Social Media Usage Among Agriculture Collegian in North-Eastern India

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ABSTRACT

The study attempts to understand the recent trends of social media use and the phenomenon of distractions among agriculture collegian in North-Eastern Hill states of India. A sample of 343 students drawn from 7 colleges of six North-Eastern Hill states was surveyed. The results showed rampant usage of social media among the agriculture collegians in the region. Social media like WhatsApp and Facebook were used by as many as 97 per cent and 93 per cent of the respondents respectively. Majority of the students spent significant amount of time on using social networking sites that too, regularly. Wastage of time in irrelevant activities and health related issues were perceived as major negative consequences of social media by the students. Social media exposure in higher agricultural education can play the positive role in information creation, sharing and socialization ultimately creating social wealth.

Keywords: Information sharing, Learning, Media learning, Social media

INTRODUCTION

The social media is a relatively new but fast-growing category of online and interactive gateway. These applications are usually user-generated content rather than supplier generated and thereby allowing peer-to-peer communication and user-participation (Nambisan and Nambisan, 2008; Shankar and Malthouse, 2009). It is a new form of communication and consists of a variety of communication tools such as blogs, collaborative projects, social networking sites, content communities and virtual world (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). These sites contribute by providing unlimited opportunities to interact, socialize and share with each other (Correa *et al.,* 2013, Ozguven and Mucan, 2013).

According to Global Digital Statistics (2014), there are 2.95 billion (41% of total population) people who are active Internet users with 2.03 billion penetrations of active social media users, whereas 1.56 billion of them access these social applications through their mobile devices (We are social, 2014). Social media applications are commonly used by millions of people across the world for different reasons on the regular basis (Al-rahmi *et al.,* 2014). This rapid growth in acceptance of social media applications in a short period of time is due to its increasingly widespread operation by students (Kirschner and Karpinski, 2010). This increase in the use of these applications is because of its convenience, flexibility and functionalities (Al-rahimi *et al.,* 2013). These tools are highly beneficial for students of higher education and modernizing the process of student learning, interaction, collaboration and sharing (Chai-lee, 2013 and Al-rahmi *et al.,* 2014). The social media experimentations with innovative farmers. The experimentation with innovative farmers had shown that it is not only helping in scaling the farmers' innovations but also institutional innovations at large (Nain *et al.,* 2019). However, on the other hand, these applications are also a source of distraction and

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divert students' attention from their learning (Kirschner and Karpinski, 2010; Purcell *et al.,* 2013; Junco and Cotten, 2012). Internet has rapidly entered the life of the people in the 20th century. Educational literature which is freely accessible such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, references, databases etc. play an important role in distant learning, in collaborative projects with students from other schools, universities, countries and also enables discussion of different problems with them. Internet in the sphere of education is really unique and was invented especially for education (UNESCO, 2003).

Internet turned to a symbol of change as it offered unlimited choices to access information. Internet affects education process, offering alternative and creative methods of learning, and helps to acquire desired information and has changed the concept of time and place. In every aspect of education and learning different applications of internet technology are spreading (Tutkun, 2011). Internet has changed the way people access information and wide ranges of learning resources are available on the Internet (Johnson, 2011). The present study investigates the usage pattern and associated challenges of social media among agriculture collegian in north eastern hill states of India which is landlocked and poorly connected with the outside world.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted during 2016-17 in six North-Eastern Hill States. One college each from Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim and two colleges from Tripura were selected for this study. Accordingly, all the 3rd year UG students and 1st year PG students (as the population has sufficient experience and exposure about ICT tools) of the constituent colleges of Central Agricultural University was purposively chosen for the study. However, based on availability and eagerness of the respondents, 343 students from 7 colleges of NEH region has taken part in the survey, which constitutes about 70 per cent of the total population under investigation. A questionnaire was designed after conducting a comprehensive review of the related literature. Frequencies, percentage, mean and standard deviation were mainly used for interpretation of data. Frequency, percentage and average were used for descriptive analysis of the data and results have been presented both tabular and pictorial format.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

ICTs are increasingly being used by public authorities as well as by individual for information access through smart phone, computer, laptop etc. Nowadays personalized web information is becoming a trend. The needs and competencies of students vary and ICTs facilitate one-to-one learning. The future trend of the higher education system may be a more personalized and customized way of learning leading to better performance of the students. The findings in Figure 1 shows the distribution of students according to availability of ICT resources such as mobile, tablet, PC, Laptop and Internet connectivity for agricultural education purpose. It was observed that almost all (99.42%) the students had mobile/tablet, 88.34 per cent of the students had PC/laptop. Majority of the students (88.05%) had access to internet connectivity.

Students use social media to stay "connected" with their friends and be up-to-date with their individual interests. Even if they are not completely engaged in class, or subject areas or remain absent from the class, social media could add that familiar territory for the students to work with a tool they interact every day. The teacher also is enriched with the facility to tweet, post out topics public materials that were covered, over all supposed to be covered that day. Social media technologies offer the capability to both receive and create content with the hope that a collected intelligence emerges. Table 1 presents usage level of different social media among the selected students. Usage of social media viz., WhatsApp and Facebook was as high as 97 per cent and 93 per
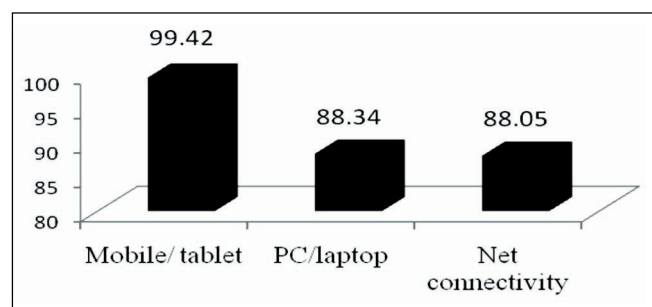

Figure 1: Availability of personal ICT resources

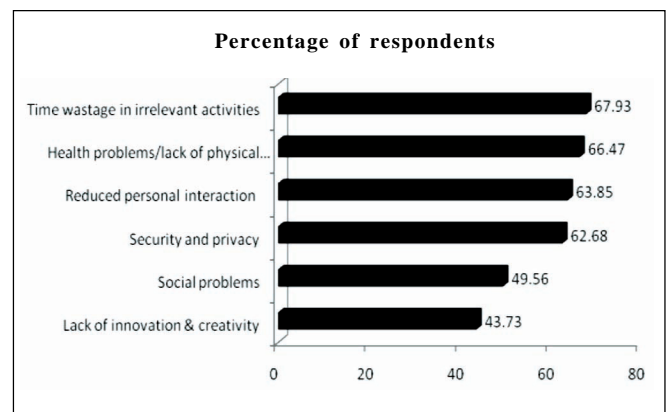**Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to usage and time spent on social media (n=343)**

Social Media	Usage		Level of usage				
	Frequency	Percentage	Never	Occasionally	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Facebook	318	92.71	29(8.45)	85(24.78)	8(2.33)	53(15.45)	168(48.98)
WhatsApp	333	97.08	11(3.21)	17(4.96)	2(0.58)	12(3.50)	301(87.75)
Google Groups	181	52.77	167(48.69)	64(18.66)	16(4.66)	37(10.79)	59(17.20)
Wiki	234	68.22	109(31.78)	111(32.36)	9(2.62)	56(16.33)	58(16.91)
Twitter	80	23.32	267(77.84)	53(15.45)	10(2.91)	3(0.87)	10(2.92)
Blog	42	12.24	300(87.46)	28(8.16)	4(1.67)	8(2.33)	3(0.87)
Google +	239	69.68	104(30.32)	119(34.69)	24(7.00)	40(11.66)	56(16.33)
OthersInstagram	24	7.00	-	10(2.91)	-	5(1.46)	9(2.62)
YouTube	15	4.37	-	4(1.67)	3(0.87)	3(0.87)	5(1.46)
Hike	9	2.63	-	4(1.67)	-	2(0.58)	3(0.87)
We chat	2	0.58	-	1(0.29)	-	-2	1(0.29)
LinkedIn	3	0.87	-	1(0.29)	-	(0.58)	-

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

cent of the students respectively. On the contrary, the usage of Twitter (23.32%) and Blog (12.24%) was low. Further, it was observed that daily use of WhatsApp and Facebook was made by 88percent and 49 per cent of the students respectively. Likewise 16.33 per cent, 7.00 per cent and 34.69 per cent of the students have indicated using wiki, Google+ on weekly, monthly and occasionally basis respectively. Only few students (2.91%, 1.67%, 1.67% 0.29% and 0.29%) reported to have used Instagram, YouTube, hike, we chat, LinkedIn, respectively in learning purposes. Manjunatha (2013) reported that 80 per cent of the students spend significant amount of time on using Social Networking Site (SNS) regularly and 20 per cent of the students do not spend any time using SNS. Reema and Gopal (2014) found that among undergraduate college students from University of Delhi who actively interacted on SNSs, usage of Facebook topped the list with 100 per cent usage, it was followed by Twitter with 43 per cent and WhatsApp with 26 per cent.

Figure 2 shows the extent to which the respondents agree with the negative impact of ICTs. Majority (68% and 66%) of the students were of the view that time wastage in irrelevant activities and health related issues were the major negative impacts of ICTs. Students, and sometimes teachers, can get hooked on the technology aspect, rather than the subject content. Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram and other social media networking sites can be a potential distraction to living and learning in the real world. Security and privacy social problems and lack of innovation and creativity were indicated as negative impact by 63, 49 and 44 per cent of the respondents respectively. Social media applications are highly utilized by students for a lot of non-educational purposes; these applications may badly affect students' academic life and learning experiences (Kuppuswamy and Narayan, 2010). These new technologies are revolutionary but some of its applications are highly insecure (Trusov *et al.,* 2009). The use of social media applications such as social networking among students

Percentage of respondents

Time wastage in irrelevant activities	67.93
Health problems/lack of physical...	66.47
Reduced personal interaction	63.85
Security and privacy	62.68
Social problems	49.56
Lack of innovation & creativity	43.73

Figure 2: Perceived negative impact of ICT

are mostly for entertainment (Khan, 2012), other applications such as Facebook is significantly negative associated with GPA and learning performance (Junco *et al.*, 2011; Junco, 2012b; Junco and Cotten, 2012) and especially among fresh students (Junco, 2015). Social media includes a wide variety of technologies and provides benefits to any group looking to market itself, including universities. Social media platforms provide ways for higher education institutions to market their services as well as to highlight student connections that can break barriers and encourage communication.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated the access to and usage of ICT and more specifically engagement on social media of the students of higher agricultural education in north east India. Penetration of smart phones and computers among the students is near complete barring a few isolated issues with regard to electricity supply and internet services. WhatsApp, Facebook and other applications are being used by almost all and usage of other tools is on the increase. The exposure is expected to enhance learning outcomes and develop professional network for mutual gain. However, one has to guard against the ill effects of social media that leads to distraction, wastage of time and poor health.

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