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USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES BY THE RESEARCHERS OF INDIA: A SURVEY OF ASSAM UNIVERSITY AND MIZORAM UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT :

Present paper is aims to study the purposes and effectiveness of using Social Networking Sites (SNSs) in communication and research by the Research Scholars of Assam University, Silchar, Assam, and Mizoram University, Aizawl, Mizoram India. The study conducted through a structured questionnaire administrated among the research scholars of both the Universities. It was observed that most of the respondents were found to be aware and making affective use of such social networks in their communication and research. The majority of the research scholars who are actively using SNSs for various purposes having more than 200 friends/contact. It was revealed from the study that facebook is the most popular SNS followed by WhatsApp by all categories of research scholars. It also indicates that majority of the research scholars of both the Universities are satisfied with feathers and contents available on these Sites.



KEYWORDS : Social Networking Sites (SNSs), ICT, World Wide Web, Facebook, LinkedIn.

1.INTRODUCTION :

Social Networking becomes more and more popular among the young generation. Social Networking is a way that helps many people shares their first hand experiences to each others. Social Networking became popular between 2004 and 2006, after Facebook and MySpace were created. Facebook has over 500 million members and it is still growing. The recent trends and developments in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have changed the information seeking scenario in the digital era. A few years ago the Internet was providing very limited set of services such as searching, browsing, emailing, chatting and so on. But at present it has become more essential part of our day to day life. It is facilitating new services to the users of various areas. World Wide Web (www) is one of the most useful and important service of internet. The ever increasing contribution of internet and the revolution of information distribution over the last few decades have significantly increased the relationship between the individuals, institutions, communities etc. According to Boyd and Ellison (2007) "Web based services allow individuals to build a Social and professional profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within a system". Social networking sites,

allow users to create a personalised account that includes the information like; date of birth, hobbies, preferences, education status, relationships status and personal and professional interest etc.

1.1 Social Networking

The term Social Networking is a composition of individuals, professionals or institutions, which are attached with one or more individuals like colleague, friend, neighbourhood, small society and so on. Social networking is possible in everywhere i.e. school, college, university, organisation, institution or in the work place among the individuals of the same group. This is because of the widely spread of internet in the work places like universities, research institutions etc, where the individuals gather and share their first hand experiences, their ideas, their views, their emotions and finally the information among them.

1.2 Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

Social networking site is an online portal, or web service, which attracts to develop a social relationship among group of individuals like a small rural community or group of professionals. It is a relationship between individuals who belongs to different religion, different region as well as different profession but with the same purposes. Therefore it is an online community of users on the web. The services provided by social networking sites based on a representation of each individual, his/her social links, and a limitation of the additional services. A social networking site provides a huge number of web based services for their users to interact to the individuals through the internet i.e. e-mail, chatting, instant massaging etc. It is estimated that there are more than 300 Social Networking sites which are available on internet and the membership of these websites are open to all. Anybody can become a member through a very small justification. The below images show the various types of Social Networking sites. (<https://www.google.co.in/#q=picture+of+social+networking+sites>).



2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The studies which were found appropriate were thoroughly reviewed along with their findings which are as follows:-

Kumar and Singh (2016) pointed out the role of SNSs in scholarly communication used by faculty members of Assam University and found that majority of the faculty members who are using these sites are in the age group of 31-40. The study also revealed that facebook is the most favoured SNSs followed by LinkedIn. Mahajan *et al.* (2013) explored to study the activities and purposes for using SNSs by the scholars of Panjab University, Chandigarh. The findings of their study shows that majority of the respondents were found to be aware and making use of such applications in their research work. Their study also reveals that facebook is the most popular SNSs by all categories of researchers. Chakraborty (2012) pointed out the bustle and purpose of using SNSs by the research scholars of North-East Hill University, Shillong, and originate that most of the respondents were from the social science stream and using it for group discussions in input matters, compilation exploring and inventing new concepts, etc. Parveen (2011) examine the alertness and use of SNSs by LIS professionals in the

university libraries of Uttar Pradesh and noticed that the most of the LIS professionals are well conscious about Facebook as it provide them a vital platform to share their views, ideas etc. Boyd and Ellison (2007) In the study it is reported that the students used SNSs to keep in touch with old friends and to sustain or deepen relationships characterised by some, form offline link such as residence closeness or a shared class explain the widespread ideas, description and character of Social Networking Sites.

3. SIGNIFICANCE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

There are hundreds of Social Networking Sites, with various technological tools, supporting a wide range of interests and practices. These websites are becoming popular among research scholars and helping them in connecting with each other, their local and the global community at large. Numerous efforts have been made particularly to understand the use of social networking sites in research and how it can elevate the quality of research in higher educational institutions. On the other hand, a tremendous increase in the use of these websites in North East Region has also been observed but no study has been conducted so far for assessing the use of social networking sites among research scholars of the taken Universities. The research scholars of the universities under the study make the best use of social networking site to share their personal and professional experiences, information and literature etc, to enhance the research capabilities.

The present study is restricted to the research scholars of the two universities in North East India namely Assam University, Silchar (Assam) and Mizoram University, Aizawl, Mizoram.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has the following specific objectives:

- To find out the use of social networking sites by the research scholars of both the universities;
- To find out the commonly used SNSs by the research scholars.
- To explore the purposes of using the social networking sites;
- To know the reliability of information accessed by the research scholars and
- To find out the problems being faced by the research scholars while using these social networking sites.

5. METHODOLOGY ADOPTED

For the collection of the primary data a structured questionnaire was prepared and was distributed in the month of Nov-December-2021 among the randomly selected research scholars of two universities of North East India. There are total 38 academic departments at Assam University and 33 departments at Mizoram University. As it was not possible to cover entire population of both the universities under the survey hence the present study is limited to the 15 common departments from each the universities.

6. SAMPLING

The Assam University has 1017 research scholars and the Mizoram University has 433 research scholars. The representative sample was formed by taking approximately 10 per cent of the respondents from each university (i.e.102) from Assam University and 43 from Mizoram University.

Total 150 questionnaire was distributed and 145 was received back which have been analysed using statistical package for social Sciences (SPSS) and their interpretations have been undertaken in the light of the framed objectives.

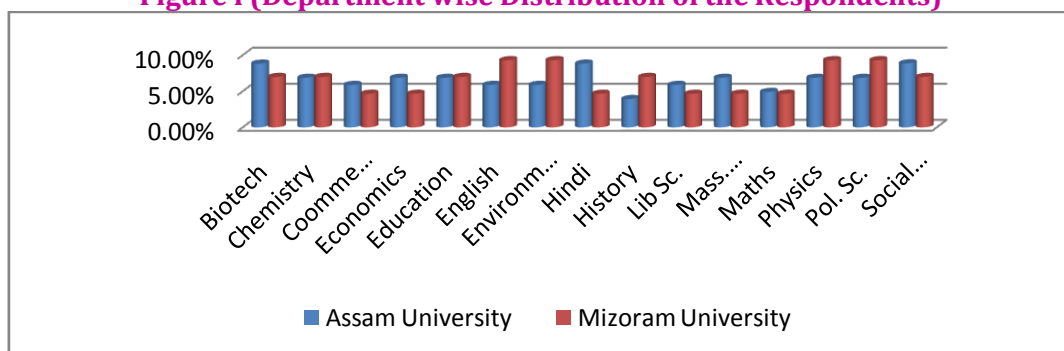
7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

7.1 Department wise Distribution of the Respondents

Figure i present the department wise respondents which show that a total of 145 research scholars from 15 departments each of both the universities have been covered. Out of these, seven departments come in art and humanities, five departments fall in science and 3 departments come

under social sciences stream. The majority of the respondents i.e. 9.30% were from the departments of English, Environmental Science, Physics and Political science.

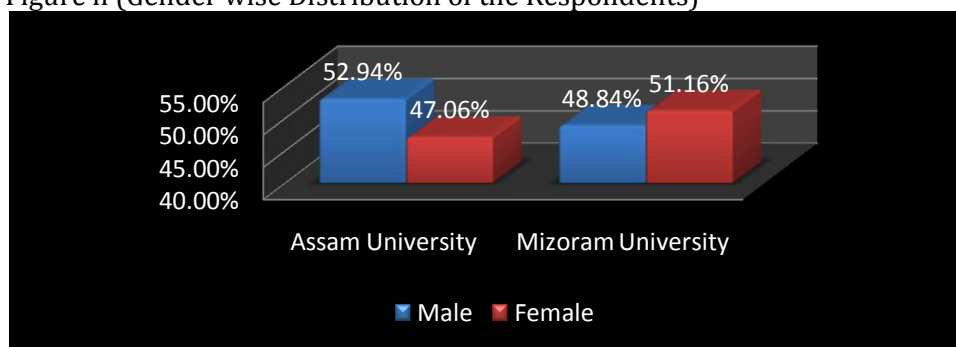
Figure i (Department wise Distribution of the Respondents)



7.2 Gender wise Distribution of the Respondents

Figure ii shows the gender wise distribution of the respondents. Which indicates that 52.94% of respondents are male and 47.06% of respondents are Female belonging to Assam University. Whereas 48.84% respondents are male and 51.16% respondents are female at Mizoram University, Aizawl, Mizoram India.

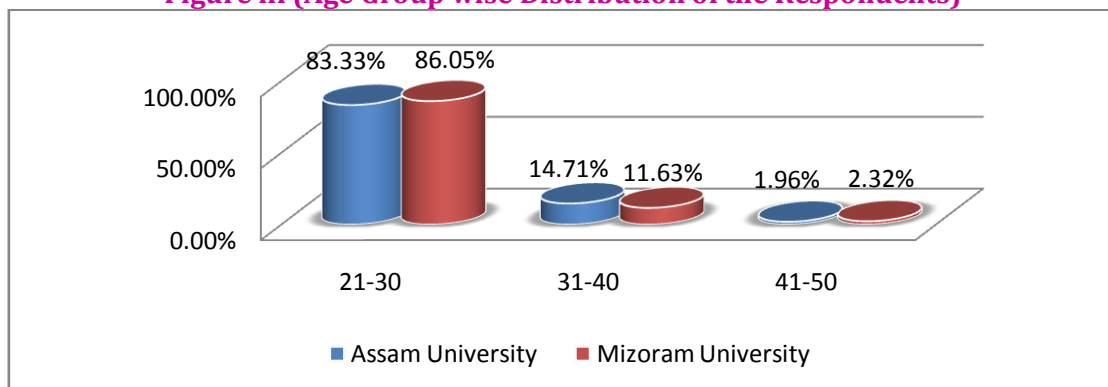
Figure ii (Gender wise Distribution of the Respondents)



7.3 Age Group Wise Distribution of the Respondents:

Figure iii presents the data related to the age group of the Research Scholars of both the Universities. This indicates that 83.33% of respondents of Assam University falls between the age group of 21-30 years, whereas 14.71% of respondents are in the age group of 31-40 years and 1.96% of respondents are in the age group of 41-50 years. Further at Mizoram University 86.05% of respondents fall between the age group of 21-30 years, whereas 11.63% respondents are in the age group of 31-40 years and 2.32% of respondents fall between the ages of 41-50 years.

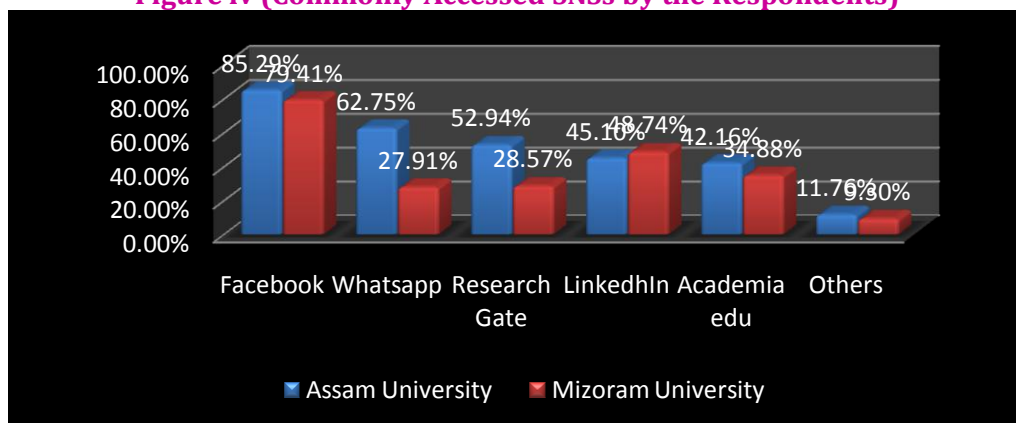
Figure iii (Age Group wise Distribution of the Respondents)



7.4 Commonly Accessed SNSs by the Respondents

Figure iv shows the commonly accessed SNSs by the research scholars of Assam University and Mizoram University. It indicates that in the Assam University, 85.29% of respondents are accessing Facebook, whereas 62.75% of respondents are accessing WhatsApp, 52.94% respondents are using Researchgate, 45.10% respondents are using LinkedIn, 42.16% of respondents using academia edu, and 11.76% of respondents are using other sites like Twitter, YouTube, Bebo etc. In the Mizoram University, 79.41% of respondents are accessing Facebook, 27.91% respondents are accessing WhatsApp, 28.57% respondents are using Research Gate, 48.74% respondents are accessing LinkedIn, 34.88% respondents accessing Academia edu and 9.30% of respondents are accessing other sites like You tube, Twitter, Google buzz, HI5 etc.

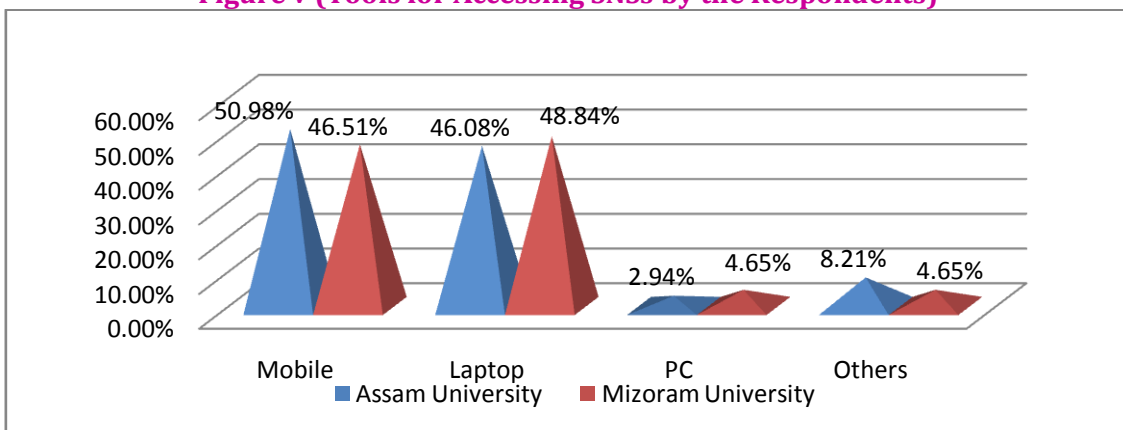
Figure iv (Commonly Accessed SNSs by the Respondents)



7.5 Tools for Using SNSs by the Respondents

Figure v Indicates devices that are being used for accessing SNSs by the research scholars of both the Universities. It shows that most of the respondents i.e. 50.98% are using Mobile, followed by 46.08% respondents using Laptop, whereas only 2.94% of respondents are using Personal Computer as tool and 8.21% of respondents are using other devices i.e. I-Pad, Palm top Tablet etc to accesses Social Networking sites. Whereas at Mizoram University 46.51% of respondents are using Mobile, 48.84% of the respondents use Laptop as a tool, 4.65% respondents use Personal Computer for the same and 4.65% of respondents are using other tools like Tablet, Palm top etc. for accessing such sites.

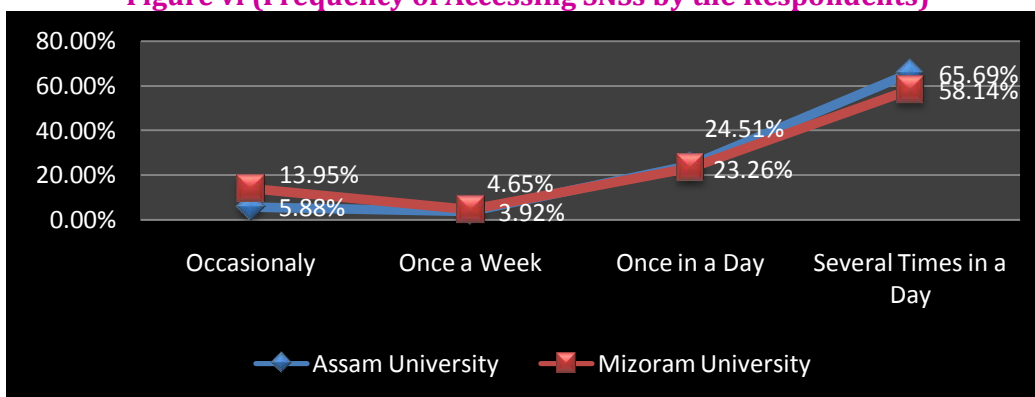
Figure v (Tools for Accessing SNSs by the Respondents)



7.6 Frequency of using SNSs by the Respondents

Figure vi presents the distribution of respondents according to the frequency of using SNSs. Which shows that most of the respondents i.e. 65.69% access the SNSs several times in a day followed by 24.51% of respondents who access once in a day. Whereas 5.88% of respondents access it occasionally and 3.92% of respondents access it once a week at Assam University. Whereas at Mizoram University 58.14% of respondents access the SNSs several times in a day, 23.26% of respondents access once in a day, whereas 13.95% of respondents access it occasionally and 4.65% of respondents access it once a week.

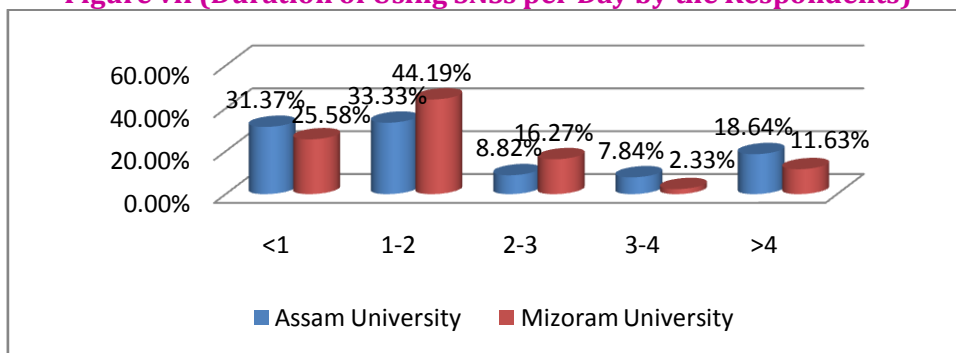
Figure vi (Frequency of Accessing SNSs by the Respondents)



7.7 Duration of Using SNSs by the Respondents

Figure vii presents the duration which are being spend for accessing SNSs by the research scholars at both the Universities. It shows that 31.37% of respondents spend less than one hour per day, whereas 33.33% respondents spend 1-2 hours in a day, 8.82% respondents spend 2-3 hours per day, 7.84% of respondents spend 3-4 hours a day and 18.64% of respondents using these sites more than 4 hours per day in Assam University. Further, at Mizoram University it indicates that 25.58% of respondents spend less than one hour per day for accessing SNSs, whereas 44.19% of respondents spend 1-2 hour in a day, 16.27% respondents spend 2-3 hours, 2.33% respondents spend 3-4 hours in a day and 11.63% of respondents spend more than 4 hours in a day for accessing such sites.

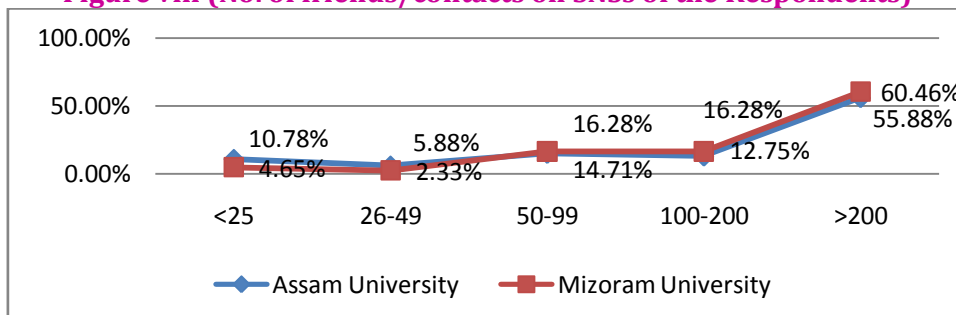
Figure vii (Duration of Using SNSs per Day by the Respondents)



7.8 Friends/contacts on SNSs of the Respondents

Figure viii indicates the number of friends/contacts of the research scholars of both the Universities on social networking sites. In Assam University, 10.78% of respondents having less than 25 friends/contacts on SNSs, whereas 5.88% respondents have between 26-49 friends/contacts on these sites, 14.71% respondents have friends/contacts on it in between 50 and 99, 12.75% respondents having in between 100 to 200 friends/contacts on these sites and most of the respondents i.e. 55.88% having more than 200 friends/contacts on SNSs. Whereas in Mizoram University, 4.65% of respondents have less than 25 friends/contacts on SNSs, only 2.33% respondents have in between 26-49 friends/contacts, 16.28% respondents have friends/contacts in between 50-99 as well as 100-200, on such sites and maximum no. of respondents i.e. 60.46% have more than 200 friends/contacts on social networking sites.

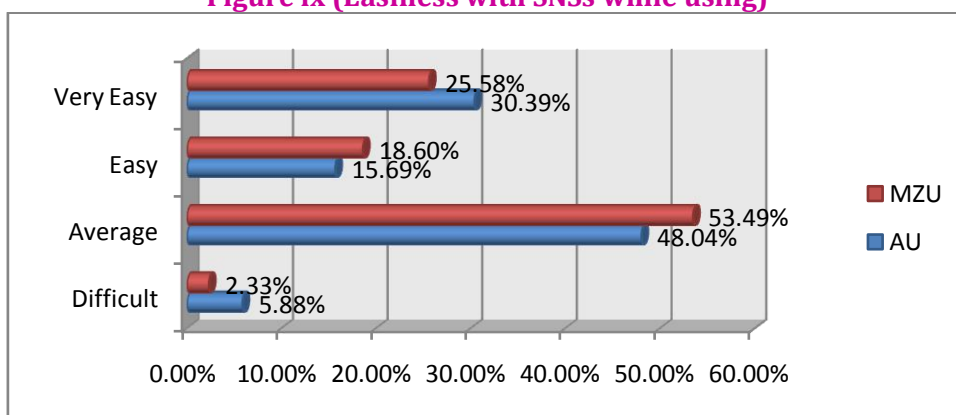
Figure viii (No. of friends/contacts on SNSs of the Respondents)



7.9 Easiness with SNSs while Using

Figure ix Indicates the easiness of SNSs being accessed by the research scholars, which shows that in Assam University 30.39% of respondents feel very easy while accessing, whereas 15.69% respondents feel easy to use, whereas most of the research scholars i.e. 48.04% feel average (not difficult/not easy) while accessing such sites and 5.88% respondents feel difficulty to access. Further in Mizoram University, 25.58% of respondents feel very easy to access, 18.60% respondents find it easy to access these sites, where 53.49% respondents find it average to access and 2.33% of respondents find them difficult while accessing.

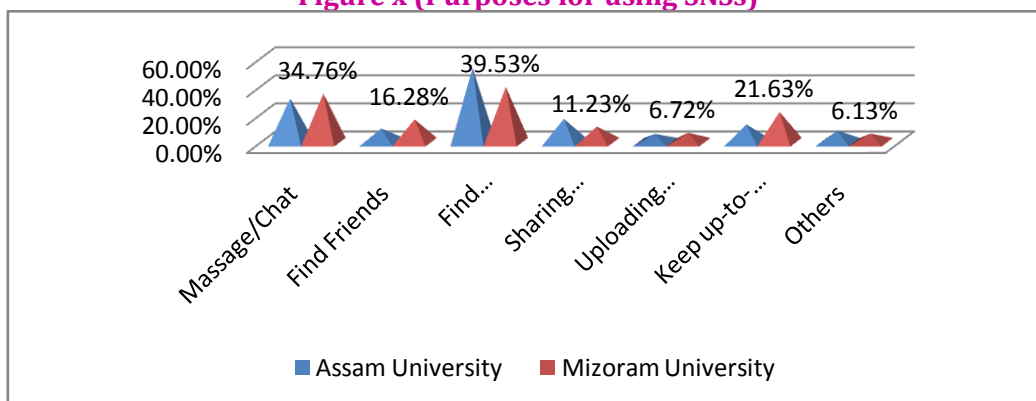
Figure ix (Easiness with SNSs while using)



7.10 Purpose of Using SNSs by the Respondents

Figure x indicates that in Assam University, 31.25% of research scholars using SNSs for Messaging/Chatting, whereas 9.80% respondents access it for find new friends, 52.94% of respondents use it to find out the relevant information, 16.67% respondents access them to share their experiences, 5.88% respondents access such sites to upload photo and videos of personal as well as events like seminar conferences etc., 12.75% of respondents access such sites to keep themselves up to date and 8.27% respondents use it for other purposes like entertainment, dating and so on. Whereas in Mizoram University 37.76% of research scholars access SNSs for Messaging/Chatting, 16.28% respondents access it to find new friends, 39.53% of respondents use it to find out the relevant information, 11.23% respondents access them to share their experiences, 6.72% respondents access it to upload videos and pictures of personal as well as events like seminar conferences etc., 21.63% of respondents access such sites to keep themselves up to date and 6.31% respondents use it for other purposes like downloading, dating and so on.

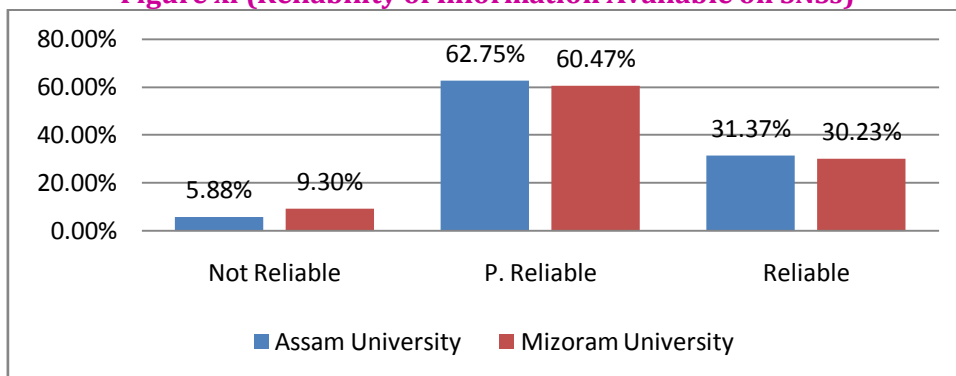
Figure x (Purposes for using SNSs)



7.11 Reliability of Information available on SNSs

Figure xi indicates the reliability of information available on SNSs. Which shows that at Assam University 5.88% of research scholars believe that the information available on these sites are not reliable, whereas most of the respondents i.e. 62.75% think that information available on SNSs are partially reliable, 31.37% of respondents feel that information available on such sites are reliable. Further in Mizoram University, 9.30% of respondents believe that information available on SNSs are not reliable, whereas 60.47% of respondents feel that information available on these sites are partially reliable and 30.23% respondents says that information available on SNSs are reliable.

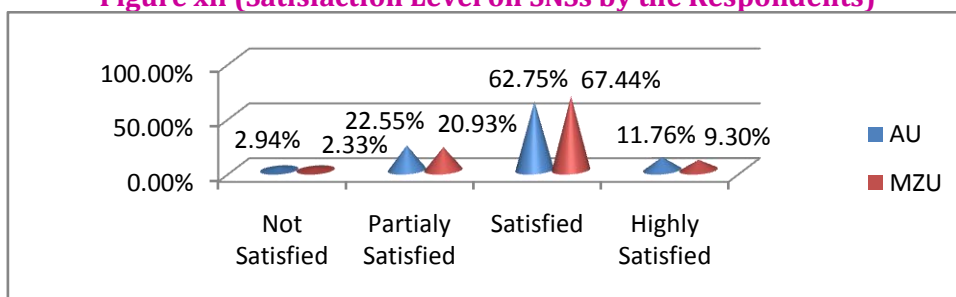
Figure xi (Reliability of Information Available on SNSs)



7.12 Satisfaction level from SNSs of the respondents

Figure xii shows the satisfaction level from social networking sites. It indicates that In Assam University 11.76% of respondents are highly satisfied with information and services provided by SNSs, whereas most of the respondents i.e. 62.75% are satisfied with SNSs, 22.55% of respondents are partially satisfied and only 2.94% of respondent are not satisfied with social networking sites. Further at Mizoram University 9.30% of respondents are highly satisfied, whereas 67.44% respondents are satisfied, 20.93% of respondents are partially satisfied and only 2.33% of respondents are not satisfied with features and services are available on Social networking sites.

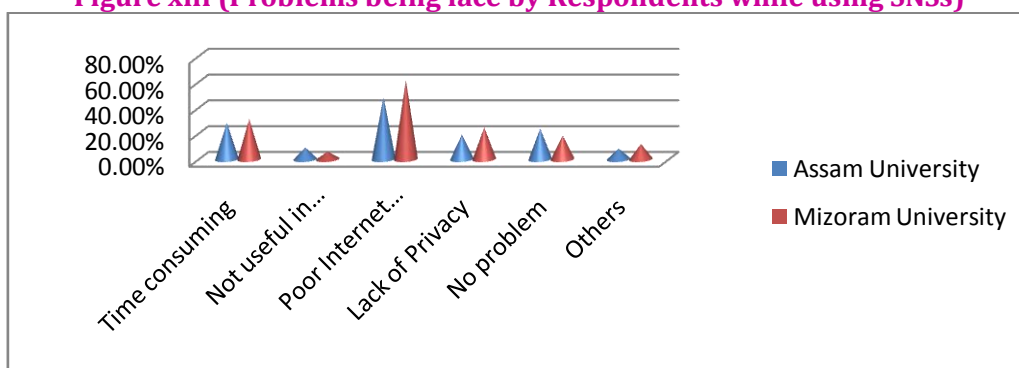
Figure xii (Satisfaction Level on SNSs by the Respondents)



7.13 Problems in using SNSs by the Respondents

Figure xiii indicates that the problems being faced by the research scholars while accessing SNSs. It indicates that in the Assam University, 28.34% of research scholars said that it is time consuming, whereas 9.23% of research scholars feel that it is not useful for the research purpose, 48.37% of research scholars faced poor internet facility, 19.17% of research scholars believed that it leaks the privacy and 8.36% of research scholars face other problems like health etc. Further in the Mizoram University, 31.28% of research scholars believe that it is time consuming, whereas 5.86% of research scholars feel that it is not useful for the research, whereas 61.52% of research scholars faced poor internet facility, 24.76% of research scholars believe that it leaks the privacy and 11.89% of research scholars faced other problems like health etc. while accessing SNSs.

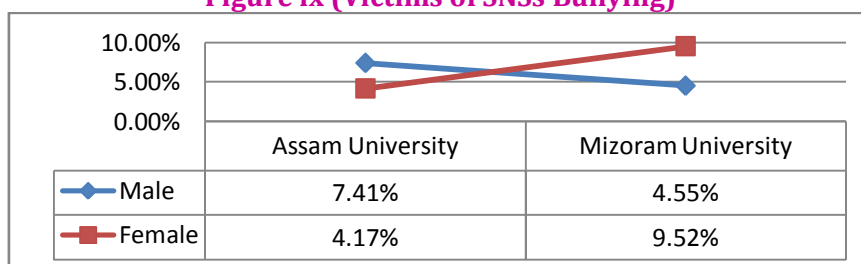
Figure xiii (Problems being face by Respondents while using SNSs)



6.14 Victims of SNS Bullying

Figure ix indicates the data regarding victim of social networking bullying of both the Universities, which shows that in the Assam University 7.41% of male research scholars have become victims of social networking bullying, whereas 4.17% of female research scholars became victim of SNSs bullying. Further in Mizoram University 4.55% of male research scholars became victim of social networking bullying, whereas 9.52% of female research scholars became victim of social networking bullying while using.

Figure ix (Victims of SNSs Bullying)



8. Major Findings

The followings are the major findings of the present study:

- The study finds that most of the research scholars of both the Universities are effectively using the SNSs for their communication & research purposes,
- The Face book is the most popular site being use by the research scholars of both the universities i.e. 85.29% at AU and 79.41% followed by Whatsapp,
- Majority of research scholars of both the University logged SNSs several times in a day i.e. 65.69% at AU and 58.14% at MZU
- Most of the research scholars from both the Universities i.e. 33.33% at AU and 44.19% at MZU spend 1-2 hours per day on SNSs,
- Most of the research scholars of both the Universities used SNSs to find their relevant information i.e. 55.94% at AU and 39.53% at MZU,
- Most of the research scholars i.e. 50.98% at AU are using Mobile as an access tool whereas 48.84% at MZU use Laptop to access these sites,
- Majority of the research scholars i.e. 55.88% at AU and 60.46% at MZU have more than 200 friends/contacts on Social Networking Sites,
- Most of the research scholars of both the Universities i.e.62.75% at AU and 60.47% at MZU are of the opinion that information available on SNSs is partially reliable,
- Majority of the research scholars from both the Universities i.e. 62.75% at AU and 67.44% at MZU are satisfied from the features and services available on SNSs,

- Most of the research scholars i.e. 48.04% at AU and 53.49% at MZU are of opinion that using Social Networking Sites are neither easy nor difficult, and
- Most important finding of the study is to indentified the victims of social networking bullying i.e. 9.52% female at MZU and 7.41% male at AU are the victims of SNSs bullying and
- Majority of the research scholars of both the Universities i.e. 48.37% at AU and 61.52% at MZU face poor internet connectivity while using these sites.

9. CONCLUSION

At presents the Social Networking Sites provide a very vital platform to share and access the relevant information for research as well as personal purposes to connect and enlarge their personal and professional network. The above finding shows that SNSs are being used very efficiently by the research scholars. Because of their attractive and informative scope, research scholars are attracted to Social Networking sites. The Study reveals that, Facebook is the most popular sites among the researchers; it provides individuals with a way of maintaining and strengthening social ties which can be beneficial to both social as well as research purposes. Several features of these sites such as profile surfing, posting of new information, sharing photo & videos making friends, meeting new people, participating in discussion and so on are the medium by which the research scholars keep update and share their experiences to each others. The Universities and educational Institutions' library should form a forum as well as provide a link like 'ask-a-librarian, subject experts and so on to support library activities and use SNSs as a promotion apparatus for the services available to the research scholars.

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