

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)

Libraries at University of Nebraska-Lincoln

---

6-2020

## Library Services through Social Media during Lockdown due to COVID-19 with Special Reference to University Libraries of Assam

Shekharjyoti Neog

Gauhati University, shekharjyotineog@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

---

Neog, Shekharjyoti, "Library Services through Social Media during Lockdown due to COVID-19 with Special Reference to University Libraries of Assam" (2020). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 4262. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/4262>

# **Library services through Social Media during lockdown due to COVID-19 with special reference to University Libraries of Assam**

**Shekharjyoti Neog**  
Research Scholar  
Department of Library and Information Science  
Gauhati University  
Guwahati, Assam-781014  
E-mail: [shekharjyotineog@gmail.com](mailto:shekharjyotineog@gmail.com)  
Mobile: 9435896387

## **Abstract**

Libraries have been under closure due to lockdown enforced as a measure to tackle COVID-19. This study has been conducted with an aim to investigate the status of the University Libraries of Assam in providing library services through Social Media during lockdown. Structured questionnaire were sent to the University Librarians of 4 Universities of Assam ranked amongst top 100 universities of India in the India Rankings, 2019 by NIRF (National Institutional Ranking Framework). It is found from the results that WhatsApp is the most used social media for delivering library services during lockdown. The study also revealed that 'Access to open access resources' is the most delivered library service during lockdown. It was found beneficial by the libraries to use social media for delivering library services during lockdown. 'Low response of user' was found to be the mostly faced challenge by the University Libraries in delivering library services through social media during lockdown. The study suggests that the libraries should provide information to make their users aware about COVID-19. The study concluded that the library users should make aware about the availability of social media services of the libraries for optimum utility of the service.

Keywords: Library services, Social Media, COVID-19, University libraries, Assam

## **1. Introduction**

Looking into the emergency situation caused due to COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease 2019), Government of India initially called a nationwide lockdown for 21 days. Since then India has gone through 4 phases of lockdown [1<sup>st</sup> Phase: From 25<sup>th</sup> March to 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2020 (21 days), 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase: From 15<sup>th</sup> April to 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2020 (19 days) and 3<sup>rd</sup>

Phase: From 4<sup>th</sup> May to 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2020 (14 days)], 4<sup>th</sup> Phase: From 18<sup>th</sup> May to 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2020 (14 days). At present India has started unlocking with Unlock 1 from 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2020. During this pandemic situation all educational institutions are under suspension. As time and tide wait for none, the institutions have been compelled to carry out all the possible academic activities through online mode. Hence, different academic activities have been exercised remotely using various technology driven applications like Google Classroom, Zoom meeting application, Cisco Webex application and many more. Social media like WhatsApp, Facebook, etc. have also been used for assigning and submission of Home Assignments in various institutions.

In such a situation, libraries have a major role to play for supporting the academic needs of the academic fraternity by providing various resources to their users. Social Media 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 like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, etc. for disseminating information to their clientele.

This study aims to investigate the use of Social Media by the university libraries of Assam for delivering different library services in the pandemic situation caused by COVID-19.

## **2. Literature Review**

Ali and Gatiti (2020) in their study ‘The COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic: reflections on the roles of librarians and information professionals’ suggested that the university librarians should raise awareness through public health education, provide support to medical staff, researchers and provide traditional services to their regular patrons.

Ashrafi-rizi and Kazempour (2020), in their study ‘Information Typology in Coronavirus (COVID-19) Crisis; a Commentary’ found that challenges caused due to COVID-19 can be solved or reduced to some extent by providing the right information, at the right time and to the right audience. They also found that problems have been created by the production and dissemination of information by various individuals and organizations.

Cuan-Baltazar et al. (2020) in their study ‘Misinformation of COVID-19 on the Internet: Infodemiology Study’ found that the use of internet has risk to public health as misinformation produced by media are available in the internet and users can be misled

by such type of misinformation. They also suggested that the governments should develop strategies to regulate health information on the internet without censoring the population.

Hu et al. (2020) in their study ‘More effective strategies are required to strengthen public awareness of COVID-19: Evidence from Google Trends’ found that public response time to COVID-19 was different across countries. The study also found that the overall duration of public attention towards COVID-19 was short. The study suggested that governments should strengthen the publicity of COVID-19, sensitize the public about COVID-19, make them aware about the precautionary measures, and finally control the spread of COVID-19.

Ladan, Haruna and Madu (2020) in their study ‘COVID-19 Pandemic and Social Media News in Nigeria: The Role of Libraries and Library Associations in Information Dissemination’ found that the libraries and library associations have a role to play as genuine information source against all the fake news and conspiracy theories to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rovetta and Bhagavathula (2020) in their study ‘COVID-19-Related Web Search Behaviors and Infodemic Attitudes in Italy: Infodemiological Study’ found that majority of the searches in Google trends were related to amuchina, face masks, health bulletins, and COVID-19 symptoms.

### **3. Statement of the problem**

Due to pandemic situation caused by COVID-19, libraries have been under closer along with other academic institutions due to lockdown declared by the Government of India. But in any pandemic, libraries have to play a three dimensional role. First of all, for promoting public health awareness libraries have to disseminate information relating to preventive measures. Secondly, they have to provide information regarding the latest developments, research and literature for supporting research works. Lastly, they have to meet the core needs of their regular users (Ali & Gatiti, 2020). In such a situation, it is very essential to know the status of University libraries of Assam in playing that three dimensional role.

### **4. Scope and Limitation of the study**

The scope of the present study is limited to examine the use of Social Media by the university libraries of Assam for providing library services during lockdown due to COVID-19. The scope is further limited to 4 (four) universities of Assam (Table 2)

which have been ranked amongst the top 100 universities of India in the India Rankings, 2019 by NIRF (National Institutional Ranking Framework).

Table 2: Universities libraries of Assam under study

Sl. No.	Name of the University	Year of Establishment	Name of the Library	NIRF Ranking (2019) of the University
1	Tezpur University	1994	Central Library	29
2	Gauhati University	1948	Krishna Kanta Handiqui Library	42
3	Dibrugarh University	1965	Lakshminath Bezbaroa Library	86
4	Assam University	1994	Rabindra Library	97

## 5. Significance of the study

This study is significant as the findings would help libraries in formulation of proper policy and effective strategies for using Social Media for delivering library services more effectively during pandemic in the future.

## 6. Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to investigate about the application of social media by the University libraries of Assam for providing library services during lockdown due to COVID-19. The specific objectives lined up in order to meet the main objective are given below:

1. To identify the different social media used by the University libraries of Assam for delivering library services during lockdown.
2. To find out the types of library services delivered through social media by University libraries of Assam during lockdown.
3. To study the effectiveness of the social media for delivering library services.
4. To understand the challenges faced by the University libraries of Assam in usages of social media during lockdown.

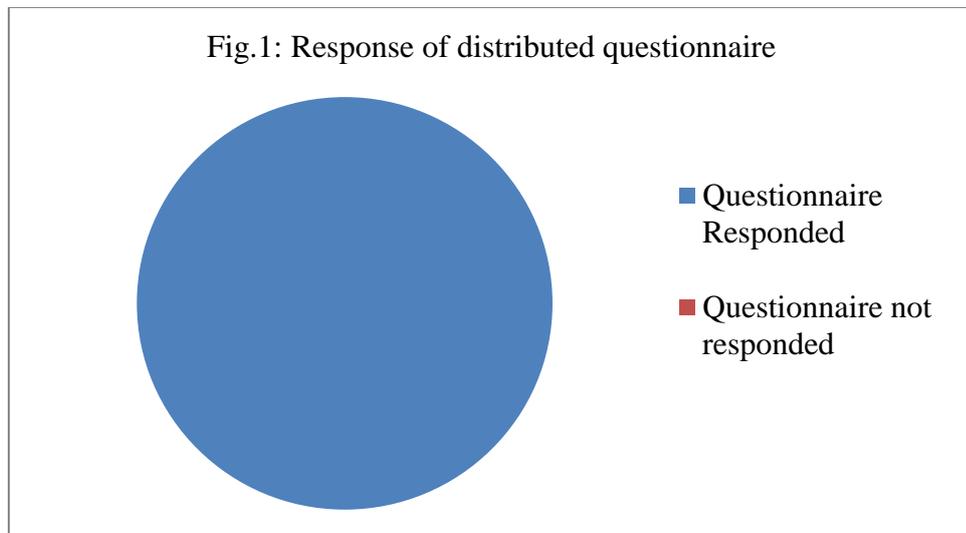
## 7. Methodology

Survey method was employed for carrying out the study. Structured questionnaire were mailed to the Librarians of the University libraries under study through e-mail as well as through WhatsApp.

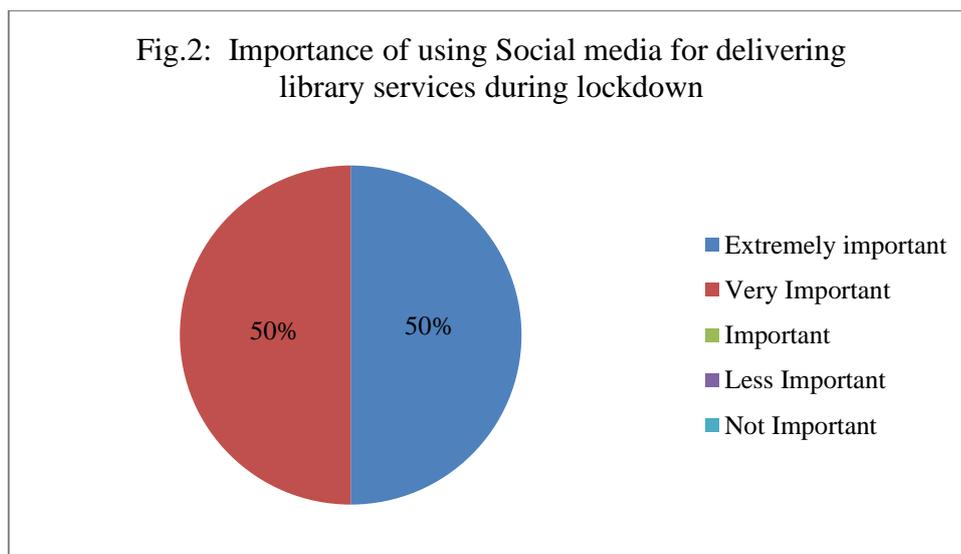
The collected data were scrutinized tabulated and analyzed using MS-Excel spreadsheet.

## 8. Data Analysis and Results

A total number of 4 questionnaires were distributed among the Librarians of the University libraries of Assam under this study and all the questionnaires (100%) were received back.



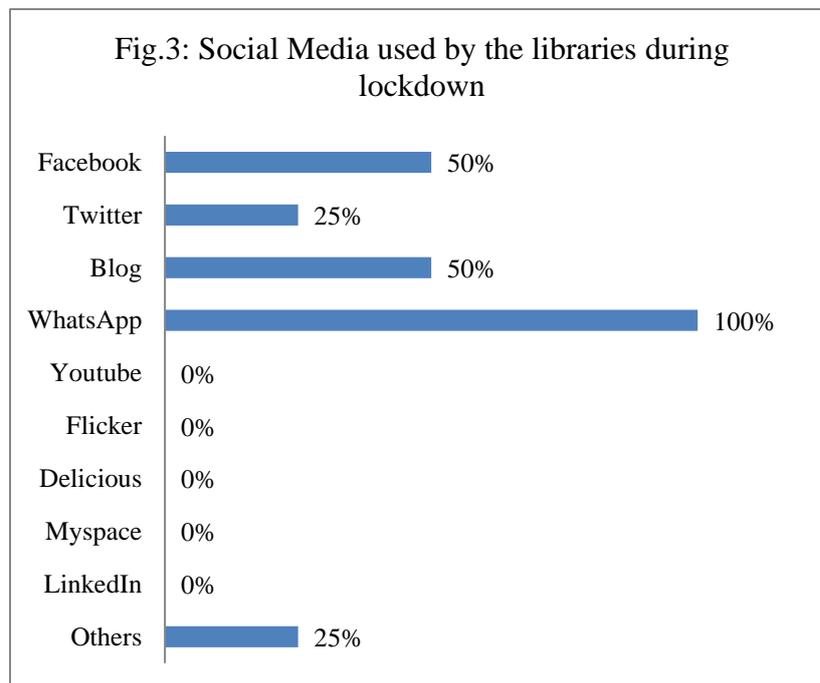
### 8.1 Importance of using of Social media for delivering library services during lockdown



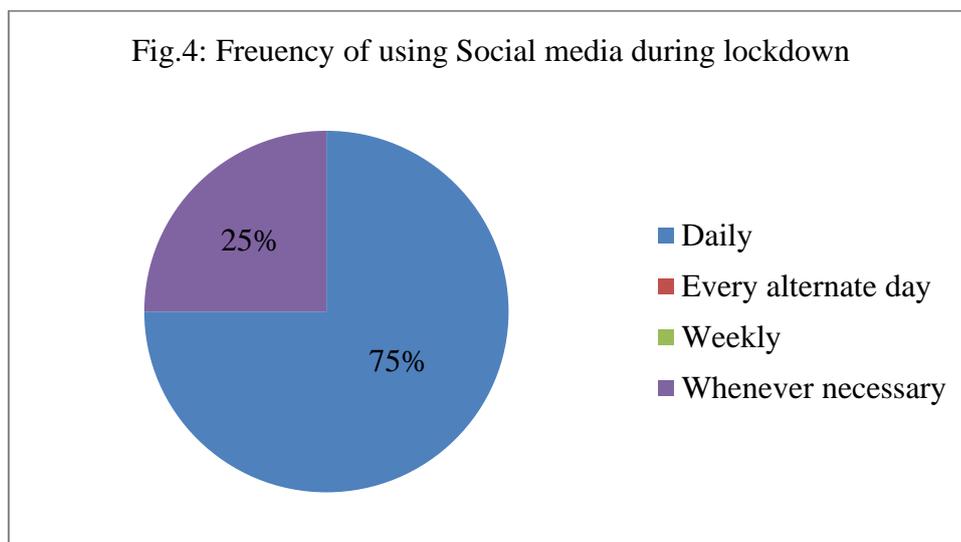
All the libraries considered it important to use social media for delivering library services during lockdown. According to 50% of them it is ‘extremely important’ and according to the other 50% it is ‘very important’ to use Social Media for delivering library services during lockdown.

### 8.2 Social Media used by the libraries during lockdown

It was found that Facebook and Blog have been used by 50% of the University libraries for delivering library services during lockdown. Twitter and some other social media platform have been used by 25% of the university libraries and WhatsApp has been used by 100% of the libraries during lockdown.



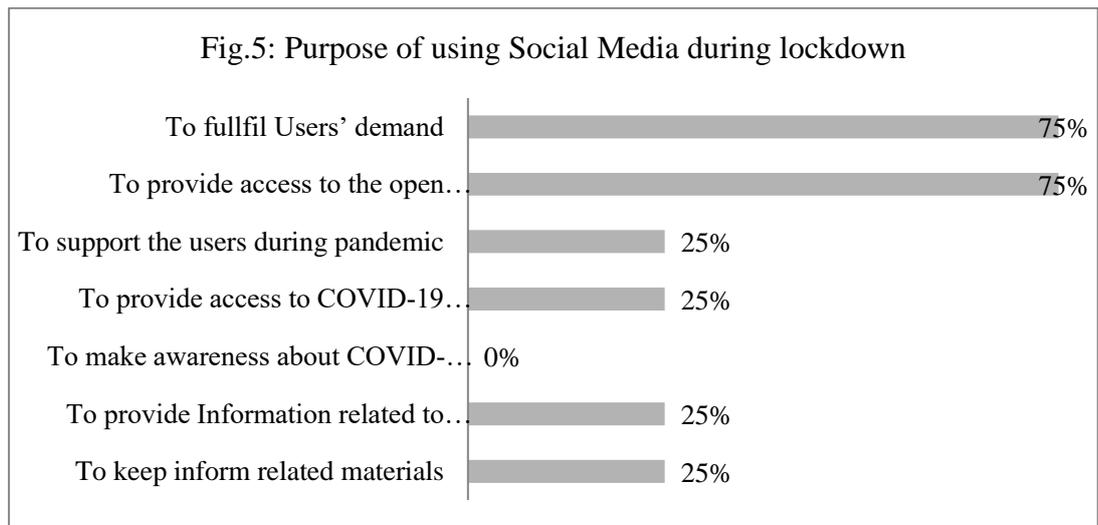
### 8.3 Frequency of using Social Media during lockdown



It was found from the study that 75% of the university libraries under this study have been using Social Media on daily basis during the lockdown due to COVID-19. On the other hand, 25% of the libraries have been using Social Media whenever they found it necessary to use.

#### 8.4 Purpose of using Social Media during lockdown

From the Fig. 5 it can be understood that 75% libraries under this study have been using social media with a purpose ‘to fulfill their users’ demand’.

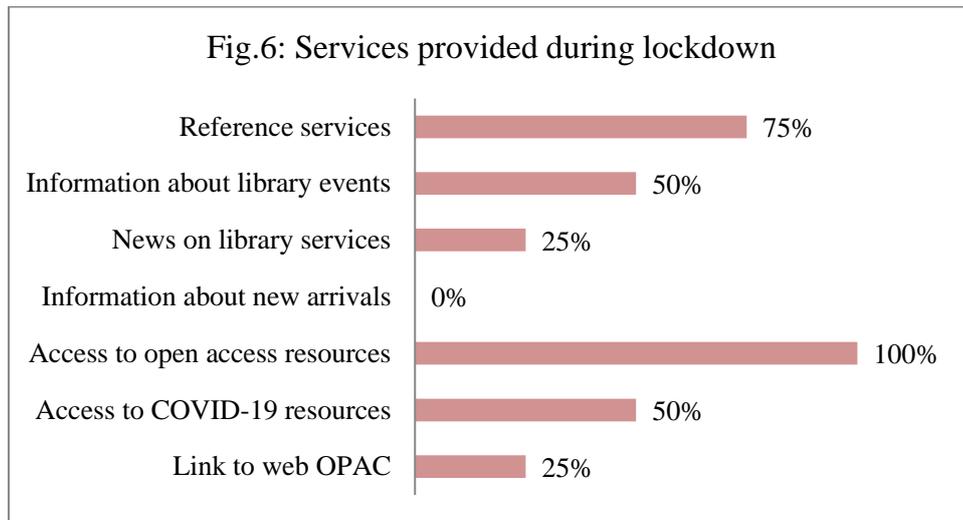


The purpose of 75% libraries is ‘to provide access to the open access resources’. 25% of the libraries have been using social media with the purpose ‘to support the users during pandemic’. The purpose of 25% libraries is ‘to provide access to COVID-19 resources’. According to 25% of the libraries, the purpose of using social media during lockdown is ‘to provide information related to academic and research purpose’. On the other hand 25% libraries’ purpose of using social media is ‘to keep inform the users about related materials’

#### 8.5 Services provided during lockdown

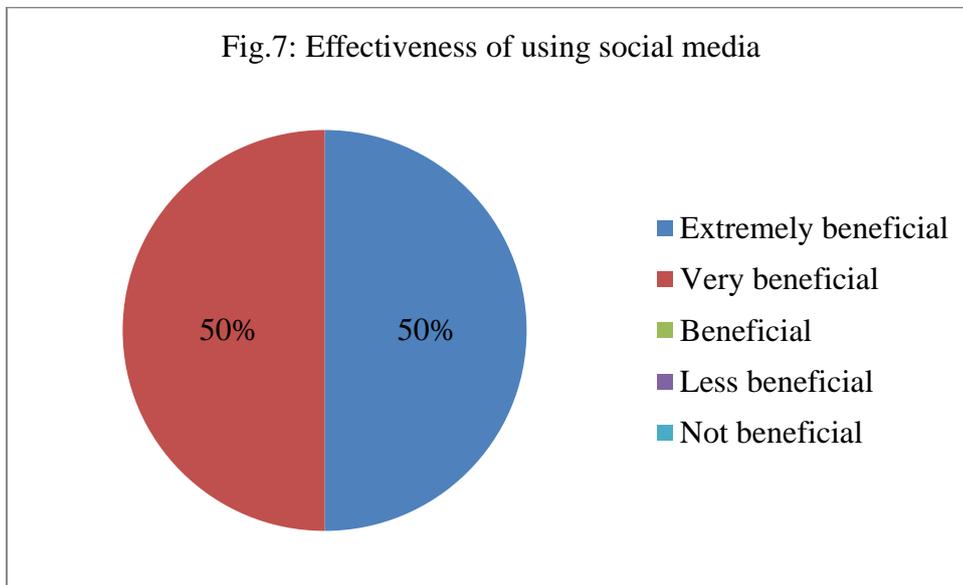
The services provided by the university libraries by using social media during lockdown have been represented in the Fig.6. It can be seen that 75% of the libraries have been providing ‘reference services’ during lockdown through social media. ‘Information about library events’ has been provided by 50% of the libraries. 25% university libraries under this study have been providing ‘news on library services’. ‘Access to open access resources’ has been provided by 100% of the libraries. ‘Access to COVID-19 resources’ has been provided by

50% of the libraries and 25% libraries have been providing ‘Link to Web OPAC’ by the use of social media during lockdown.



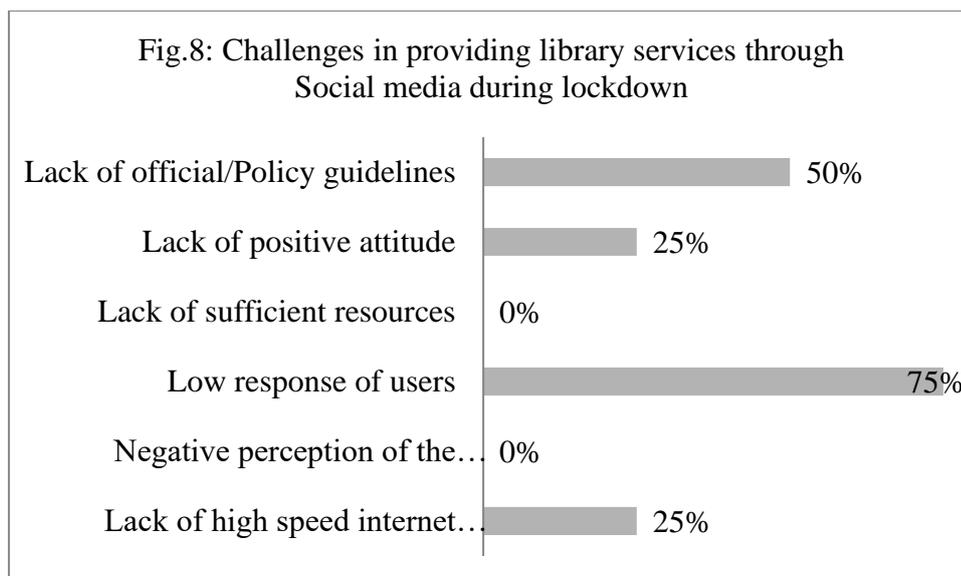
### 8.6 Effectiveness of using Social media during lockdown

From the Fig.7 it can be learned about effectiveness of the use of social media for delivering library services during lockdown. According to 50% university libraries, it is ‘extremely beneficial’. On the other hand, 50% libraries found it ‘very beneficial’ to use social media for delivering library services during lockdown.



### 8.7 Challenges in providing library services through Social media during lockdown

Challenges faced by the university libraries in providing library services through social media during lockdown have been represented in the Fig.8.



According to 50% of the libraries ‘lack of official/policy guidelines’ is the challenge faced. 25% libraries under the study found ‘Lack of positive attitude’ as one of the challenges faced in using social media for delivering library services. According to 75% of the libraries, ‘low response of users’ is a challenge in providing library services through social media during lockdown. ‘Lack of high speed internet connection’ has been pointed out as the challenge faced by 25% of the libraries.

## **9. Discussion**

From the above results it was found that WhatsApp is the most used (100%) Social media platform by the university libraries during lockdown. This is followed by Facebook and Blog (50% each) and next by Twitter and others (25% each).

The study revealed that none of the University libraries have taken up the purpose ‘to make awareness about COVID-19 among the users’.

As seen in the result, 75% of the libraries pointed out ‘low response of users’ as a challenge of delivering library services through social media during lockdown. While 50% of the libraries found ‘lack of official/policy guidelines’ as one of the challenge. ‘Lack of positive attitude’ and ‘lack of high speed internet connection’ have been pointed out as challenges of using social media by 25% of the university libraries under this study.

## **10. Suggestions and recommendations**

As we are going through a very crucial and difficult situation, the university libraries should take responsibility and serve the purpose of making their users as well as the public aware about COVID-19 pandemic.

The study has revealed that though the university libraries are providing various services for the users, they are getting low response from the users. To overcome this challenge the libraries should have to initiate some user awareness programs regarding their services through social media. The libraries can also send invitation to the users to join/follow their social media accounts.

The universities should adopt/formulate proper policy for implementing and operating the Social media based services. It is also important to inculcate positive attitude among the library professionals as well as among the users towards potentials of social media and hence optimum use of social media for academic and social development should have to be ensured.

Proper infrastructure like high speed internet connectivity should also be arranged for smooth delivery of services through social media.

## **11. Conclusion**

In every crisis, there is a need for information and providing information access to users is a social responsibility of the libraries and the information personnel. In this lockdown due to COVID-19, the University libraries of Assam have been extending their support to their regular users by providing library services and disseminating information. They are also supporting the researchers and also the public by providing specific resources and disseminating information on COVID-19.

## **References**

- Ali, M. Y., & Gatiti, P. (2020). The COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic: Reflections on the roles of librarians and information professionals. *Health Information & Libraries Journal*, 37(2), 158–162. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hir.12307>
- Ashrafi-rizi, H., & Kazempour, Z. (2020). Information Typology in Coronavirus (COVID-19) Crisis; a Commentary. *Archives of Academic Emergency Medicine*, 8(1), 19. <https://doi.org/10.22037/aaem.v8i1.591>
- Baloch, S., Baloch, M. A., Zheng, T., & Pei, X. (2020). The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic. *The Tohoku Journal of Experimental Medicine*, 250(4), 271–278. <https://doi.org/10.1620/tjem.250.271>
- Cuan-Baltazar, J. Y., Muñoz-Perez, M. J., Robledo-Vega, C., Pérez-Zepeda, M. F., & Soto-

- Vega, E. (2020). Misinformation of COVID-19 on the Internet: Infodemiology Study. *JMIR Public Health and Surveillance*, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.2196/18444>
- Habibzadeh, P., & Stoneman, E. K. (2020). The Novel Coronavirus: A Bird's Eye View. *The International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 11(2), 65–71. <https://doi.org/10.15171/ijoem.2020.1921>
- Harapan, H., Itoh, N., Yufika, A., Winardi, W., Keam, S., Te, H., Megawati, D., Hayati, Z., Wagner, A. L., & Mudatsir, M. (2020). Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): A literature review. *Journal of Infection and Public Health*, 13(5), 667–673. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jiph.2020.03.019>
- Hollander, J. E., & Carr, B. G. (2020). Virtually Perfect? Telemedicine for Covid-19. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 382(18), 1679–1681. <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMp2003539>
- Hu, D., Lou, X., Xu, Z., Meng, N., Xie, Q., Zhang, M., Zou, Y., Liu, J., Sun, G., & Wang, F. (2020). More effective strategies are required to strengthen public awareness of COVID-19: Evidence from Google Trends. *Journal of Global Health*, 10(1), 011003. <https://doi.org/10.7189/jogh.10.011003>
- IFLA -- COVID-19 and the Global Library Field. (n.d.). Retrieved 18 May 2020, from <https://www.ifla.org/covid-19-and-libraries>
- Ladan, A., Haruna, B., & Madu, A. U. (2020). COVID-19 Pandemic and Social Media News in Nigeria: The Role of Libraries and Library Associations in Information Dissemination. 7(2), 9.
- Online library use soars during lockdown as bookworms go digital | Blog Preston. (n.d.). Retrieved 18 May 2020, from <https://www.blogpreston.co.uk/2020/05/online-library-use-soars-during-lockdown-as-bookworms-go-digital/>
- Paik, C. (n.d.). User Oriented Service in Pandemic Situation in Graduate College in West Bengal | Purakala with ISSN 0971-2143 is an UGC CARE Journal. Retrieved 18 May 2020, from <https://www.purakala.com/index.php/0971-2143/article/view/252>
- Read all about it: Library services continue despite lockdown | City Of Wolverhampton Council. (n.d.). Retrieved 18 May 2020, from <https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/news/read-all-about-it-library-services-continue-despite-lockdown>
- Rovetta, A., & Bhagavathula, A. S. (2020). COVID-19-Related Web Search Behaviors and Infodemic Attitudes in Italy: Infodemiological Study. *JMIR Public Health and Surveillance*, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.2196/19374>

Surrey County Council, C. H. (n.d.). *Use your library on lockdown* (Surrey, England, UK) [Text]. Retrieved 18 May 2020, from <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/surrey-matters/shelf-life/use-your-library-on-lockdown>

*The Importance of Libraries in Lockdown* | Newcastle City Council. (n.d.). Retrieved 18 May 2020, from <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/libraries-culture/newcastle-libraries-blog/importance-libraries-lockdown>