations to solve the above identified challenges of using or managing social media tools in academic libraries in India. These are as follows:

1. Various programmes like library orientation, conferences, symposia, workshops can be organised to aware and educate librarians and users on the social networking services and applications.
2. Provision of stable power supply will encourage and facilitate the effective use of these tools.
3. Assimilating a maintenance culture so as to manage the few available ICT facilities effectively.
4. Pro-active training of librarians and library staff to acquire the 21st century skills to adapt to the ever-changing ICT environment.
5. Library associations, alumnae, Government and LIS schools should play their role in popularizing the use of social media among LIS professionals as well as the end users.
6. The behaviour of the authorities should be important so that new tools may be applied in the libraries without having faced any possible hurdles.
7. Library schools in their syllabus should emphasize on the practical aspects of marketing and using social media for this purpose.
8. It is recommended that libraries should provide their patrons with tools for accessing social media by developing social media page on library website.
9. Educating the public on the issue of copyright law and violation.
10. All libraries should develop their website with available internet facilities.

### **Conclusion**

It is clear that the degree of using social media tools is growing rapidly day by day. The users of academic libraries are moving from traditional use of libraries to social media platforms for their growing thrust of new knowledge of information. It is only the librarians who can take initiative

to continue the pace of development of using social media tools in library services. The librarians have to take the responsibilities to initiate all the point suggested in the recommendation part. If it is possible, this will create new revolution for the modern academic libraries in India as well as for the end users also. Social Media has become an integral part of our daily lives. From connecting with friends and family to promoting businesses, social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn offer immense value.

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