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Social Media and Academic Libraries of Kashmir in Technological Era

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Social Media and Academic Libraries of Kashmir in Technological Era

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Abstract

This research considers how academic libraries in kashmir are using social media platforms for the pro-active awareness and training, to educate the LIS professionals as well as patrons. It aims to explore the pattern of social media usage by library clients and then highlights the current status of social media usage in academic libraries of kashmir for the effective and efficient dissemination of information.

Keywords: *Social media, Technological era, Academic libraries, Libraries in Kashmir.*

Introduction

Social media has influenced the personal and economic habits of individuals to an inconceivable extent. It has created a huge and dispersed community of media content creators, who use this platform to disseminate their content. Evidently, it not only provides ample opportunities for information institutions in general and libraries in particular, to communicate the information with the proprietors but also allows them to engage with the information users using free online resources. Social media nowadays is just a name for how the internet looks and particularly the way people use it. This change has been mainly due to the emergence of different social media tools and services.

Lee and McLoughlin (2014) defines Social media as a set of web-based tools and services used for a wide range of applications. They characterized Social Media as Web 2.0 resources that emphasize active participation, connectivity, collaboration, as well as sharing of knowledge and ideas among users. **Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein (2015)** elaborate social media as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundation of Web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Thereby, standardising Social Media as the Web 2.0 application for information exchange. **Kietzmann and Hermkens (2014)** in their study define Social Media as a technological concepts, which have brought about persuasive changes in business-to-business communication, business-to-customer communication, and customer-to-

customer communication. **Mansfield, H (2013)** in his research says, “social media makes our information search, accessing, organizing, creating, disseminating and analyzing more interactive”. In a general sense we can say ‘social media are media for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques’ (**Morgan, 2012**).

Some of the social media websites like Social Bookmaking (Del.icio.us, Blinklist etc) Interact by tagging websites and searching through websites bookmarked by other people. Social News (like Digg, Propeller, Reddit) Interact by voting for articles and commenting on them. Social Networking sites (like Facebook, Hi5, etc) Interact by adding friends, commenting on profiles, joining groups and having discussions. Social Photo and Video Sharing applications (like YouTube, Flickr) Interact by sharing photos or videos and commenting on user submissions. Wikis (like Wikipedia, Wikia) and also MySpace, Facebook, Hi5. Friendster, Orkut, Bebo and Tagged Interact by adding articles and editing existing articles.

The growth of social media and social networking sites has been one of the most dramatic aspects of the internet in recent years and its popularity has shown an upward inclination over the years. Twenty two percent of all time spent online is spent on social media sites, or one in every four and a half minutes and three quarters of global consumers who go online visit social media sites **Kietzmann and Hermkens (2014a)**. Social media has broke all the traditional barriers between information sources and its users. It is safe to predict that social media is here to stay and is now a priority for many organizations. The challenge for all organizations particularly those working in the information industry, is how to harness and exploit these communication channels to best effect. The emergence of social media has lead to a revolution that is changing the way individuals and organisations interact, and libraries are no immune to this. It has forced the transition of libraries from print to electronic and thereby influencing the overall user behavior. Most of the libraries, especially academic libraries are continued to be hybrid (print and electronic) libraries. Compare to other libraries, academic college libraries need special attention in developing collection, systems and services, keeping in view the changing technologies, user needs and information seeking behavior of the users.

Paul Miller (2012) in his work ‘Web 2.0: Building the New Library,’ says “Libraries should be seizing every opportunity to use social media for the dissemination of their valuable content, services and expertise out to place where people might stand to benefit from them.

This research examines how social media tools have been used by academic libraries of kashmir to disseminate the information in an effective and user-friendly manner. The paper is based on data

analysis of social media use by academic library patrons. It highlights the inefficiency of libraries to prepare their LIS professionals to communicate and engage professionally using social network media and also gives a comprehensive view of how are libraries are future planning the inclusion of formal social media roles in their institutions.

Literature Review

Research carried by **Suraweera, S. N., et al (2014)** under the title “value of social networking in libraries and information organizations in Asia and Oceania” highlights the inability of libraries to cope with the current trends of information technology. The paper draws a comparison between social media usage by the libraries in European and that in Asia. The study finds asian libraries lagging behind european libraries by a fair dimension in terms of social media usage for the dissemination of valuable information.

Berube (2013) in his study “Do You Web 2.0? Public Libraries and Social Networking” enumerates the pros and cons of using social media networking in academic libraries. He entrusts social media as a boon to libraries in the technological era for proper transformation of information from information source to information seeker. He not only emphasises over the importance of using social media in libraries but also encourages the libraries for their awareness among masses.

A recent study conducted by **McDool, Powell, Roberts and Taylor (2016)** on use of social media by the tweens and teens revealed the benefits and risks involved in the same. He attributes the positive values of social media as its ability to connect with friends and families, providing opportunities to engage in communities, enhancing creativity by developing and sharing artistic ideas, expanding the peer group and connecting with like-minded people for knowledge-sharing, connecting with friends forming homework groups, study groups, exchange ideas for assignments and projects, reinforcing language skills, writing expression, and many more. They also elaborate some risk factors in using social media. They included cyber bullying, online harassment, sexting, facebook depression because of lesser likes to their posts, privacy concern, digital footprint, and many more. They also set forth various recommendations for different business groups and information institutions like libraries how they can use such a platform to reach maximum audience.

Salmon, G. (2010) studies the information seeking behaviour of students of different colleges pre and post introduction of social media in their libraries. The author finds that an organised use of social media in dissemination of information has led an effective transformation of information

between the source and user. The library use as well as the resource use has improved many a times. Another study conducted by

Strasburger and Hogan (2013) analysed the impact of social media on the minds of library users. They also analysed the ICT skills of LIS professionals working in different academic libraries in puducherry and found most them lacking the essential skills required to disseminate the information through socail media.

Topper, E. F. (2015) in his work “Social networking in libraries” highlights the importance of using social media in academic libraries. He enlists the role and utility of different social media platforms like facebook, youtube, digg, flicker, reddit, wikipedia, myspace and others in systemic dissemination of information. He argues in his findings that social media can redefine the lost glory of libraries in technological era.

Piotrowski, C. (2015) recommends information institutions (schools & libraries) to expand the media education programs and use of technology like online learning etc for the promotion of positive usage of the social media for educational purposes.

Steiner, H. (2016) in his reseach “Reference utility of social networking sites: Options and functionality” highlights the role that social media networks can play in a library set up. He enumerates the need to train the LIS professionals with the latest ICT tools and techniques that will help them to revive the role a library can play in the current circumstances.

Objectives

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives

- To highlight the usage pattern of different social media platforms by library patrons.
- To identify the social media usage pattern in academic libraries of kashmir for the promotion of their resources and services.
- To testify the social media knowledge of LIS professionals in academic libraries of Kashmir.
- To identify the future coarse of action of academic libries in kashmir regarding the use of different social media platforms.

Methodology

To realize the objectives of the study, a questionnaire was prepared and data were collected through survey method of data collection. The population of the study was library patrons and staff of 20

degree colleges of Kashmir. Prominent among them include Amar Singh College- Srinagar, Womens College M.A road- Srinagar, Degree College Bemina- Srinagar, S.P College-Srinagar, Degree College Budgam, Degree College Baramulla (Girls), Degree College Pulwama (Boys & Girls), Degree College Shopian (Boys & Girls), Degree College Ganderbal and others. The collected data was tabulated and analysed to draw the findings as well as conclusion.

Data Analysis

1. Social Media usage by library users

The research reveals that among the surveyed library users, 96.5% were using different social media networks while mere 3.5% were not involved in any kind of social media activity. The comparative usage along with the type of platform they use has been depicted and represented by Fig. 1(a) and (b) respectively.

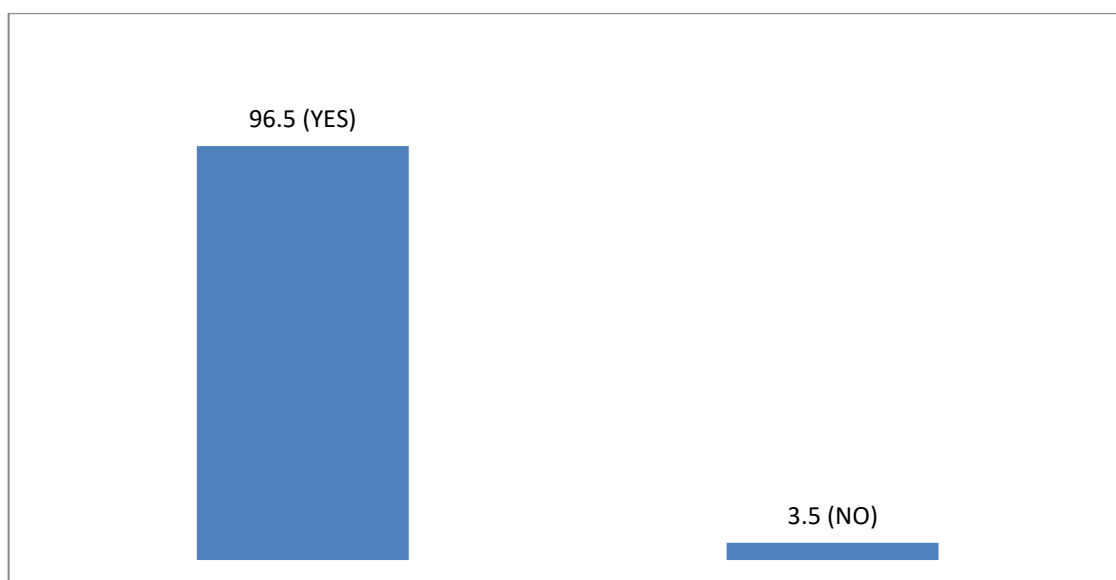


Fig. 1(a): Social Media usage

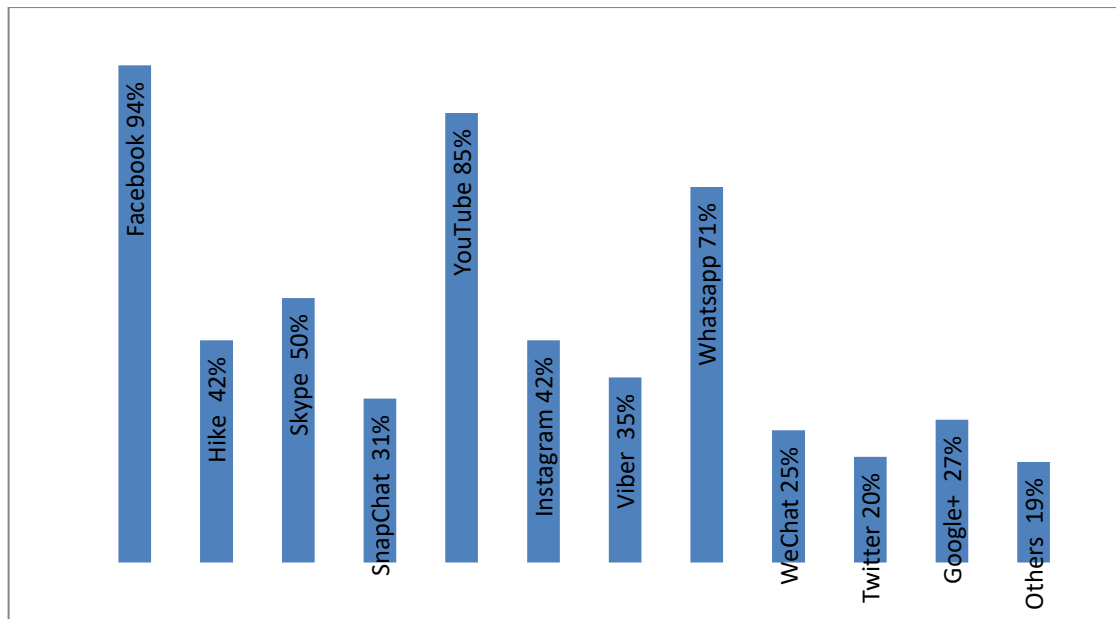


Fig. 1(b): Usage of different social media platforms

2. Time spent on Social Networking Platforms

Among the surveyed library users, at an average, 29% users spend more than 5 hours, 23% spend 4-5 hours, 17% spend 3-4 hours, 9% spend 2-3 hours, 16% spend 1-2 hours and 6% spend less than 1 hour on different social media platforms. The same is depicted in Fig. 2.

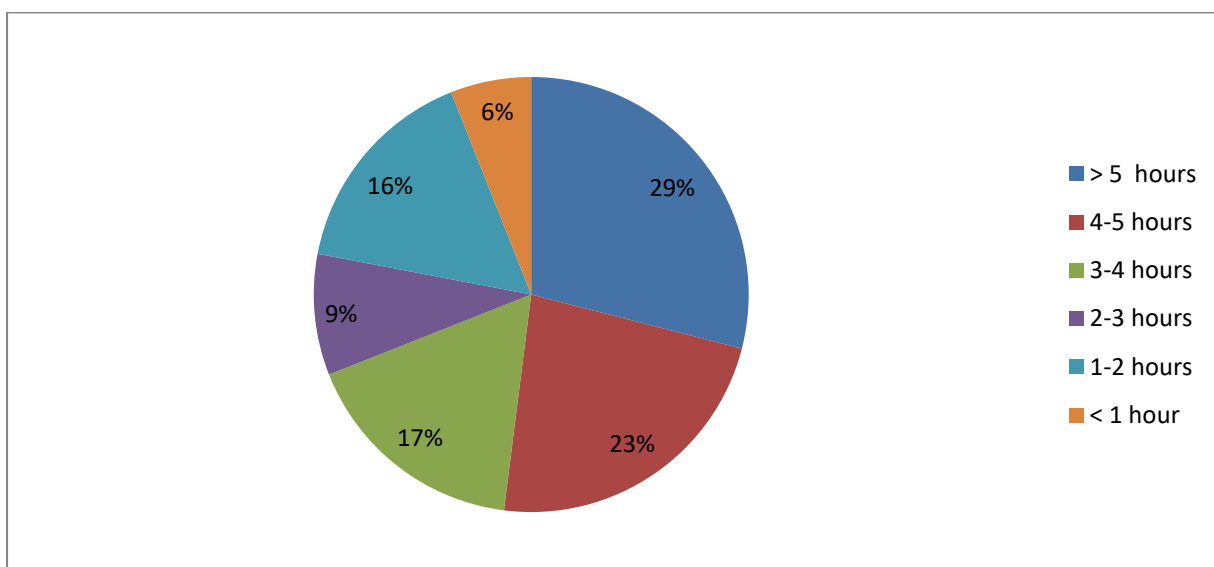


Fig. 2: Time spent on Social Networking Platforms

3. Reason of using Social Media Applications

The study finds that 82% surveyed library clients using Social media for chatting, 76% for accessing/downloading multimedia, 63% for sharing personal information (images, thoughts etc), 11% for blogging, 23% for contributing to different websites, 53% for educational purposes and 33% for other reasons. The graphical representation of the same gives a clear picture in Fig. 3.

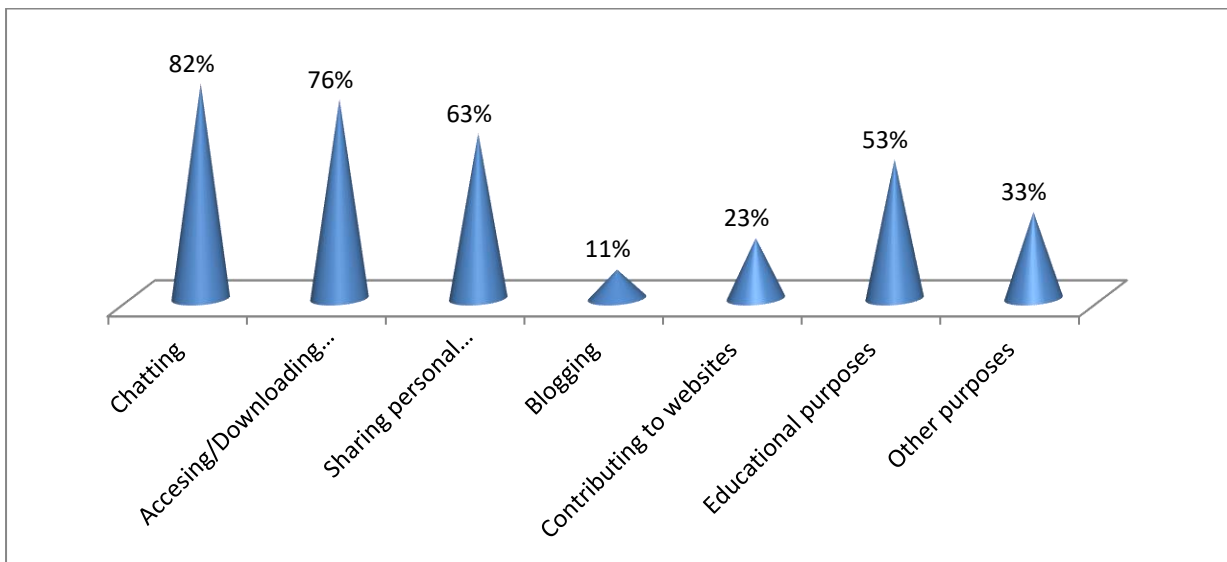


Fig. 3: Reason of using Social Media Applications

4. Social Media usage by Library

Among the surveyed libraries (20), 4 were found to be using three social media platforms viz Facebook, Whatsapp and Instagram. 3 libraries were found to be using Facebook only while rest of 13 libraries were not using any social media platform. Fig. 4 gives birds view of the same.

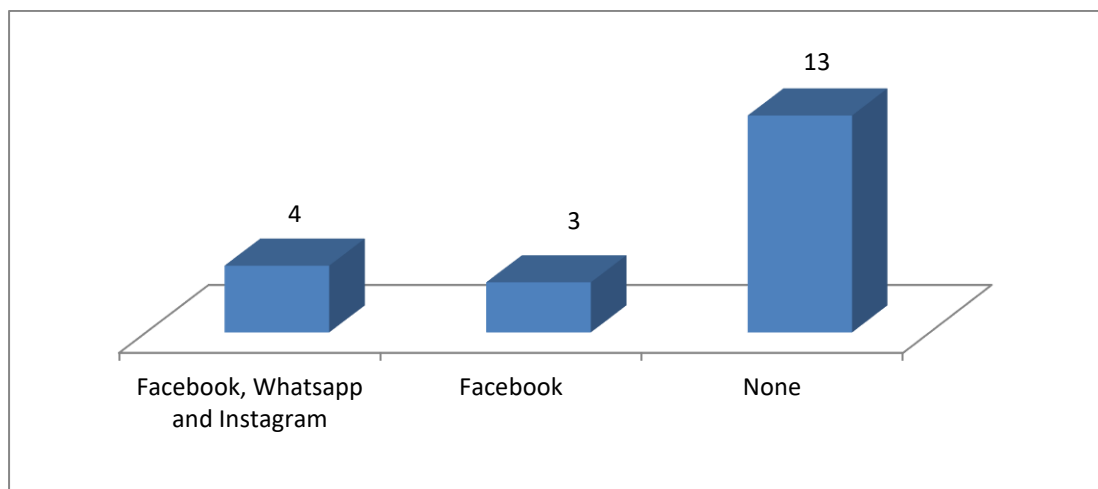


Fig. 4: Social Media usage by Library

5. Posts shared by Libraries

The study reveals that 15-20 posts have been shared by 2 libraries, 10-15 posts have been shared by 3 libraries, less than 10 posts have been shared by 2 libraries while no post has been shared by 13 libraries. Fig. 5 illustrates the same.

| S.No | No. of Libraries | No. of posts shared by each |
|------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 15-20 |
| 2 | 3 | 10-15 |
| 3 | 2 | <10 |
| 4 | 13 | Nil |

Fig. 5: Posts shared by Libraries

6. Awareness among users

Its highly surprising to know that mere 2.5% surveyed users were aware of their libraries using different social media platforms while rest 97.5% patrons were unaware of it. The graphical representation of the same is given in fig 6.

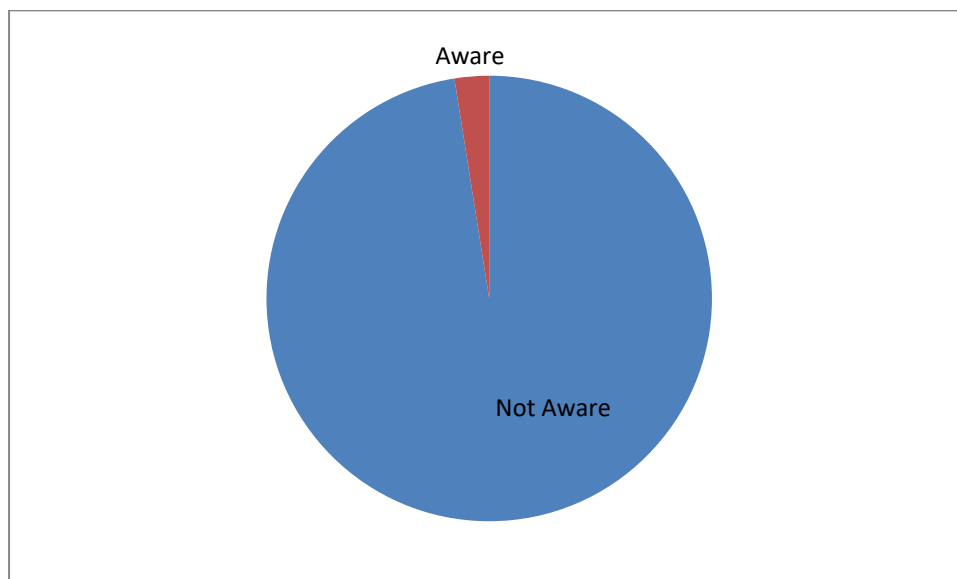


Fig. 6: Awareness among users

7. Social Media knowledge among LIS professionals

The paper finds an analogy between age of the LIS professional and their social media expertise. The analysis were sketched in four major age groups viz >50 years, 40-50 years, 30-40 years and <30 years. The awareness was found to be in among 5%, 12%, 39% and 100% professionals respectively. The pictorial representation is depicted in Fig. 7.

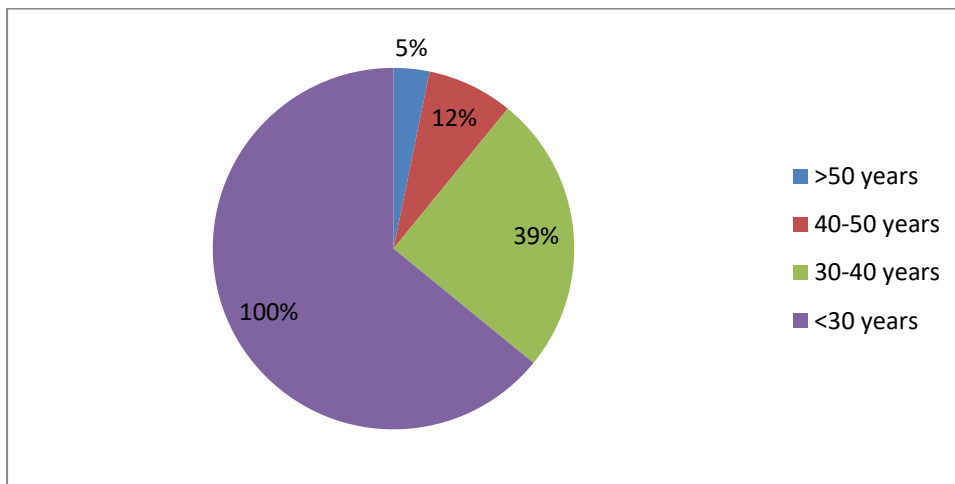


Fig. 7: Social Media knowledge among LIS professionals

8. Future coarse of action

60% of surveyed libraries (12 out of 20) were found to be planning to use different socail media platforms in order to disseminate the essential information and communicate with the patrons more effectively. However, rest 40% libraries (8 out of 20) thought socila media usage a wastage and irrelevant.

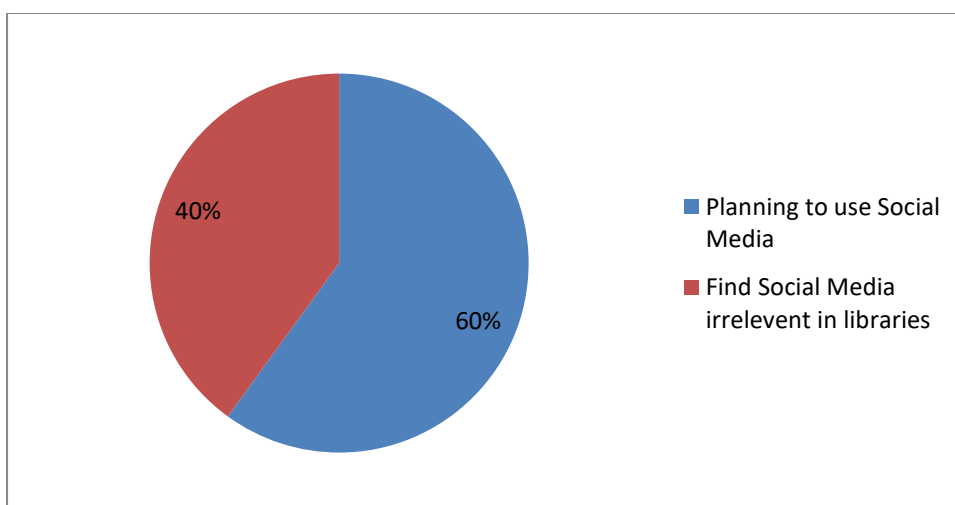


Fig. 8: Future coarse of action

Findings

The major findings of the study have been illustrated below:

- Majority of the patrons in academic libraries of Kashmir use different social media platforms regularly. This gives an insight about the impact that it has enforced over the lives of its users.
- The study reveals that although library users are using wide range of social media applications, however the majority spend most of their time on three major applications viz: Facebook, YouTube and Whatsapp.
- The library users spend a major portion of their time on different social media platforms. The time duration ranges from 1 hour to more than 5 hours at an average per day.
- Majority of the library patrons use social media platforms for chatting with friends and relatives which is followed by downloading media, sharing information, blogging, education and other purposes.
- Majority of the surveyed libraries were found to be not using any social media platform for the dissemination of information.
- Only 7 out of 20 surveyed libraries were found to be using Facebook, Whatsapp and Instagram for the marketing of library resources and services.
- The academics libraries that were using social media applications were found to be sharing negligible or very little information, owing to their least following by users.
- Majority of the surveyed users (97.5%) were found to be unaware of different social media tools or platforms being used by their libraries.
- Young LIS professionals were found to be aware of latest trends in social media in comparison to their older counterparts.
- Majority of the surveyed libraries (60%) were found to be planning to use social media for the marketing of their resources and services.

Conclusion

In the era of modern technology, the libraries (college libraries) of Kashmir are lagging behind in terms of utilizing the services of different IT tools for the easy dissemination of information. The present study reciprocates the same and advocates for adopting multidimensional approach towards social media in order to promote the library resources and services. This is not only going to

improve the visibility of the library but will also enhance the use and efficiency of service deliverance. Further, library professionals need to express their identity, in the era of technology, by acquiring the requisite knowledge and skills and providing the right information to the user at the right time, which in fact has been the motto of librarianship ever since.

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