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Winter 2021

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Das, Indrakshi and Borgohain, Trinayan, "Social Media Tools in Promoting Library Services: The Case of College Libraries of Assam during Covid 19 Pandemic" (2021). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 6616.

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# Social Media Tools in Promoting Library Services: The Case of College Libraries of Assam during Covid 19 Pandemic

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## ABSTRACT

Social media have become popularly use to seek information and have fascinated the library professionals to collect information in various perspectives. In the world wide there are so many acceptance regarding social media platform in college libraries. The study's main objective is to understand the advantages of social media and find out the use of social media by the college librarians of Assam particularly during the Covid 19 situation. This study adopted a sample of 295 librarians from the zone. The results indicate that majority of librarians used social media for delivery of services. The results also demonstrated to explore integration of social networking tools with library professionals to promote library services, available content, challenges & problems faced by each library discussed. This study recommended that college libraries should adopt social media platform to enhance library services and priorities training of librarians to impart all the diverse activities of social media; provision of ICT infrastructure, power supply, internet connection to mobilize their service.

**Keyword:** Social media tools, College libraries, Library services, COVID 19, Assam.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social media is called "Social" for a reason. It is the platform where the world is interacting and has represents today's world. Social media is now preeminent and much popularized impressive aspect in digital age as that it can change the way of communicating and sharing knowledge with each other. As of today, libraries are upgrading their quality services to retrieve information and full fill user's assumptions. Prominently by moving with technology and end

up all the traditional barriers with the users to improve and accessible the services in handle hand devices, social media has led to a novel challenges for the librarians. By confessing this challenge librarians or other staff need to be rehabilitate, recrystallite, strengthen themselves to satiate and keep able to provide services in best effect. To reduce the physical interaction and get awareness, social media platforms have become significant tool for communication and

the continuation for the people's routines. (Al Eid & Arnout, 2020). This current study introduces function of social media as library information platforms in the global connected world ranging from Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, Blog and LinkedIn. In this article we examine the strengths of social media in promoting social support, awareness, and updates of the global situation. We argue that social media provide opportunities to hundreds and millions of users to keep updated and informed about library information through posts, comments, videos, pictures, and others in their everyday routines. The objective of the study is to share the opinion of library professional regarding the positive use of social media for library information, and to provide the map of social media use and access for gaining information, discussing, as well as distributing library information within the people's closed-network like students, teachers and other professionals also how social media tools are being used by college library across Assam based on the data analysis of library use of social media tools and provide some key points that how libraries are engaged and what are the problems faced by librarians to implement social media platform services.

## 2. OBJECTIVES:

The main objective of this study is to understand the usage and its impact of social media tools among the librarians of college libraries of Assam and its approaches towards gratify the events, products and services.

- 1) To find out the most popular social networking tool used by library professionals.
- 2) To identify the reasons for which each social networking tool is being used.

- 3) To analyze the major services & determine the reach of presence promoted by library professionals through social media.
- 4) To identify the challenges that the librarians may encounter while managing social media platform.

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Various studies have already covered on the issues related to the diverse use of social media. Most of the researches have focused on to the use of social media in academic libraries, benefits of teaching & learning, up to date technology, tools, services components. Arumugam & Balasubramani (2019) analysed the impact & activities of various promotional activities done by using the social media tools in Engineering Colleges with respect to Tamilnadu. Vatter Z (2016) social networking technologies are creating a virtual environment changing the method of communication among library users and library professionals. Ahenkorah-Marfo & Akussah (2016) investigated the preparedness of academic libraries in Ghana for the use of social media in reference and user services. Young & Rossmann (2015) discussed about the usefulness of social media in the library committee. Zohoorian-Fooladi & Abrizah (2014) argued about the social media presence in Malasiyan academic libraries setting and also discovered that the librarians are using social media for promoting library services, organizing knowledge and for getting feedback from users against their inputs. Palmer (2014) analysed the forms of Twitter and Facebook activity that engage library stakeholders in social media conversations in the Australian context. Villoldo (2012) affirms that

communication with the library user is the service that has most benefited from the implementation of social media. The creation of profiles on social networking websites, the use of digital signage and thematic blogs etc are just some of the ways in which librarians are now communicating with patrons. (Hussain, 2012) also discussed the capabilities to promote synchronous or asynchronous interactions and communication through social networking sites like web-blogs, wikis, social bookmarking, media sharing spaces, RSS Feeds, microblogging sites, Facebook, LinkedIn etc. Mishra (2008) found that Librarians are using social media for professional development in their respected areas of interest. Moreover, the present age social networking sites are meeting the need of library professionals to prepare themselves for upcoming challenges in their fields. Library professionals should learn skills and knowledge to develop them to meet the needs and wants of the library users in the future.

#### **4. IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE COLLEGE LIBRARY DURING COVID 19 PANDEMIC**

Social media is a platform where community users, specific audiences get a chance to interact with the library. It is the way that we can pave the growth of libraries by thinking some unimagined ways to create categories of resources, services, platforms and drives. Also we can call these are technologies that transforming our workplace. It can be instrumental in disseminating information and providing library services to the library users as well as to the public in this pandemic situation. Responding to the need of the hour, libraries have been utilizing various social media tools.

Shafawi (2018) social media sites are considered as the easiest way to update library outreach programs and exhibitions; they can be used as online customer services and interactive feedback platform like the use of Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, Blogs, Widgets, YouTube, Flickr, and Instagram to name a few. Uniformly people are adopting new various technology applications like Google Classroom, Zoom meeting application, Cisco Webex application and many more for disseminating information to their clientele. According to platform survey on the current number of active users it has reported that approximately 3.96 billion people are engaged with social media. Social media sites are considered as the easiest way to update library outreach programs and exhibitions; they can be used as online customer services and interactive feedback platform. The application of social media is spreading day by day globally which allows users to acquire relevant information that would serve as an effective promotional means for academic libraries. Yalung (2018).

From early March of 2020 academic libraries are blindsided due to COVID19 crises. To achieve a victory over we rethink to provide multiple sources of digital content as well as learning and research interaction and developing robust search interfaces and web presences furnished around the globe during this transition period. To accessible the services actively run it has been necessary to keyed up social media platform. To accede the theme “Think digital, not physical” it has been focused too much on maintaining and optimizing to access the physical resources. The adoption of social media tools in this Covid 19 pandemic era can facilitate online services via

RSS feeds, Facebook and Twitter and can make the current awareness services to become relatively convenient for users to be abreast of recent trends in their choice of information needs (Friday & et.al 2020). It is worthy of elucidation is that the other social networking applications such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Zoom, GoogleMeet, Group discussion using Facebook Live, You tube live streaming, LinkedIn among users can serve as a useful communication as well as to link on emerging library services. By navigating this situation social media is the best option for delivering services of library. The use of social media platforms to promote library services and profitable librarianship; facilitated two-way communication and ease of communication among library users. Furthermore, it has provided a forum for feedbacks, increased the number of library users, and benefitted librarians from experiencing traffic which is generated as users visit their blog pages (Bakare 2018).

As of now, the commons are taught anything due to corona virus crises. It has galvanized new hopes, inspire new thinking and continued dialogue; gradually it has diminished our print collections, libraries have seen surmount the electronic resources and proceed to a mass digitization achieve, which are more plentiful and gain able with ease. Social media have provided many opportunities for the global world to participate and be part of the online community (Sobré-Denton, 2016). Because of social media, libraries have recalibrate with high quality customer service which has endowed more self service, self checkout, & touchless interactions. In the state of Covid19 emergency it has emphasized the importance of immediate access to linking of course content,

co teach, research consultancies. It is essential to ensure the students information literacy skills. Librarians have been trample on to develop alternative pathways for research dissemination through institutional repositories and support of open-access publishing. For enhancing online student engagement, libraries have already taken a leading role for introducing free homework systems, virtual labs, managing and materializing educational resources viz; textbooks, learning materials etc. By using technology students are amplified with digital literacy support by the libraries that perfectly positioned to assist development of online courses having extensive familiarity with tutorial and instructional video creation, course management systems. This has leverage and ensures students and faculty has the skills they need to succeed in this new online environment.

By developing online learning environments it has been developed voice recognition, data visualization, social gaming, social bookmarking, live streaming etc. In the library hub, social gaming is the activity that approaches informal learning. It makes everyone to perceive new thoughts, strategic thinking, encourage patrons to share their thought processes. One librarian is sharing with another librarian what they are doing, and much excitement has been generated in the other community. How things are set up, how activities are run in a positive and engaging way, how to drum up user interest, best communicate weekly with all the participants. Now a day's academic libraries are incorporating games and activities into new student orientation and into information

literacy instruction (Phetteplace & Felker, 2014).



**Figure: Social Media Landscape**

Libraries have had to rethink their websites now that they represent the primary path of interaction for patrons. Following usability principles look for library websites to evolve to be more user friendly, responsive and customizable and lead to be an touchless interaction. For marketing purposes, Web 2.0 applications can be used for that, librarians are using SNSs like Myspace and Facebook to promote library affiliation and community building; the virtual environment; Second Life, to create alternative library spaces; and RSS feeds, wikis, and blogs to post announcements and post other information' Deyrup's (2010).

In this outbreak. empathy among the respondents' social networks have increased and it acts as an effective tool for risk and crisis communication during disasters and emergencies (Eriksson, 2018), and individuals turn to social media to look for updated information on critical situations, as well as for getting emotional support (Valentini et al., 2017). Recent research indicates that people used social media to look for and share

information during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak, and to know about their health condition in an unparalleled manner (Li et al., 2020).

In this unprecedented situation of quarantines and social distancing measures, travel restrictions and business shutdowns, the operation of libraries was also subjected to change, ranging from minimal restrictions to full closure. Thereafter, librarians were faced with the challenge of ensuring uninterrupted service delivery to their patrons. Also, libraries were offered a unique opportunity to fight against the coronavirus infodemic (Gao et al., 2020). Furthermore, it can be said that these challenges like lack of training of library staff, lack of government or authority supports copyright issues are genuine that encountering the use of social media in libraries throughout the globe.

Today, the world has become a global village and everyone is access to the internet connecting to other people via social media. The librarians and LIS professionals are trying to make a bridge between the library sources, services and library users via social networks and focused their efforts on the promotion of their electronic resources, realizing the need to increase their investment in new technology tools and digital resources in the post-corona virus era.

## 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study applied a quantitative research to collect the data through an online survey. The respondents were targeted and approached through WhatsApp messenger and Email via an online Google form. The online form was limited to the professionals of Assam. The data compiled through primary and secondary data,

such as previously published articles, opinion regarding research on through social media promoting services of library from reputable publishers and journals. The results were coded, analyzed in Microsoft excel and presented with frequency distribution tables. It is also to add that there were 29 missing data were also reported, and later on deleted. So, the total number of 266 responses were tested and verified out of 295 colleges of Assam. The data illustrated the socio-demographic variables like age, gender, category, and formal education. Other tables discusses about the social media and seeking information, which shows whether or not the social media platforms are useful for accessing information. We have categorized social media platforms such as, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Blog and asking how professionals calculate their average daily use of each platform, and whether or not social media have helped them to aware of the outbreaks and how people are collecting information from social media about library services, events, and questioning whether the information gained has changed their knowledge or not.

## 6. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Table 5.1 briefly demonstrates the socio demographic status of 266 respondents in the study. The data show around (203) 76.32% are males and (63) 23.68% are females. The majority of respondents who are using social media to access information around 31–40 years (111) 41.72%, young-adult people who actively engaged with social media platforms within the age between 21–30 years old and 41–50 years old are also among the active users of social media in Assam (54) 20.3%. Professionals

above 50 years old are very rare in accessing information regarding Library event which is (47) 17.66%. The data also show the position status, which was categorized on the basis of Librarian (163) 61.27%, Assistant Librarian (56) 21.05%, and Library Assistant (47) 17.66%. Additionally, it is important to know the educational background, which is scaled by Post graduate, M. Phil, PhD. The results explained that the majority of respondents hold Post graduates which (199) 74.81%, PhD (40), while M.Phil has less education scale raised (27) 10.15%.

### 5.1 Demographic variables (n=266)

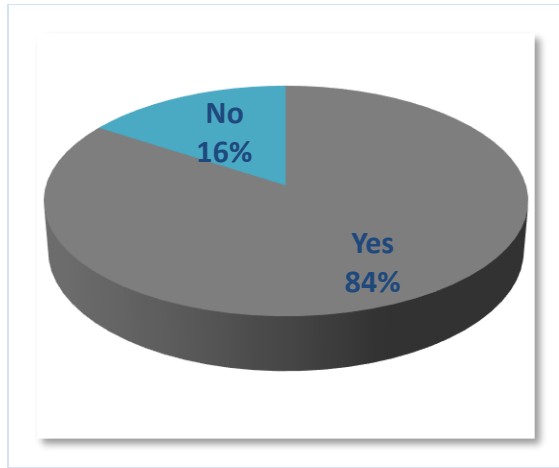
Table No 1

Variables	Categories	Count	Column N %
<b>Sex</b>	Male	203	76.32
	Female	63	23.68
<b>Age</b>	Between 21 to 30 Years	54	20.3
	Between 31 to 40 Years	111	41.72
	Between 41 to 50 Years	54	20.3
	More than 50 Years	47	17.66
<b>Category</b>	Librarian	163	61.27
	Assistant Librarian	56	21.05
	Library Assistant	47	17.66
<b>Formal Education</b>	Post Graduate	199	74.81
	M. Phil	27	10.15
	PhD	40	15.03

### 5.2 Engaged with Social Media

Figure No 5.2 explains about the library's engagement with any social media platform and the result of this survey is encourage us. Majority of college library are using social

media platform which is 84%. Only 16% library reported that they are not using any social media platform.



**Figure No 5.2**

Table No 2 discusses various general variables that indicate how social media is useful to gain or collect information about outbreak situation at the local or global level. Several platforms connected people to people for their online social life like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, Blog and LinkedIn. The results shows that majority 250 (93.98%) of respondents are using WhatsApp as a more accurate and current informative application for these days than other platforms.

Meanwhile Instagram 8(3.01%), Facebook 63(23.68%), YouTube 15(5.64%), Blog 41(15.41%) and LinkedIn 9(3.38%) are perceived as useful apps for the information sharing and awareness about the library information. Result of this survey surprised us

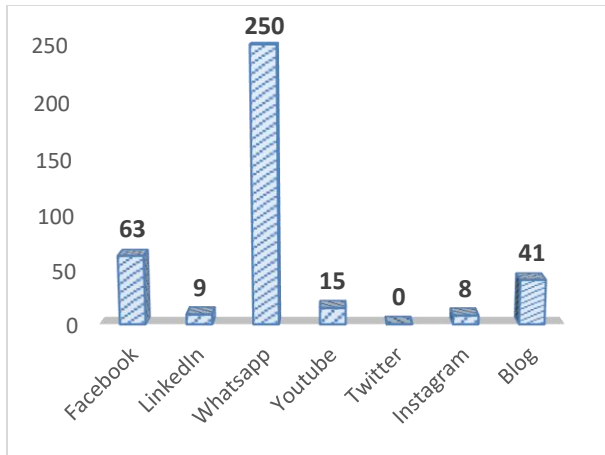
when it shows that no college library is using Twitter which is one of the most used social media platform in the world.

**5.3 Social media for information seeking (n=266) Table No2**

Variables	Categories	F	%
<b>Use of any social media platform</b>	Facebook	63	23.68
	LinkedIn	9	3.38
	Whatsapp	250	93.98
	YouTube	15	5.64
	Twitter	0	0.00
	Instagram	8	3.01
<b>Frequency of post on social media</b>	Blog	41	15.41
	Multiple times per day	118	44.36
	Once per day	14	5.26
	Occasionally	78	29.32
	Rarely	9	3.38
<b>An actual strategy over social media</b>	It varies a lot	47	17.67
	We have a written strategy	32	12.03
	We kind of have a strategy....but its normal	150	56.39
	We have no strategy	83	31.20
	I don't know what a social media strategy is	1	0.38

As respondents regularly use social media applications, which were scaled in hours, we gained the picture that respondent predominantly consumed “Multiple times per day” (44.36%) on their social media and are active on it. The rests confirmed that they used social media for “Occasionally” used (29.32%) followed by those who used as “varies a lot” (17.67%), “Once per day” (5.26%), and “rarely” (3.38%).





**Figure No 2 Social media platforms for seeking information**

For about the Social Media Strategy Table No 2 also shows responses received from the respondents regarding any written social media strategy. The result shows that (56.39%) of total respondents declared that they have a strategy, but its normal. (31.20%) respondents revealed that they do not have any written strategy. On the other hand, (12.03%) of total respondents stated that they do have a written strategy and (0.38%) respondents are not aware about social media strategy.

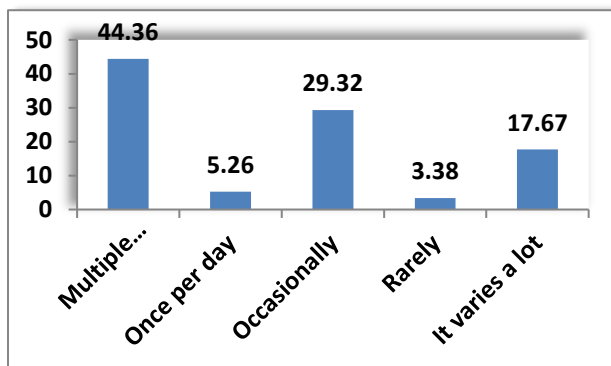


Table 3 depicts reasons to use social media platform by the college library of Assam. The respondents (75.18%) said that sharing pictures from library events & to promote library services which indicate a strong social

**Figure No 3 Frequency of using Social media platform**

### 5.4 Social media Services of Library activity & its policy

Reason	Options			
	Yes	No	Would Like to Start	No Plan to start
To promote library events	170 (63.90)	61 (22.93)	17 (6.39)	18 (6.76)
To share pictures from library events	200 (75.18)	22 (8.27)	29 (10.90)	15 (5.63)
To highlight library collections	163 (61.27)	39 (14.66)	29 (10.90)	35 (13.15)
To promote library services	170 (63.90)	61 (22.93)	15 (5.63)	20 (7.51)
To inform about library holiday closing/hours etc.	81 (30.45)	90 (33.83)	63 (23.68)	32 (12.03)
To share ideas/Information that support the library's mission	122 (45.86)	50 (18.79)	61 (22.63)	33 (12.40)
To connect with other libraries and/or community organizations	65 (24.43)	55 (20.67)	109 (40.97)	37 (13.90)
Provide reference or readers advisory services	38 (14.28)	84 (31.57)	103 (38.72)	41 (15.41)
Live streaming	-	122 (45.86)	74 (27.81)	70 (26.31)
Digital Notice board	96 (36.09)	60 (22.55)	69 (25.93)	41 (15.41)

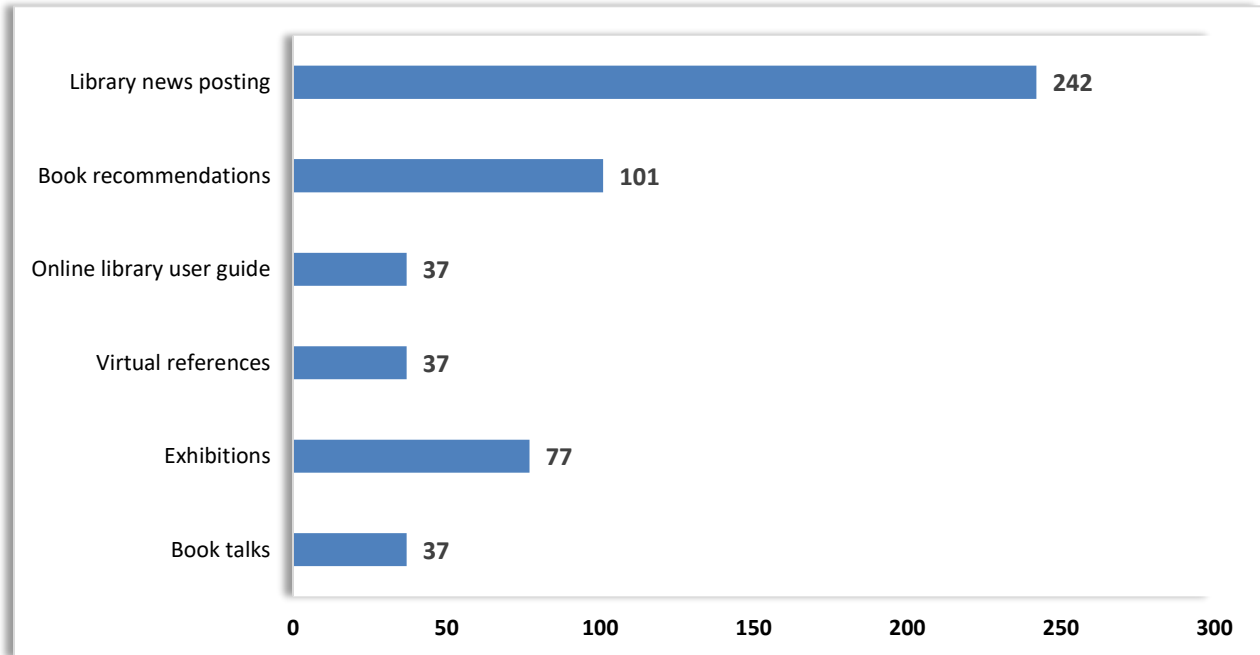
**(Table No 3)**

connection with the users & professionals. The respondents (63.90%) said that they have used social media to promote library events. To highlight library collection to be one of the reason as (61.27%) respondents has said. The

result shows that the respondents (45.86%) said to share ideas/Information that support the library's mission followed by Digital Notice board (36.09%), to inform about library holiday closing/hours etc (30.45%), To connect with

other libraries and/or community organizations(24.43%) and very less percent is said to provide reference or readers advisory services(14.28%).

### 5.5 Library Activity through Social media Figure No 4



*Figure No.4 Library activity through Social media*

Figure 4 discussed about the mostly used library activities in social media platform. As per the responses received library news posting (242) 90.98% is the highest used library activities in social media. (101) 37.97% respondents

revealed that book recommendation is also one of the popular library activity which is followed by exhibitions (77) 28.95%, online library user guide, virtual references and book talk (37) 13.91%.

## 5.5 Guidelines, Engagement and Challenges of social media Table No 4

Variables	Categories	F	%
<b>Policy for library's social media</b>	Yes, with guidelines only for staff	0	0
	Yes, with guidelines only for patrons	0	0
	Yes, with guidelines for both patrons and staff	127	47.74
<b>Engaged of Audience with Social media</b>	No	139	52.26
	Received a lots of Likes/Comments/feedback/retweets/responses from target audience	52	19.55
	Received some Likes/Comments/feedback/retweets/responses from target audience	119	44.74
	Received few Likes/Comments/feedback/retweets/responses from target audience	24	9.02
	We don't get much response at all to our posts on social media	45	16.92
	Not respondent	26	9.77
<b>Biggest challenges to managing library's social media presence</b>	Administrating social media, enough staff and time	132	49.62
	Assessing audiences based on their preferred platforms	95	35.71
	Managing user engagement	4	1.50
	Identifying channel - specific strategies per platform	6	2.26
	Managing trolling or tensions	6	2.26
	Finding an aggregation tool to manage multiple platforms	11	4.14
	Copyright issues on content, including images	18	6.77
	Growing your audience and followers	14	5.26

Table No 4 shows results about the social media policy guidelines that (127) 47.74% respondents replied with that they have guidelines for both patrons and staff on the other hand remaining (139) 52.26% respondents informed that they do not have social media policy guidelines. For about Audience engagement, the results revealed that (119) 44.74% respondents they received some likes/Comments/feedback/retweets/responses from our target audience. The rest are confirmed that (52)19.55% respondents received a lots of Likes/Comments/feedback/retweets/responses

from our target audience. Whereas (24) 9.02% respondents informed that they received few Likes/Comments/feedback/retweets/responses from our target audience. In the other hand (45) 16.92% respondents don't get much response at all to our posts on social media and 26 (9.77%) respondents did not respond to our question. Tabulated view of the results also confirms the challenges of the major constraints to social media usage including Administrating social media, enough staff and time (132) 49.62%, Assessing audiences based on their preferred platforms (95) 35.79%. There are many other challenges like

Copyright issues on content, including images (18) 6.77%, Growing your audience and followers (14) 5.26%, Finding an aggregation

tool to manage multiple platforms (11) 4.14% also respondents often faced.

### 5.6 Satisfaction Rate of Library’s use of social media Table No 5

Option	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Neutral
Yes, I think our library does a great job with its social media presence	137 (51.50)	-	-	-	33 (12.40)
Sort of...I think We could do better	138 (51.87)	28 (10.52)	-	-	14 (5.26)
I feel We are lacking in this area	100 (37.59)	119 (44.73)	-	-	-
I don't care about social media and don't think libraries should invest in it	-	-	140 (52.63)	126 (47.36)	-

In the questionnaire we asked whether they all are satisfied with their existing use of social media or not. We gave four statements and against each statement we used a five-point scale (Agree, strongly agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree and Neutral). Table No 5 presents data about the satisfaction rate where most of the respondents (138) 51.87% are agree with the statement that their library could do better. 137

(51.50%) respondents also agree with the statement that their library does a great job and 100 (37.59%) respondents agreed that they are lacking in this area. On the other hand, 140 (52.63%) respondents are Disagree and 126 (47.36%) are Strongly disagree with the statement that they do not care about social media and also do not think libraries should invest in it

## 7. DISCUSSION

In this study, the responds rate was very positive. It directs a good indication that majority of respondents were using social media for their library which improves the way people receive library information. Most of the LIS professionals are use social media for promoting their resources and services. WhatsApp is more accurate and current informative application for these days rather than other platforms which is followed by Facebook, Blog (50% each). Findings also shows that a, massive number of librarians are used social media applications in

multiple times per day (44.36%). In addition the result shows strong indications which reflect connection between users & professionals that (75.18%) librarians are using social media for sharing pictures from library events & to promote library services, library events. Also it manifest like a more humanitarian with the users and presumably more serviceable when they have some reference queries. As seen in the result, majority of respondents (90.98%) agreed upon an inhibited use in order to show up library news feeds posting activity. On the other hand,

49.62% respondents indicated for administrating social media, enough staff and time are the challenges for using social media platform in the library. Also assessing audiences based on their preferred platforms is the another factor inhibiting the use of social media platform as said by 35.79% respondents. While 6%

respondents are pointed out “copyright issues on content, including images” as a major privacy issues on the use of social media. Finding also indicated an aggregation tool to manage multiple platforms as challenges often faced by 4.14% respondents

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are some recommendations in line with the findings of the study-

- College libraries should develop their infrastructure facility i.e. power supply, ICT infrastructure, Internet connectivity etc to meet an uniform standard.
- College libraries should make their own library website to make one gateway that provides access to the delivery of digital documents and online resources.
- Librarian or other staff must be well trained in using of social media to provide reference services.
- Every college library should have create their own profile in various applications like facebook, Youtube, twitter etc.
- Aluminae, library association, any other organizations should play a role in popularizing the use of social media among the students and LIS professionals.
- There must to be add one short term practical program in the colleges for awareness and familiarity towards social media library services.
- By keeping teen’s fresh mind frequently arrange some library related activity and keep it in a live streaming show in facebook, youtube etc.
- Future research should be continued to investigate the usage of social media users by students or other general public.
- Arranged some library events, Book talk, author talk show to inculcate positive attitude among the library professionals as well as the users towards potentials of social media.
- The libraries can also send invitation to the users to join/follow their social media accounts.
- For operating social media services it is necessary to adopt proper guidelines policy.
- Libraries will need to develop new strategies for negotiating better deals with publishers and lobby for greater access to streaming media and ebooks,
- Social media use policy should be developed to create awareness, availability and implications to users.
- By stimulating the use of social media in educational purposes there should be published e guides via social media with active link to its full content to aware the availability of educational information.

## 9. CONCLUSION

Leading to a new evolution Social media play a tremendous role in the communication field. It is an excellent platform and it provides accessibility to exchange of knowledge, updating content, news and a mix of user services. This study reflects that the college librarian's are utilizing social networking tools in library service delivery across Assam is excellent. Respondent's attitude towards usage of social media tools and services for enhancing user services, communicating, interacting and sharing the resources is very remarkable. With a view to this study and continuing the trend of social media acceptability in college libraries, librarians need to be educated and technically trained also have the capability to resolve any difficulties or problem for the smooth functioning of social media activity. Since during corona outbreak, the college libraries of Assam have been keep support to their regular user by providing library services online who may not be physically present library. Social

media is an excellent platform that transforms the information into a handy accessible device which has made people more quickly to learned, share, gain knowledge, and keep updated. For this librarians should keep active themselves to full fill the needs of patrons as well as to maintain an effective relationship with library users. The challenges concerned to utilized social media tools for enhancing the marketing of library, assist to attract library users to the library environment. For this pandemic situation we are restricted to go out from home, people are working from home, and ensuring social distance. That's why people are spending more time on social media platform and insistent to get information up date with less time. Social media platform is very useful for the libraries to send e-contents, e-resources and provide optimum e-services for socio psychological healing, sharing public information & suggestions regarding virus, illness, pandemic updates etc available around the world.

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