

Application and Impact of Social Media in Academic Libraries with Special Reference to Assam

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Abstract

The vast growth of knowledge and literature in every field of education along with the advancement of information technology has placed special responsibilities on all types of libraries. Nowadays, different types of social media tools are increasingly used in library works in academic libraries. So, this study is an investigational study to know about the use of social media tools in academic libraries and its impact on the library staffs, library users, library services etc and challenges as well as problems influencing in using such tools. Social media are mainly used to connect people in different communities and share, transfer information, and cooperate with each other information among different users of different communities.

The main aim of this work is to make intensive and extensive study to find the application and effect of social media on the users, library works and services, staffs etc in the academic libraries with special reference to Assam and make awareness among users and staffs towards the use of social media in the libraries. Also, find out the factors they are facing for using social media in the academic libraries.

Keywords: Social Media, Academic Libraries, Information Technology, Facebook, Twitter

1. Introduction

During the last 20 years, technology became a major factor on the library scenario. There have been several developments in information technology which may be characterized as revolutionary in terms of their actual or potential effect on the library.

The term 'Socialmedia' is described in different ways and for different functions. Social media are mainly internet-based tools for sharing, distributing and discussing information among the people. Social media refers to web-based tools that help individuals

and organizations to generate, attach, share information and communicate with the people.

In the era of internet social media applications became very powerful tool for all types of libraries. The range of social media application in the library include communication with users, library services, user education, creating awareness of library resources, communicate other librarians and staffs, getting opinion or feedback from the users and staffs etc.

Social media are used in academic libraries in different purposes, mainly in information communication, information sharing and knowledge organization. Mainly, MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, Blog etc., are used for information communication,



and Flickr, YouTube, Wikipedia, Slideshare etc are used for information sharing and Librarything, Netvibes etc., are used for knowledge organization. In the present era, the librarian can keep contact with the library users and staffs in online collaborative environment with the help of social media.

2. Scope and Limitation

The scope of the study is to find out the use and application of social media and its impact on the academic libraries. The scope of the study is limited to College libraries of Nalbari and Barpeta District and some university libraries of Assam.

By going through the study one can conduct this type of similar study covering the other libraries such as public and special libraries and also can cover other college and university libraries of North East region.

3. Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are:

- ❖ To understand the awareness of the academic libraries towards the application of social media tools in library works.
- ❖ To know about the different types of social media tools which are using in the academic libraries.
- ❖ To know about the impact of social media tools on the services of the academic libraries.
- ❖ To find out the problems faced while using social media in the academic libraries.

4. Methodology

For this study thirteen colleges of Nalbari and Barpeta District and three universities of Assam are

selected for study. Hence total sixteen academic libraries have been taken for this study. These institutions are selected randomly and the population targeted for use in this study consists of librarians of the selected academic libraries. A survey has been conducted through questionnaire that was distributed to the librarians personally and through e-mail. The other methodology and technique applied for conducting the paper are personal interview, observation and discussion method.

Questionnaires were given to be filled up by meeting Librarians. Personal interview have also taken during the survey to know their personal experiences.

5. Literature Review

The environment of library work has changed noticeably because of technology. Social media applications are also part of these. Libraries use social media tools all over the world and for the purpose of sharing the contents in a new way.

A few literatures which are consulted are given below and these are arranged in a chronological order:

Sherrod (1974) in his book "Information Systems and Networks" discussed about different types of academic libraries including college libraries and computerized information systems and about the online information retrieval system. He also discussed about computer network usage etc.

Kumar (1987) in his book "Computerization of Indian libraries", discussed about application of information technology in the libraries. He also discussed about internetworking and inter library lending etc.

Panigrahi (2000) in his book “Impact of information technology on libraries”, discussed the impact of technology in different types of libraries and evaluation of different technological advancement. He also discussed about different types of library information networking.

Haythornthwaite, Caroline (2005) in her article “Social networks and internet connectivity effects”, discussed about the different uses of social media.

Gupta, Gautam and Khare (2014) in their paper “Awareness and use of social media applications among library staff of power sector organizations”, discussed about the use of social media in workplace by library staffs and the usefulness of social media tools in the libraries.

Kumar, Chegoni Ravi (2015) in his paper “Social networks impact on academic libraries in technology era”, discussed about the importance of technology in education. He also discussed about the different types of social media tools and their benefits on academic libraries.

6. Analysis

On the basis of the data collection from the academic libraries mainly the college libraries of Nalbari and Barpeta District and university libraries of Assam, shows that among the sixteen academic libraries, fifteen libraries (93.75%) have internet connection. Only one college (M.N.C. Balika Mahavidyalaya) has not internet connection in their library.

Data further reveals that among the thirteen colleges, only three colleges use social media in the libraries and among the three universities, two universities are using social media tool in their library. Mainly, Facebook, Whatsapp and e-mail are used in the libraries. Hence, total 31.25 % libraries use social media.

The other libraries do not use any social media tools because of different types of reasons. The main reason is the surveyed libraries doesn't have updated website. Some of the libraries have the problems of proper internet connection, skilled manpower, etc. Some other libraries are planning to update social media website development for the libraries as well as the students.

From the data, it is found that according to the librarians of fifteen (93.75%) surveyed academic libraries (except the library of Assam University), social media would be used to disseminate information. They have mentioned some other possible reasons.

The data shows that according to the point of view of the librarians of fifteen academic libraries (93.75%) which we have studied, social media to be a relevant academic endeavor. Only the librarian of Kamrup College has given no comment on this point.

Data reveals that that according to the point of view of the librarians of the all surveyed libraries, communication would be a benefit derived from the social media in the libraries. They also provide some other possibilities of benefits derived from the social media.

Regarding the expectation of the librarians towards the impact of social media. According to the librarians, library services will be improved due to social media using in the library.

Data shows the different types of problems would be faced while using social media. Four colleges (Tihu College, Barbhag College, B.H. College and Nabajyoti College) and the all three university librarians have not given any information on this question.

7. Results

Academic libraries find difficult to provide proper and scientific services because of various types of barriers. Non-availability of sufficient funds, lack of skilled manpower, lack of proper internet facilities, negligence of students etc., may take place. It is high time to recognize that the library has taken the responsibility of our educational development.

Total sixteen academic libraries i. e. thirteen college libraries and three university libraries have been selected for the study, but out of these thirteen colleges, only three colleges use social media in the library. These three libraries use only facebook and e- mail as a social media tool and the university libraries which have studied in this purpose, use only Facebook and WhatsApp as a social media tool. This is a very negative point for the academic libraries of Assam. Because in the era of internet, there are lots of social media tools are available and these tools are very useful for communication, sharing information and performing other library activities. So academic libraries should take the advantages of these social media tools. From the survey we have found that the college libraries are planning for conducting social media tools in a near future. From the survey, we have found that the overall services provided by the academic libraries of Assam are not so bad. But the libraries encounter many problems in implementation of information technology. So, by overcoming the all barriers, the academic libraries will be more developed and will be able to provide high quality services to the users.

8. Conclusion

The use of information technology in most of the college libraries of Nalbari and Barpeta District are in initial stage. The libraries face many problems of

implementation of social media tools i.e. lack of fund, lack of trained skilled manpower and lack of infrastructure, irregular power supply, slow internet speed etc. Besides the college libraries do not update their own library websites. So, they are not able to provide the links of social media to the users. The quality of services in the academic libraries of Assam increases due to use of computer applications. The college libraries of Nalbari and Barpeta District and the surveyed university libraries have many future plans for the development of IT based facilities.

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Further Reading

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