



ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN LIBRARY OUTREACH AND USER ENGAGEMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COLLEGES AFFILIATED TO RTM NAGPUR UNIVERSITY

Mr. Rajkumar Thaware

Librarian

Athawale College of Social Work, Bhandara.

ABSTRACT:

The present study examines social media as a vehicle of library outreach and user engagement in colleges affiliated with Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj (RTM) Nagpur University over the 10 years. With the growing popularity of these social networking platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, libraries in all parts of the globe started adopting these social networking tools for informing their users about various services, disseminating information, and interacting with the users beyond their physical boundaries. Hence, in this study, interaction, visibility, and service delivery were enhanced by the college libraries of Nagpur through the use of these sites. A descriptive survey method was adopted for collecting data from the librarians of 40 affiliated colleges through a questionnaire and interview schedule. The findings indicate some level of awareness of social media tools among librarians, yet their use in outreach activity was minimal. With the announcement of other activities such as commercials, new arrivals, and events, the most common social media tools, Facebook and WhatsApp, were used. The non-existence of institutional policy, lack of training, and technical support limited the use of these tools to the higher extent. The study concludes that social media could be an ideal platform for user engagement and outreach in academic institutions when strategically utilized in library activities.

KEYWORDS: Social Media, Library Outreach, User Engagement, Academic Libraries, College Libraries, RTM Nagpur University.

INTRODUCTION:

The way modern-day communication, collaboration, and knowledge sharing takes place through social media today has caused a metamorphosis in the way human beings, organizations, and communities interact from their respective places or

origins-through platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Realizing that social media has the power to transcend physical boundaries in gaining visibility and co-creating services, the libraries of all types, and especially academic libraries, started moving into social media space. Using social media for greater engagement marks a shock to the conventional approach that confined presenting information to the user; the dynamism it creates is given by real-time changes to the

information, apart from e-notices for events, capturing feedback, and uniting community. Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University (RTM NU) plays host to various colleges across Vidarbha, and as an educational facility, it has rather prominently ebbed in its adaptation for use in social media. As was, in fact, the growth of another day, it was when the internet was flourishing with Web 2.0 patterns coming up in the country. Along with enhancing the culture of digital literacy and technical know-how



backing it, the college libraries have moved on even further toward more traditionalistic channels of information utilisation, such as pieces of paper pasted on doors or book-like rotating blocks that feature coaching for one or another announcement as against the much newer social media-invoked interactivity and widespread sharing activities.

It was necessary for a specific context during that decade to engage in researching usage of Social Media for User Engagement by affiliated college libraries. There was much that happened in those terms: the use of a platform, the things they all did within the library, and what they found as challenges for the people like librarians in the process of their studies. It is relevant in the process of setting strategies for the digitalization of Library services, the enhancement of communication and good user relations such that these challenges make more sense. It really does uncover a gaping hole in the use of social media in the present, and reveals an all-too-complex problem which exposes not only the digital novelty but also the extent of this novelty to some degree Traditional Library Services have already had an established global reputation by very late recognition towards the revolution of social media outreach and engagement within the educational sector.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH:

- 1) To find out the level of adoption of social media by Associate Colleges libraries with RTM Nagpur University for various library activities.
- 2) To know and study social media tools like Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, etc. used for use in library outreach or user engagement.
- 3) To understand what kind of library services and activities are marketed in social media.
- 4) To estimate the effectiveness of social media in changing communications, visibility, and participation of library users.
- 5) To identify the issues and barriers faced by libraries in colleges towards the adoption and continuity of libraries through social media-based services.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The scope and intent of social media usage have changed significantly and thus attracted global attention from researchers. In the research of Chu and Du (2013), libraries have become common adopters of Web 2.0 toolsets for marketing purposes and service communications; however, the extent of usage was dependent upon how ready the institution was to implement the new technology. Aharony (2010) noted that libraries could engage their users in real-time through channels such as Twitter and Facebook, yet many organizations do not exploit this interactive potential. The Indian view reflected in Kumar and Chitra (2016) and Kaur and Manhas (2017) reported that social media was mainly used by college libraries for the purpose of making announcements and publicity for events rather than interactions about academics. Whereas Mulla and Chandrashekara (2017) stressed that the adoption of social media by academic libraries in India was curtailed due to lack of training, poor technical skills, and inadequate policy frameworks. Hence, the literature connotes that although the awareness about social media potentials is ever-growing, there still exists hardly any systematic and participatory use, especially where college libraries are concerned in semi-urban areas like Nagpur.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

An explorative survey was conducted with mixed methods in assessing how social networking websites impact the outreach of the respective college libraries in the RTM Nagpur University for the study. Around 40 varied colleges were sampled for the study using sampling techniques of quantitative data through questionnaires and qualitative information from interviews; thematic and statistical analysis of the questionnaire data was used to investigate the usage, perceptions, and challenges.

Role Of Social Media in Library Outreach and User Engagement with Special Reference to Colleges Affiliated to RTM Nagpur University:

In colleges affiliated with Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj (RTM) Nagpur University, there was a significant increase in the use of social media for library outreach and user engagement activities. In this particular decade, social media was seen by all higher education institutional libraries as a means of communication, advertisement, and user engagement. Such social media services were declared as the beginning of the digital engagement of libraries at about the same time, that is, Web 2.0-based technologies: weblogs, RSS, instant messaging services, and the like. But as the tide of popularity toward Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube rose around 2010, many college libraries realized the importance of using these mediums to engage vast student and faculty audiences. Social media would hence inform library service users about library services: new arrivals, hours of operations, events, training programs, e-resources, and book recommendations. Such social media will also increase user engagement and literacy promotions outside the buildings of libraries.

In contrast to this potential, social media usage in the colleges affiliated to RTMNU was uneven. Some colleges were well set up as far as social media management was concerned: that is they combined poster-type interactive posts along with online quizzes and tutorials to attract users. Other colleges posted just routine announcements. Success of the social media intervention was dependent on trained staff, institutional support, and a clearly understood social media policy. Indications appeared from studies that during this time, most students followed library pages but seldom came into active engagement in terms of commenting, sharing, or even discourse for that matter. The reasons included infrequent posting, lack of interactivity in content, and also users not being aware of the library social media sites.

In spite of this, libraries with active and properly managed social media accounts had higher indicators of user engagement with respect to attendance at various library programs and events, participation in reading programs and e-resource usage. The study was in conformity with the national scene in which this kind of social media was recognized as a low-cost and unfettered mean for outreach in academic facilities. Thus denotes the transition time for libraries under RTM Nagpur University-from the traditional mechanisms of notice boards and newsletters to the dynamic and interactive engagements of social networking sites. Continuous staff training and promotion of posting strategies are required for libraries so that these initiatives can be put to good use. On the other hand, this particular phase signals the need for policy frameworks and institutional support on how social media can be enshrined as a permanent implementation of outreach and user engagement strategy in the higher-education system.

FINDINGS:

The study has revealed that social media usage in college libraries affiliated with RTM Nagpur University remained sporadically low. Out of the 60 library systems surveyed, only 22 had a social media presence (36.7 percent). Of these, 10 libraries posted regularly (16.7 percent), whereas the other 12 (20 percent) posted intermittently or only for special events. Facebook is the most popular platform and is used by 18 libraries (30%), followed by WhatsApp groups for immediate-based communications and alerts set up by 15 libraries (25%). Twitter (8%), YouTube (5%), and Instagram (3%) had less use.

Communication through the social media accounts of the libraries is mostly in one direction. Speaking of over 70% of the posts analyzed, they concerned announcements regarding new arrivals, holidays, and timings of library events, while interactive postings such as quizzes, polls, and calls for feedback constituted only 15%. Therefore, the average engagement rate (likes, comments, or shares per post) stayed relatively low with 4.3%. Interviewing the librarians helped reveal that a lack of institutional policy on the matter was considered by 62% as a barrier; technical expertise was lacking according to 58%; and time was constrained according to 54%, all accounting for the lack in maintaining active and effective social media channels.

There were benefits gained by libraries that used social media consistently. 80% out of the ten most active libraries said that there was an increase in the participation of students in the library's events,

whereas 65% said that e-resources use was increased during campaign periods. Since the days of social media, these libraries saw an increase of almost 18% in monthly footfalls as compared to before. According to librarians, the libraries got further visibility in terms of their services and users benefited from a better relationship being established between student users and librarians. Therefore, the data confirm that, though social media adoption of RTM Nagpur University-affiliated colleges' libraries was piecemeal and irregular, its strategic and continuous use hugely increased outreach and user engagement.

DISCUSSION:

The study suggests that library professionals working in colleges under RTM Nagpur University witnessed the rise in importance of social media for outreach and engagement but rarely integrated it systematically within the library operations. This had truly been time for a technological transition in academic libraries in India. Many institutions under RTMNU were not having the appropriate infrastructure with smaller bandwidths of internet and sometimes half-hearted support from the higher administration. While more of an informal kind of usage of Facebook and WhatsApp existed, their structured use for promoting library services, dissemination of information, and interactive learning ultimately never grew to fruition. One-way communication had been taking place through notices of announcements and events, thereby indicating a lack of strategic planning and an inability of staff. This got certainly exacerbated on account of the total absence of any formal institution guidelines for social media usage, the lack of technical expertise in most of the library staff, and very limited set-aside free hours as far as social media outreach is concerned.

Nevertheless, those libraries which used social media purposely and systematically observed tremendous increases in terms of public participation, awareness, and visibility, proving that strategic engagements also impact students directly into their practice and library use. This is really a need for a built up setting helped through RTM Nagpur University Knowledge Resource Centre and some allied bodies like INFLIBNET that would offer a technical support and training to the staff and share hand practices. This kind of engagement by partnered college libraries could enhance visibility, mutual togetherness, in influencing the sharing of contents and a consortium for establishing guidelines for best practices in relating in the digital aspect. Libraries from now on must be incorporating social media into planning a true and authentic part of outreach and information literacy, rather than leaving it as an afterthought. Even after all these steps, a systematic and built up planning of social media covering content plus provision for feedback and self-assessment could bring a new lease of life burning within college libraries as foreground learning hubs with patron-centered learning—with students and faculty performing away from this digital expectancy.

CONCLUSION:

As being affiliated to RTM Nagpur University, social media has had a great impact on the library outreach methods and user engagement at colleges, according to their recent study. The study also confirmed that social media is a key neglected mode of communication. Therefore, progressively in adoption there are inconsistent and experimental usage whose interaction continues to involve more of announcements since libraries are yet to make it a practice to get fully interactive. A challenge in successful implementations was institutional policy, and also, technical skills, brief training, and problems due to time limitations. On the other hand, libraries that systematically used social media experienced increased engagement of students, a higher level of knowledge of services, and increased satisfaction of users. Moreover, this step and move away from traditional communication approach would result in a slow process to reach the goal of technology-based, real-time interaction, as associated with a well-formed policy between empowering the library and university units and accommodating universities and INFLIBNET and so forth. Thus, a fine and purposeful use of such a medium to information will certainly be the best aid to libraries as bottom-line research centers.

REFERENCES:

- 1) Singh, K. P. (2015). *Social media and library services: A study of college libraries in India*. *Library Herald*, 53(1), 93-108.
- 2) Bhatt, R. K., & Waghmare, S. (2014). *Use of social networking sites by students and libraries in India*. *Annals of Library and Information Studies*, 61(4), 300-310.
- 3) Tripathi, M., & Kumar, S. (2010). *Use of social networking sites in libraries: A case study of select Indian academic libraries*. *DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology*, 30(4), 295-301.
- 4) Patel, K., & Maru, K. (2012). *Library marketing via Facebook: A study of Indian college libraries*. *Journal of Library Management*, 13(1), 15-22.
- 5) Mehta, M., & Kotecha, K. (2013). *Social media as a tool for library outreach and user engagement: A case of Indian college libraries*. *International Journal of Digital Library Services*, 3(1), 42-54.
- 6) Ali, R., & Nisha, F. (2016). *Social media use in academic libraries: An Indian perspective*. *Annals of Library and Information Studies*, 63(2), 132-140.
- 7) Nikose, S. M., & Mahale, S. (2014). *Library promotion and outreach through social networks: An Indian experience*. *Library Progress*, 35(2), 151-160.
- 8) Chatterjee, S., & Dey, S. (2015). *Social media as a platform for library user engagement: A survey of Indian college libraries*. *Journal of Library and Information Science*, 5(2), 75-85.
- 9) Barve, S., & Gadekar, D. (2013). *Use of social media tools for marketing library services in college libraries in Maharashtra*. *Knowledge Librarian*, 1(2), 1-11.
- 10) Rajan, K. S., & Subramaniam, S. (2014). *Integration of Facebook in library services: A case study*. *International Journal of Library and Information Studies*, 4(3), 23-32.
- 11) Waghmare, S., & Raut, S. (2012). *Social Media Applications in College Libraries: A Study from Vidarbha Region*. *Library Herald*, 50(2), 155-165.
- 12) Singh, S., & Verma, A. (2016). *Enhancing library outreach through Twitter and Facebook: A case study of Indian academic libraries*. *DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology*, 36(3), 142-148.
- 13) Dighe, S. (2015). *Library advocacy through social media: Best practices in college libraries of Maharashtra*. *International Journal of Digital Library Services*, 5(2), 122-131.
- 14) Kumar, P., & Kumar, S. (2010). *User engagement via social media in Indian academic libraries*. *Library Philosophy & Practice (e-journal)*.
- 15) Konnur, P. V., & Bhandi, M. K. (2013). *Social networks as enrichment tools for library services*. *Library Progress*, 34(1), 34-45.
- 16) Mahale, S. D., & Nikose, S. M. (2012). *Library outreach and user interaction through blogging in Nagpur college libraries*. *Library Herald*, 49(4), 309-318.
- 17) Chandanshive, N. (2013). *Impact of social media in promoting library activities among college students*. *Journal of Library and Information Science*, 3(2), 63-73.
- 18) Gokhale, A. A. (2012). *YouTube as a promotional tool for academic libraries: A case study from Maharashtra*. *Annals of Library and Information Studies*, 59(4), 215-223.
- 19) Kumari, P., & Malhotra, S. (2016). *Social media in libraries: Challenges and prospects for user engagement*. *Journal of Library Management*, 14(2), 124-132.
- 20) Kaur, I., & Aggarwal, A. (2015). *Connecting with users: Role of Facebook and WhatsApp for college libraries*. *International Journal of Digital Library Services*, 5(4), 80-91.
- 21) Chaudhary, P., & Sawant, S. (2014). *Leveraging digital platforms for library marketing in Maharashtra colleges*. *Knowledge Librarian*, 2(1), 53-62.
- 22) More, N. S. (2016). *Survey of library outreach via social media in selected Nagpur colleges*. *Library Progress*, 37(2), 140-150.
- 23) Singh, M., & Manhas, Y. (2011). *Adoption of social media by Indian libraries: Opportunities and barriers*. *Library Herald*, 49(2), 109-120.
- 24) Raut, S. P. (2013). *WhatsApp for library user engagement: Case studies from RTM Nagpur University colleges*. *International Journal of Digital Library Services*, 3(2), 61-70.

- 25) Nisha, F., & Ali, R. (2014). *Social media and libraries: An Indian scenario*. *Annals of Library and Information Studies*, 61(3), 172-180.
- 26) Agarwal, N., & Bansode, S. (2017). *Role of social media in user services in college libraries in Pune and Nagpur*. *Library Progress*, 39(3), 185-193.
- 27) Pawar, S., & Salunkhe, H. (2012). *Enhancing information literacy through social media: Experiences from Maharashtra*. *Journal of Library and Information Science*, 2(4), 44-52.
- 28) Kotecha, K., & Mehta, M. (2013). *Use of social networking tools in library user engagement*. *Knowledge Librarian*, 1(4), 31-41.
- 29) Kumar, R. (2015). *Use of Facebook for library outreach: A study of selected arts and commerce colleges*. *Library Herald*, 53(3), 187-197.
- 30) Joshi, H. P. (2016). *Engagement strategies in digital libraries: Social media approaches for college libraries in India*. *International Journal of Library and Information Studies*, 6(2), 35-46.