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Library Services Through Social Networking Sites: Perception and Attitudes of Research Scholars of Central Universities of Assam

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Abstract

This study has been carried out with an aim to explore the perception and attitudes of Research Scholars of Central Universities of Assam towards library services through Social Networking Sites. A structured questionnaire was distributed among 250 Research Scholars of the Central Universities of Assam. It is found from the results that 93.55% Research SCholars have positive perception regarding use of SNSs for providing library services to the users. The study revealed that Facebook is the most preferred SNS preferred by 58.98% respondents and Delicious is the least preferred SNS preferred only by 0.92% respondents. It was found from the study that only 19.36% research scholars have been following their libraries' SNSs since a period of '1 year-5 years' and 39.17% have 'not yet' followed. The study also revealed that only 24.42% research scholars regarded SNSs of their university libraries as 'very active', while activeness of library's SNS was 'not known' to 38.71% of the research scholars. The study resulted that 'News on library services' is the mostly chosen motivating factor of the library's SNSs chosen by 44.24% respondents. The study concluded that the libraries shall have to be active, motivating and beneficial for the users in delivering services through SNSs for the purpose of reaching more users beyond the physical boundaries of the library premises.

Keywords: Library services, Social Networking Sites, Central Universities, University libraries, Assam.

1. Introduction

With the emergence of Social Networking Sites (SNSs), people have become more gadget freaks and tech savvy than ever before. At present at least 3.8 billion people out of total 7.75 billion population of the world are active on Social media (Digital 2020: Global digital overview). In such an environment where library users wish to access

information on the go, libraries are adopting SNSs for promoting and delivering their resources and services to the users in a convenient and easily accessible way. Implementation of SNSs also enhances the visibility of the library and hence increases the reach of the libraries by attracting more numbers of potential users.

To become successful, it is necessary for any service to get positive response from its user community. This study has been carried out with an objective to investigate the perception and attitudes of the research scholars of the Central Universities of Assam.

2. Literature Review

Brady [et.al.] (2010) found that students have positive attitudes towards SNSs as tools for teaching and learning. The study also observed that educational SNSs could be used most effectively for online communications among students in distance learning courses.

Haneefa and Sumitha (2011) found that most of the students were aware of SNSs and they use these sites for friendly communication. Though lack of security and privacy were indicated as issues of SNSs, the students have showed positive attitudes towards social networking sites.

Hamade (2013) found that most of the students use Facebook and Twitter and majority of them only view the sites instead of posting message. The most of the respondents expressed that inspite of having some issues with SNSs, a number of positive impacts are also there in SNSs.

Verma and Devi (2016) found that the majority of the students are aware of SNSs. The study also revealed that Facebook and YouTube are the most commonly used SNSs by the students of Mizoram University.

Tham and Ahmed (2011) found that younger students have negative perception on the effect of SNSs on academic performance. The findings of the study revealed that perceptions of the students on the influence of SNS were consistent with the actual effects.

Park (2010) found three groups of users with distinct patterns of SNS use. It was found that the profile service was mostly used by the undergraduates, while the community

service was mostly used by the graduates and most of the faculty members were not active users. The study identified six factors affecting this different usage patterns of SNSs.

Oye, Helou and Ab.Rahim (2012) found that most of the younger students use SNSs mainly for socializing activities than for academic activities. The study also revealed that most of the students also believe that the SNSs have more positive impact on their academic performance.

Neog(2020) found that a number of library services are offered through SNSs despite of facing some challenges. The study concluded that users should be made aware about the availability of SNS based services.

3. Statement of the problem

It is observed that university libraries of the Central Universities of Assam have been using the social networking sites for promoting and delivering library resources and services. It is also observed that the university libraries of the Central Universities of Assam are not that much active that it can attract their users towards their Social Networking Site based activities.

Therefore this study has been taken up to investigate the perception and attitudes of research scholars towards library services through Social Networking Sites in the libraries of Central Universities in Assam.

4. Scope and Limitation of the study

The scope of the present study is limited to examine the perception and attitudes of research scholars towards library services through Social Networking Sites (SNSs) provided by the university libraries of Central Universities of Assam.

5. Significance of the study

This study is significant for the libraries as the findings of the study would enable libraries to formulate proper and effective strategies for addressing the issues and meet the expectations of the research scholars more effectively in the future regarding library services through social networking sites.

6. Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to investigate about the perception and attitudes of research scholars towards library services through social networking sites provided by the University libraries of Central Universities of Assam. Followings are the specific objectives lined up in order to meet the main objective:

- To analyze the perception of the respondents about library services through SNS
- To analyze the perception of the respondents about importance of SNS for libraries
- To find out the awareness of the research scholars about usage of SNS by library
- To find out the users' preferred SNSs.
- To analyze the activeness of library SNS
- To know about the motivating factor of library SNS
- To know about the Expected/Preferred library services through SNS
- To know about the benefits from library SNS

7. Methodology

The following methodology was used for the study.

Method used for the study: Survey method was applied for carrying out the study.
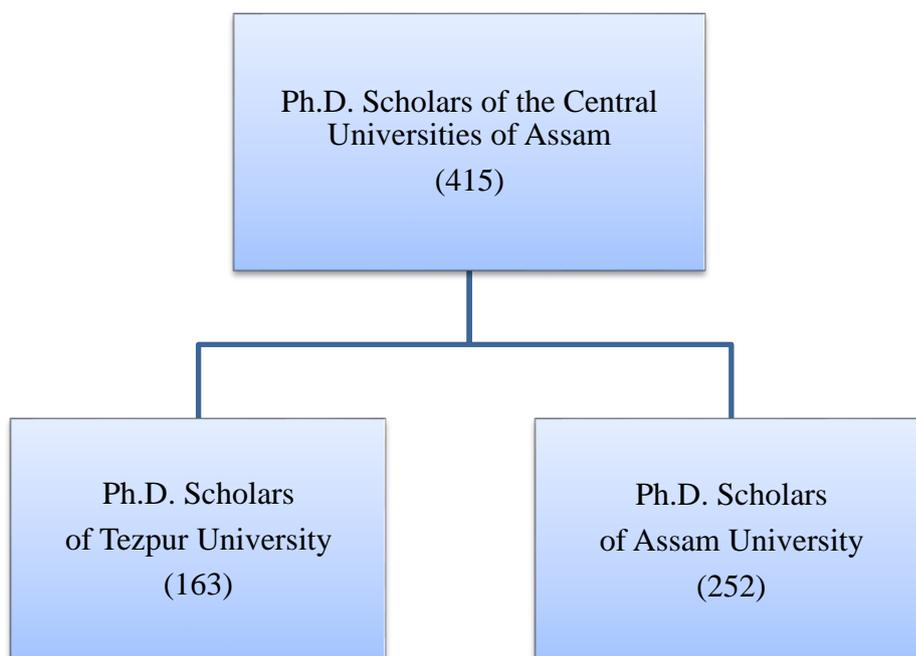
Population of the study: The population of the study was the Ph.D. Scholars of the Central Universities of Assam enrolled in the academic session 2018-2019.

Structured Questionnaire was designed for the purpose of collection of data.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The Stratified random sampling has been applied in this study. A total of 250 structured questionnaires were distributed (60.24% of the total population) among the research scholars met with in the library premises as well as through social media and e-mail. Total 217 (86.8% response) valid responses were received which is 52.28% of the total population.

Figure 1: Total Number of Ph.D. Scholars of the Central Universities of Assam enrolled in the academic session 2018-2019.

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              ┌─────────────────────────────┐
              │ Ph.D. Scholars of the Central│
              │   Universities of Assam      │
              │          (415)               │
              └──────────────┬──────────────┘
              ┌──────────────┴──────────────┐
    ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
    │   Ph.D. Scholars     │      │   Ph.D. Scholars     │
    │ of Tezpur University │      │ of Assam University  │
    │        (163)         │      │        (252)         │
    └─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘
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The collected data have been scrutinized tabulated and analyzed separately using MS-Excel spreadsheet.

8. Data Analysis and Results

The structured questionnaire designed for data collection was distributed among the research scholars by personal visit in the university library and using Social media and e-mail. The details of the responses are given in the Table 1.

Table 1: Responses received from the Ph.D. scholars of the university libraries of Assam under study

| Mode of questionnaire distribution	Questionnaire distributed	Response received	Percentage
Social Media/e-mail/Physical visit	250	217	86.8%

The data received on different parameters from the respondents have been analyzed, interpreted and presented as under.

8.1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are shown in the following figures.
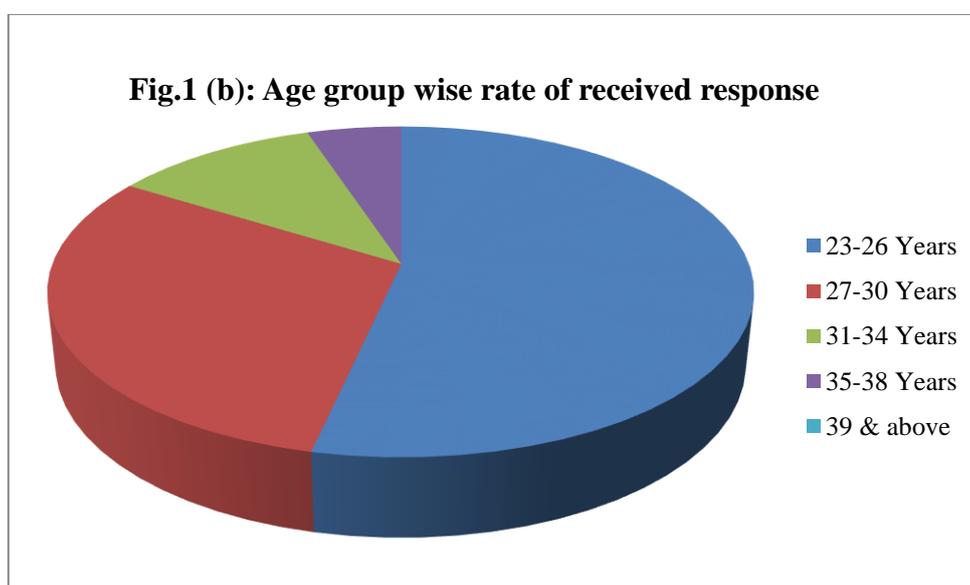
8.1.1   Gender wise distribution of respondents

The gender wise rate of received responses has been described in the Fig.1 (a). Out of the total 217 respondents 39.63% (86 Nos.) respondents are male and 60.37% (131 Nos.) respondents are female.

Fig. 1 (a): Genderwise rate of received response

Male

Female
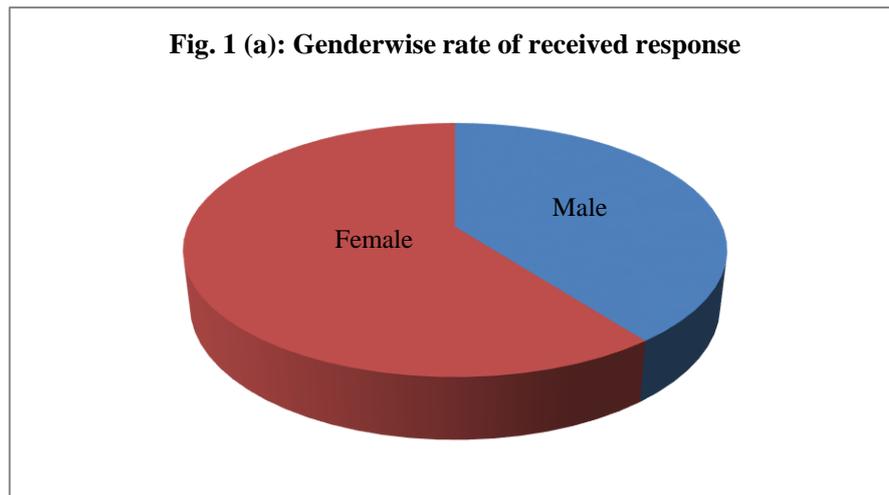
8.1.2   Age group wise distribution of respondents

Fig.1 (b) shows the age wise distribution of received responses. 53.45% (116 Nos.) of the total respondents are in the age group of 23-26 years. 30.41% (66 Nos.) of the respondents are of 27-30 years of age. 11.06% (24) respondents are in the age group of 31-34 years. 5.06% (11 Nos.) respondents are in the group of 35-38 years.

Fig.1 (b): Age group wise rate of received response

■ 23-26 Years
■ 27-30 Years
■ 31-34 Years
■ 35-38 Years
■ 39 & above

8.1.3 Discipline wise distribution of respondents

Discipline wise distribution of respondents can be seen in the Fig.1 (c). The figure shows that 17.05% (37 Nos.) of the respondents are from Commerce and Business Studies discipline, 56.68% (123 Nos.) respondents are from Humanities and Social Science discipline and 26.26% (57 Nos.) respondents are from Science & Technology discipline.

Fig. 1 (c): Discipline wise rate of received response

Legend:
- Commerce & Business Studies
- Humanities & Social Science
- Science & Technology
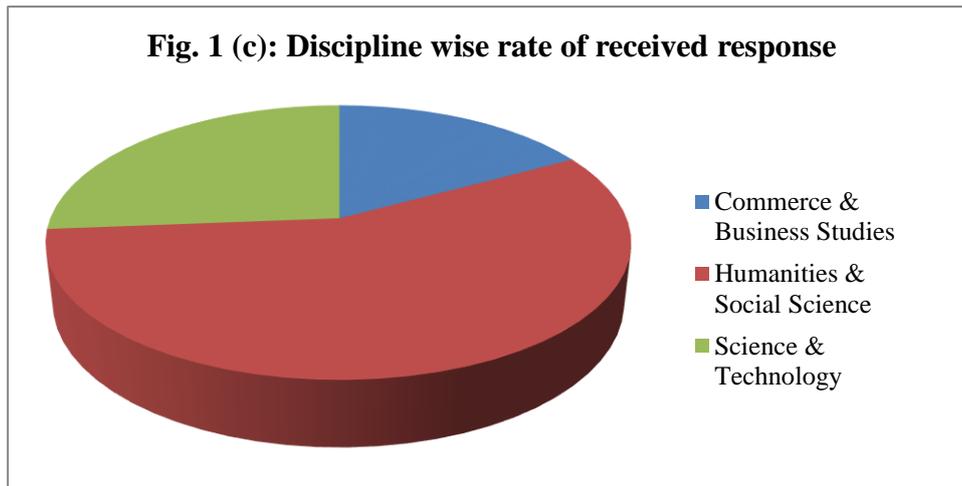
8.2 Perception on library services through SNS

Perception of the research scholars of the surveyed universities on use of SNS for providing library services are presented in the Fig.2.

Fig.2: Perception on library services through SNS

Legend:
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- No idea
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
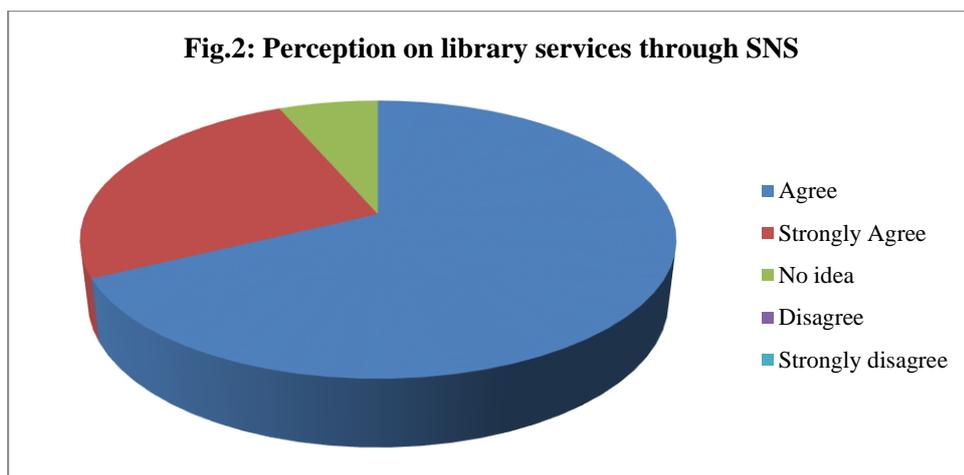
93.55% (203 Nos.) of the total respondents showed positive perception and 6.45% (14 Nos.) respondents had no perception regarding the use of SNS for providing library services.

Out of the total of 93.55% respondents having positive perception, 67.75% respondents agreed and 25.8% respondents strongly agreed to the statement that 'SNS can be used to provide library services to the users'.

8.3 Perception about importance of SNS for libraries

The perceptions of the research scholars of the surveyed universities about the importance of SNS for libraries have been described in the Fig.4.

Fig.3:Importance of SNS for libraries

Legend:
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- No idea
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
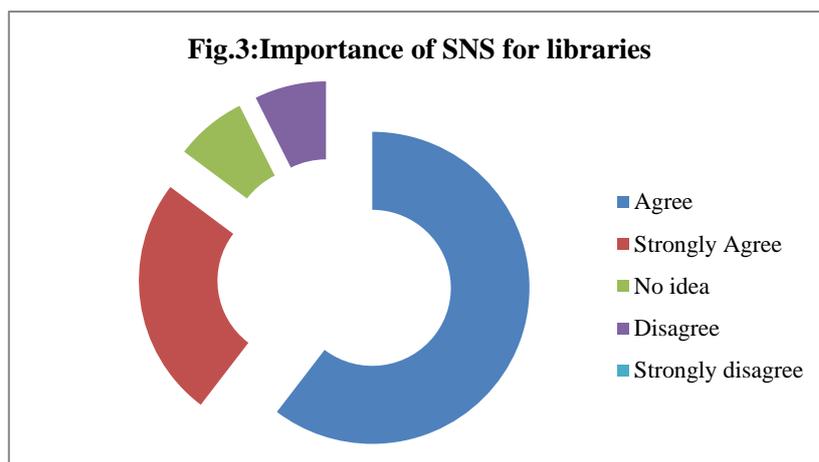
85.26% of the total respondents expressed positive perception, 7.37% respondents have negative perception and the other 7.37% respondents have no idea about the importance of SNS for libraries.

Out of the 85.26% respondents having positive perception, 60.37% respondents agreed and 24.89% respondents strongly agreed to the statement that 'use of SNSs is important for the libraries'.
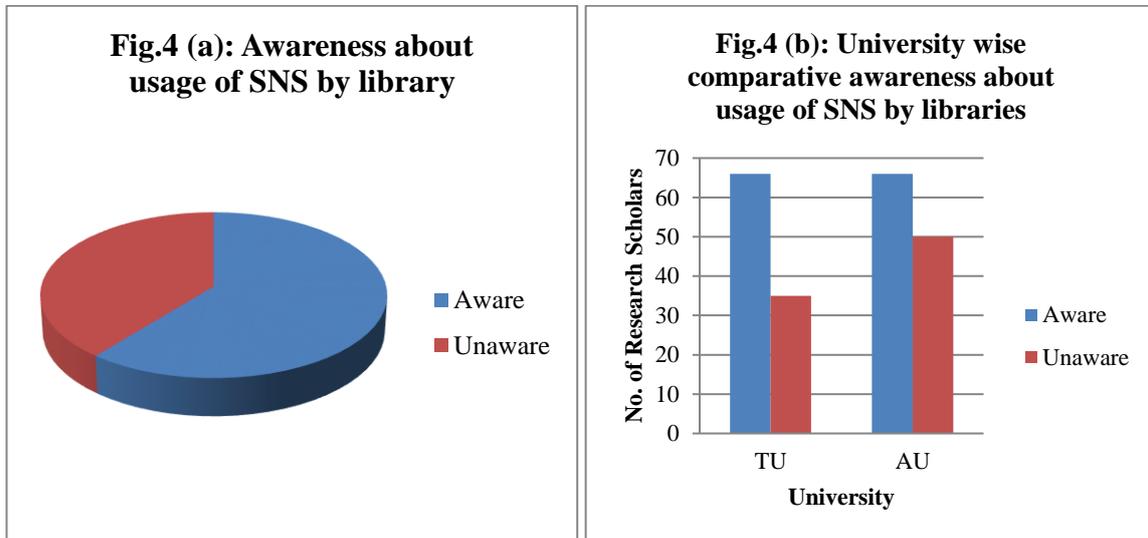
8.4 Awareness about usage of SNS by library

Awareness of the research scholars of the surveyed universities about usage of SNS by the university libraries have been described in the following figures.

Fig.4(a) shows that 60.83% of the total respondents are aware that their university libraries use SNS for delivering library services. On the other hand, 39.17% respondents are unaware about the usage or non-usage of SNS by their respective libraries.

Fig.4(b) has been used to describe university wise comparative awareness of the research scholars about usage of SNS by their respective university libraries. In case of TU (Tezpur University), 65.35% of the respondents are aware that their university

library uses SNS, while 34.65% respondents are unaware about the matter. On the other hand, 56.90% respondents of AU (Assam University) are aware and 43.10% respondents are unaware about the usage of SNS by their library.

Fig.4 (a): Awareness about usage of SNS by library	Fig.4 (b): University wise comparative awareness about usage of SNS by libraries

8.5 Users' expectation about library's invitation to follow their available SNS

The opinion of the research scholars of the surveyed universities about library's invitation to follow their available SNSs have been described in Fig.5.
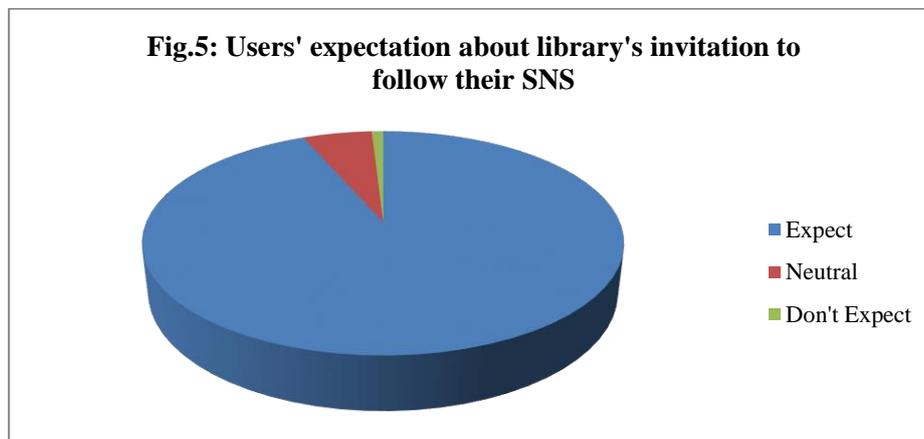
The Fig.5 shows that 93.55% of the research scholars expect library's invitation to follow library's SNS, 5.53% respondents remain neutral on the matter and the other 0.92% respondents have no expectation of receiving invitation to follow SNS of the libraries.

8.6 Users' preferred SNS

The research scholars' preferred SNS for having library resources and services have been described in the following figures.
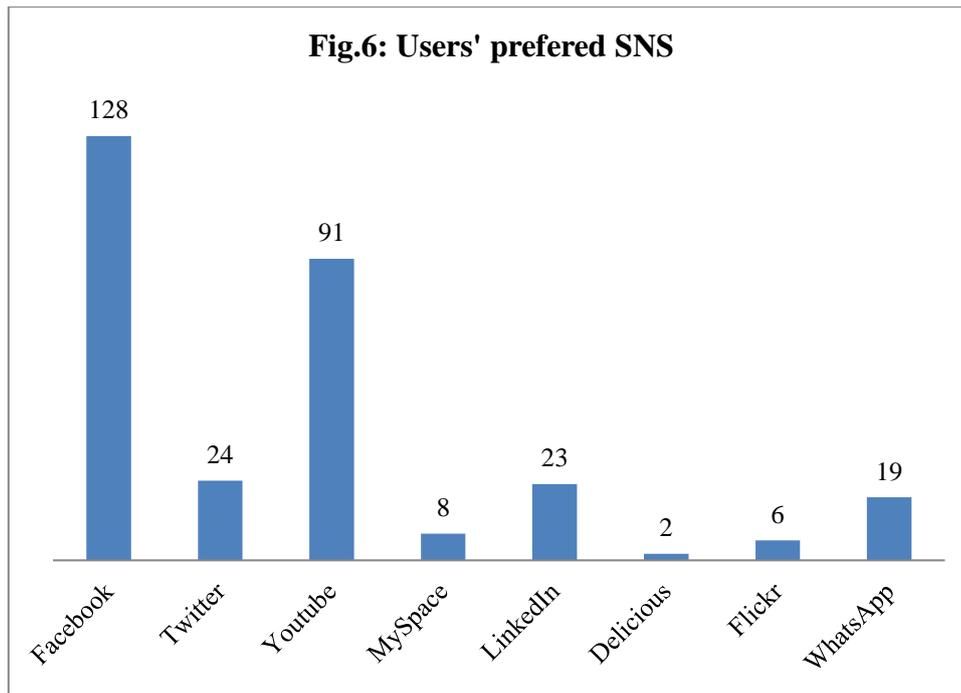
Fig.6: Users' prefered SNS

Fig.6 is evident of the fact that Facebook is the most preferred SNS preferred by 58.98% respondents and Delicious is the least preferred SNS preferred only by 0.92% respondents.

8.7 Length of following SNS of libraries by Research Scholars

The length of following libraries' SNS by the Research Scholars of the surveyed university libraries have been represented in the following figures.

The Fig.7(a) shows that 18.43% research scholars have been following their libraries' SNS from a period of 'less than 6 months'. 23.04% research scholars have been following SNSs of their university libraries from a period of '6 months-1 year'. 19.36% research scholars have been following their libraries' SNS since a period of '1 year-5 years'. The other 39.17% of the research scholars have 'not yet' followed the SNSs of their university libraries.

The Fig.7(b) shows university wise length of following library SNS by the research scholars. In case of Tezpur University, library SNSs have been followed by 32.67% of the research scholars for a period of 'less than 6 months'. 7.92% research scholars have been following library SNS from '6 months-1 year'. 24.75% of the respondents have been following library SNSs from a period of '1 year-5 years'. The other 34.65% research scholars have 'not yet' followed their library's SNS.

Fig.7 (a): Length of following library SNS

Fig.7 (b): University wise length of following SNS
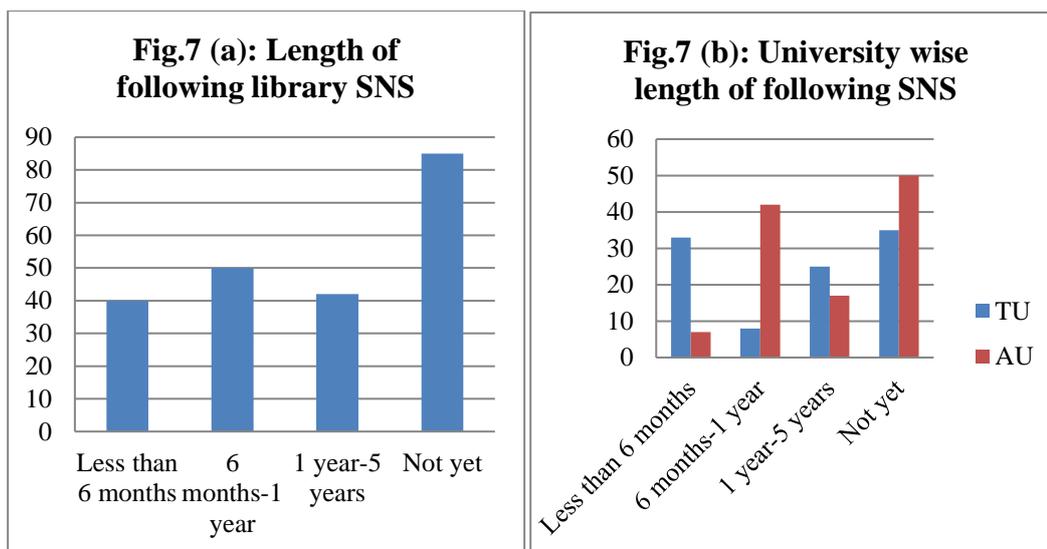
In case of Assam University, 6.03% research scholars have been following library SNSs for a period of 'less than 6 months'. 36.21% research scholars have been following SNSs of their university library from a period of '6 months-1 year'. 14.66% research scholars have been following library SNSs of their university from a period of '1 year-5 years'. The other 43.10% research scholars have 'not yet' followed their library's SNS.

8.8 Frequency of visiting library SNS

Frequency of visiting library's SNS by the research scholars of the surveyed university have been represented in the Fig.8(a) and Fig.8(b). Fig.8(a) shows the overall frequency of visiting library's SNS by the research scholars. On the other hand, Fig.8(b) represents university wise frequency of visiting library's SNS by the research scholars of the respective universities.

Fig.8(a) is evident of the fact that 4.61% research scholars of the universities under study visits their libraries' SNS on daily basis. 16.59% research scholars visit their university libraries' SNS on 'every alternate day'. 6.45% research scholars visit their libraries' SNS on weekly basis. 23.96% respondent opined that they visit their libraries' SNS on monthly basis. 9.67% respondents informed that they visit their libraries' SNS on 'every alternate month'. 38.71% research scholars reacted that they had 'never' visited their university libraries' SNS.

In case of TU, 6.93% research scholars of the university visit their library's SNS on daily basis. 15.84% research scholars of TU stated that pay visit to their library's SNS

on 'every alternate day'. 7.92% respondents of the university visit library's SNS on weekly basis. 28.71% research scholars of TU visit library's SNS on monthly basis. 7.92% respondents of TU visit their library's SNS at an interval of 'every alternate month'. 32.67% of TU respondents informed that they have 'never' visited library's SNS of their university.

Fig.8: Frequency of visiting library's SNS
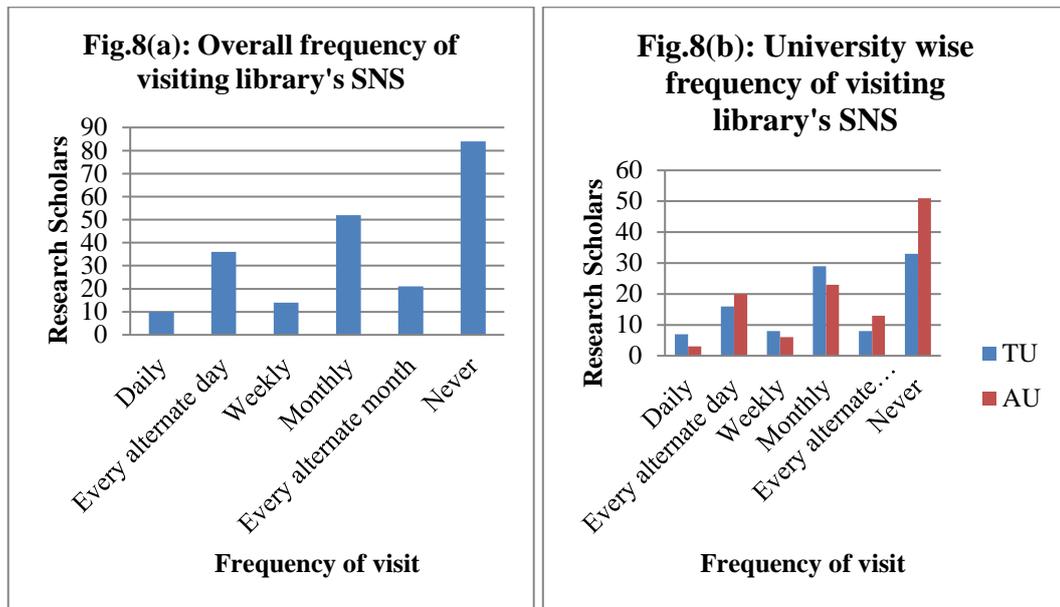
In case of AU, 2.59% AU research scholars visit their library's SNS on daily basis. 17.24% respondents visit their university library's SNS at an interval of 'every alternate day'. 5.17% research scholars of AU visit SNS of their university library on weekly basis. 19.83% respondents of AU reported that they visit their library's SNS on monthly basis. 11.21% research scholars of AU visit at SNS of their university library at an interval of 'every alternate month'. On the other hand, 43.97% respondents of AU reported that they have 'never' visited SNS of their library.

8.9 Activeness of library SNS

On the basis of the responses received from the research scholars of the surveyed university under this study, activeness of the library's SNS of these universities have been tried to measure.

The overall activeness of the library's SNS of the universities under this study have been represented in the Fig.9(a). From the Fig.9(a), it is clear that 24.42% research scholars regarded the library's SNS of the universities as 'very active'. According to 22.12% research scholars, library's SNS of the universities are 'Moderately Active'.

0.92% research scholars considered SNS of the university libraries under this study as 'less active'. 13.82% research scholars opined that library's SNS of the surveyed universities are 'Active only on some issues'. On the other hand, activeness of library's SNS is 'not known' to 38.71% of the research scholars those took part in the survey.

University wise activeness of library's SNS have been described in the Fig.9(b). According to 47.52% research scholars of TU, SNSs of their university library are 'very active'. 15.84% research scholars of TU considered their library's SNSs as 'moderately active'. As per opinion of 1.98% research scholars of the university, SNSs of their library are 'active only on some issues'. 34.65% research scholars opined that activeness of the library's SNSs of their university are 'not known' to them.

Fig.9(a): Overall activeness of libraries' SNS

Fig.9(b): University wise activeness of libraries' SNS
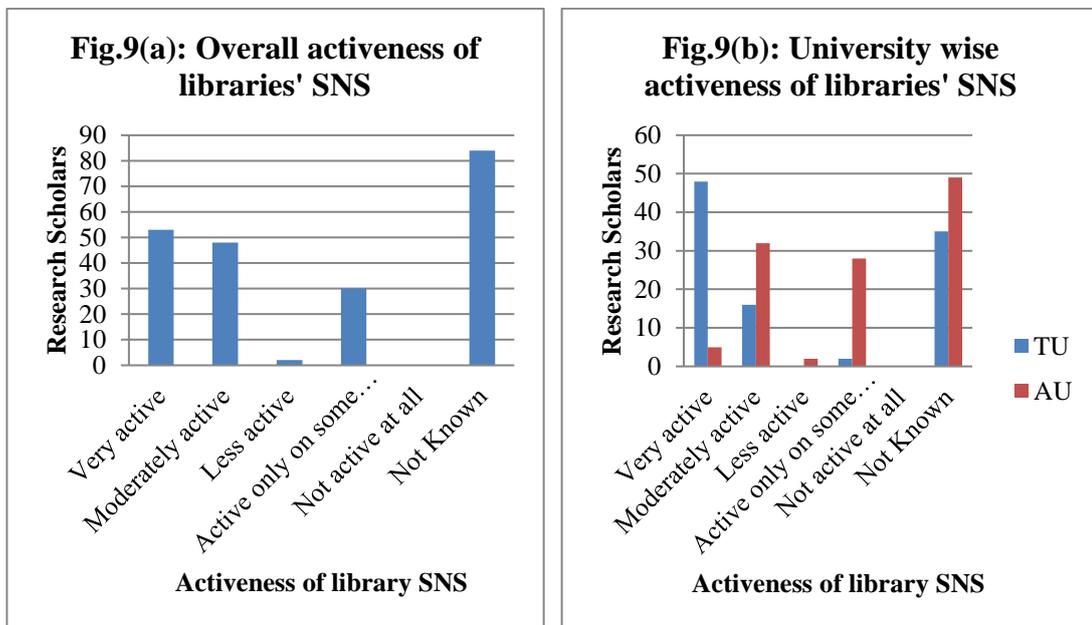
In case of AU, 4.31% research scholars opined that the SNSs of their university library are 'very active'. According to 27.59% research scholars of AU, SNSs of their university library are 'moderately active'. 1.72% research scholars of AU considered that their library's SNSs are 'less active'. As per responses of 24.14% research scholars of AU, SNSs of their university library are 'active only on some issues'. On the other hand, 42.24% research scholars informed that the activeness of their university library's SNSs is 'not known' to them.

8.10 Motivating factor of library SNS

It is necessary to have some motivating factors in the library's SNSs, so that users can be motivated to follow them. On the basis of the responses of the research scholars, the motivating factors of library's SNSs have been figured out in the Fig.10(a) and Fig.10(b). The overall motivating factors of libraries' SNSs have been described in Fig.10(a) and University wise motivating factors of library's SNSs have been described in Fig10(b).

Fig.10(a): Overall motivating factors of library SNS

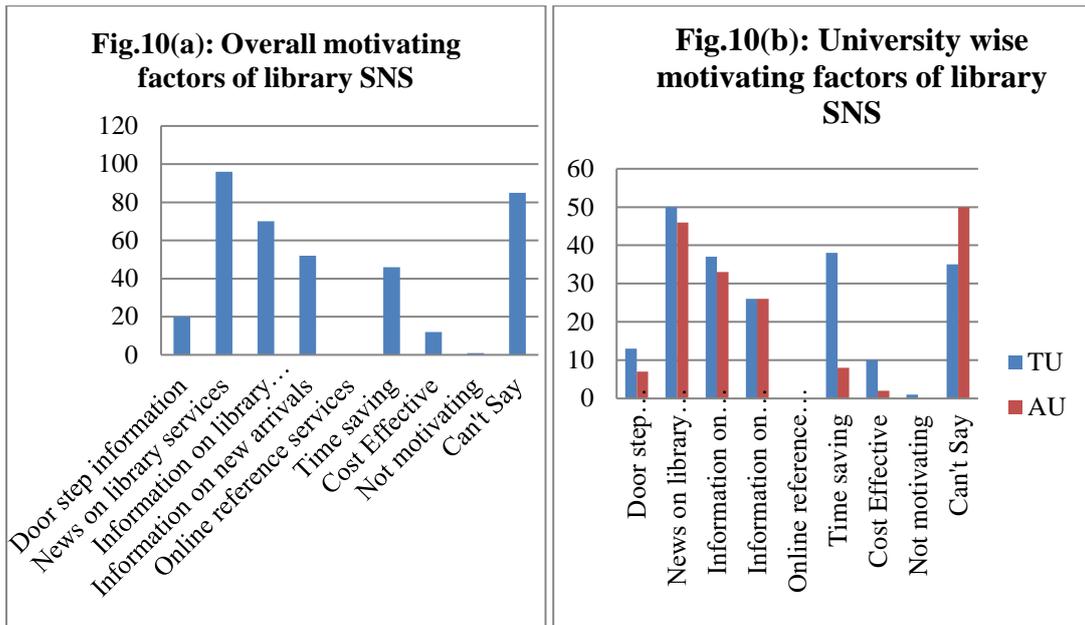**Fig.10(b): University wise motivating factors of library SNS**

Fig.10(a) is evident of the fact that 9.22% respondents consider 'Doorstep information' delivery is the motivating factor of SNSs of the surveyed university libraries. According to 44.24% respondents 'News on library services' is the motivating factor of the library's SNSs. 32.25% respondents stated that 'information on library events' is the motivating factor of the surveyed university libraries' SNSs. 23.96% research scholars opined that 'information on new arrivals' is a motivating factor. For 21.19% respondents, the motivating factor of library's SNSs is that they are 'time saving'. According to 5.53% respondents, SNSs of libraries are 'cost effective'. 0.46% found their libraries' SNSs as 'not motivating'. On the other hand, 39.17% respondents reacted that they 'Can't say' about any motivating factor of the SNSs of the libraries.

From the Fig.10(b), it can be seen that 12.87% research scholars of TU considered 'door step information' delivery as motivating factor of their library's SNSs. As per

responses of 49.50% TU research scholars, 'news on library services' of their library's SNSs is a motivating factor. 36.63% respondents of TU opined that 'information on library events' is a motivating factor of their library's SNSs. According to 25.74% TU research scholars, 'Information on new arrivals' is a motivating factor of their library's SNSs. As per opinion of 37.62% TU research scholars, their library's SNSs are motivating as these are 'time saving'. According to 9.90% respondents of TU, their library's SNSs are 'cost effective'. 0.99% respondents opined that the SNSs of their university library are 'not motivating'. On the other hand, 34.65% TU research scholars stated that they 'can't say' about the motivating factor of their library's SNSs.

It is observed from the Fig.10(b) that 6.03% research scholars of AU consider 'door step information' delivery as the motivating factor of SNSs of their library. 'News on library services' is the motivating factor according to 39.65% AU research scholars. As per 28.45% AU research scholars, 'information on library events' is the motivating factor of their library's SNSs. 22.41% respondents of AU stated that 'information on new arrivals' is a motivating factor. According to 6.89% AU respondents their library's SNSs are 'time saving'. 1.72% respondents of AU consider that the motivating factor of their library's SNSs is that they are 'cost effective'. On the other hand, 43.10% research scholars of AU stated that they 'can't say' about the motivating factor of their library's SNSs.

8.11 Expected/Preferred library services through SNS

Fig.11: Preferred library services through SNS
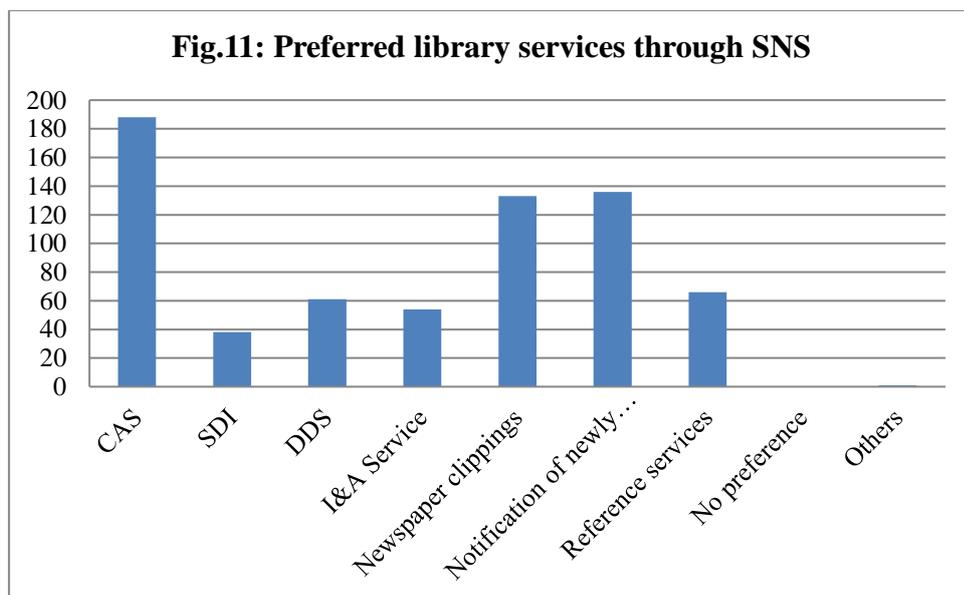
The expected/preferred library services of the users which they wish to receive through SNS have been described in the Fig.11.

86.63% of the respondents prefer to receive Current Awareness Service (CAS) through SNS. Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) is preferred to be received through SNS by 17.51% respondents. 28.11% research scholars prefer Document Delivery Service to be delivered through SNS. Indexing and Abstracting Service is preferred to receive through SNS by 24.88% respondents. 61.29% research scholars expect Newspaper clippings service through SNS. 62.67% respondents prefer to have notification of newly published research through SNS. Reference service is preferred to receive through SNS by 30.41% of the research scholars of the surveyed universities. 0.46% respondents expect other services like 'Question-Answer', 'E-thesis', etc. to receive through SNS of the university libraries.

8.12 Benefits from library SNS

The benefits gained by the research scholars of the surveyed universities from using their library's SNSs have been tried to analyze from their responses. The overall benefits received from the SNSs of the university libraries have been described in Fig.12(a) and Fig.12(b) describes university wise benefits received by the users from their respective university libraries' SNSs.

It is clear from the Fig.12(a) that 17.05% research scholars have opined that they have got benefited from 'door step information' delivery service of library's SNSs. According to 20.73% research scholars of the surveyed universities, they have got benefited from 'news on library services' through libraries' SNSs. 29.49% research scholars opined that 'information about library events' has been beneficial for them. According to 42.85% respondents 'information about new arrivals' are beneficial for them. As per opinion of 35.02% respondents the SNS of the libraries are beneficial, as they are 'time saving' in nature. According to 11.52% respondent, they have got benefited from SNSs of the libraries as they are 'cost effective'. 0.92% of the users stated that they have not got benefited from library's SNSs. On the other hand, 39.17% respondents stated that they have 'not yet used' the SNSs of their university libraries.

Fig.12(a): Overall benefits from library SNS

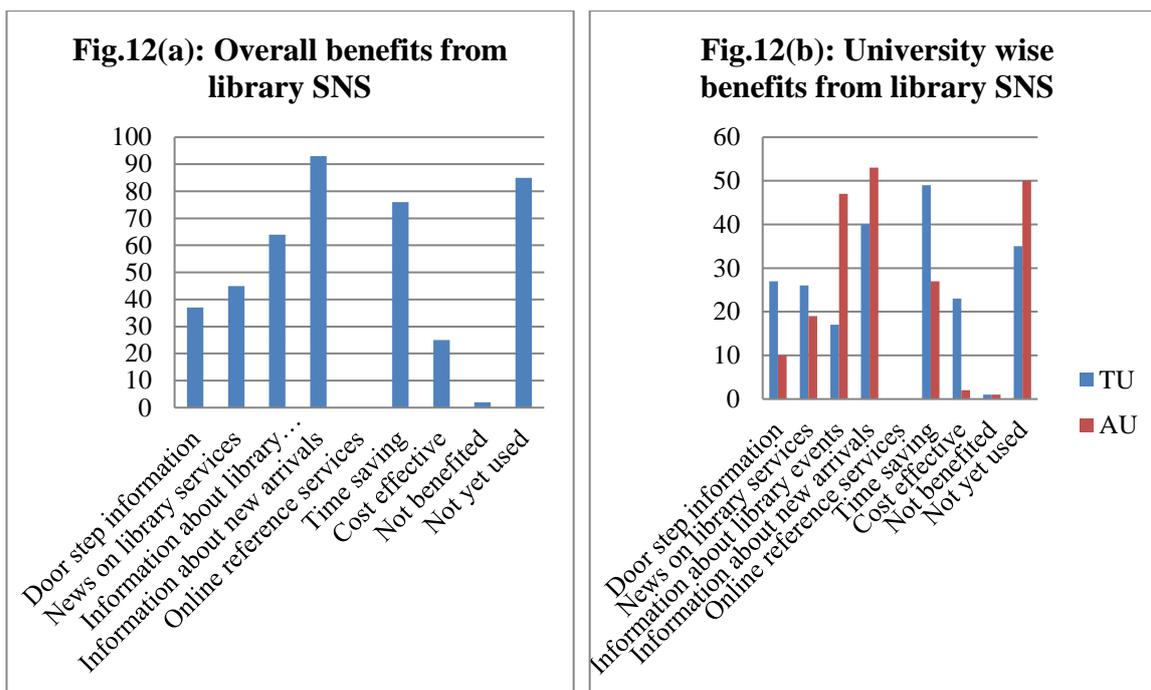
Fig.12(b): University wise benefits from library SNS

Fig.12(b) is evident of the benefits received by the research scholars from their respective university library SNSs. According to 26.73% research scholars of TU, they have got benefited from the 'door step information' delivery service of their library SNSs. 25.74% respondents opined that 'news on library services' by the library SNSs have been beneficial for them. As per opinion of 16.83% research scholars, they have got benefited from the 'information about library events' provided by the library SNSs of their university. 39.60% research scholars of TU stated that 'information about new arrivals' provided by the library SNSs have been beneficial for them. According to 48.51% research scholars of TU, library SNSs of their university is beneficial as they are 'time saving'. 22.77% respondents opined that they have got benefited from their university library's SNSs as they are 'cost effective'. According to 0.99% respondents, they have got 'not benefited' from their university library's SNSs. On the other hand, 34.65% research scholars of TU stated that they have 'not yet used' the SNSs of their university library.

In case of AU, 8.62% respondents stated that they have got benefited from the delivery of 'door step information' by the SNSs of their university library. 'News on library services', provided by the SNSs of the university library, have been beneficial for 16.38% respondents of AU. According to 40.52% research scholars, 'information about library events' has been beneficial for them. As per opinion of 45.69% respondents, they have got benefited from the 'information about new arrivals' service

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provided by the SNSs of their university library. 23.27% respondents opined that they have got benefited from SNSs of their university library as they are 'time saving'. According to 1.72% respondents, SNSs of their university library are beneficial as they are 'cost effective'. 0.86% research scholars of AU stated that they have got 'not benefited' from SNSs of their university library. On the other hand 43.10% respondent reported that they have 'not yet used' SNSs of their library.

9. Discussion

From the results derived from data analysis, it was found that 93.55% respondents have positive perception regarding use of SNSs for providing library services to the users. 85.26% respondents forwarded positive perception regarding importance of use of SNSs for the libraries.

The results showed that 93.55% of the research scholars expect to get library's invitation to follow their SNSs.

It was found in the study that Facebook is the most preferred SNS preferred by 58.98% respondents and Delicious is the least preferred SNS preferred only by 0.92% respondents.

As seen in the result, the libraries' SNSs have been followed by only 19.36% research scholars since a period of '1 year-5 years' and 39.17% have 'not yet' followed.

It was found that only 4.61% research scholars visit their libraries' SNSs on daily basis, while 38.71% research scholars had never visited the SNSs.
The study resulted that 24.42% research scholars regarded SNSs of their university libraries as 'very active', while activeness of library's SNS was 'not known' to 38.71% of the research scholars.

It was found from the result that 'News on library services' is the mostly chosen motivating factor of the library's SNSs chosen by 44.24% respondents.

The most preferred service to receive through library's SNSs was Current Awareness Service (CAS), which was preferred by 86.63% of the research scholars.
The most beneficial service through library's SNSs was found to be 'information about new arrivals', which benefited 42.85% of the research scholars.

10. Suggestions and recommendations

From the results it is revealed that though various services have been provided through SNSs by the university libraries, these have not reached the users. For addressing this issue the libraries should have to send invitation/request to users to join/follow their SNSs. The libraries should also have to gear up some user awareness programs regarding their services through SNSs.

The libraries should have to be very active regarding their services through SNSs, so that more users can be attracted towards their services.

The libraries shall have to make their services more motivating through SNSs, so that more users get motivated to follow them.

The libraries should also try to make their services through SNSs more beneficial, so that most of the users get benefited from these services.

11. Conclusion

The study revealed that the research scholars of Central universities of Assam have positive perception and attitudes towards library services through Social Networking Sites. The libraries are also trying to provide a number of services through SNSs. To reach to more users beyond the physical boundaries of the library premises, libraries shall have to be active, motivating and beneficial for the users in delivering services through SNSs.

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