Use of Social Media in Marketing of Library and Information Services in Academic libraries in West Bengal

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Abstract

The main aim of this research paper is to find out use, advantages and problems faced by the library and information professionals in West Bengal in marketing through social media. For this study thirteen (13) college libraries in West Bengal were selected as a research sample. The findings of this research proved that most of the college libraries use WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn for publicity of library services. Most of the libraries use social media for marketing library resources and services, for circulating library news and events for research purpose. A face-to-face interview method are used for data collection in this study. Library professionals gives their important views and suggestions about ways of promoting library services through social media.

Keywords: social media, library marketing, social networking site, Library 2.0 marketing, academic library, West Bengal.

1. Introduction:

Social media is a powerful new form of communication. SixDegrees.com was the first social network site that was launched in 1997. Orkut ranked 1st among the social networking sites in India with a user share of 64 percent (Madhavan, 2007). Social networking sites provide brief information about the users and their work. In many cases, it can be used for various purposes like business, and publicity. At present, there are many Social Networking sites. some popular websites are Facebook, WhatsApp, Orkut, Twitter, Myspace, Friendster, and Bharatstudent.com.

A few years ago, the situation was not the same. After the attack of Corona epidemic, this picture changed a lot. For a long time, we were forced to stay at home. At that time the only recourse we had to stay by each other's side was social media. Gradually, in various educational institutions, teachers started teaching through video calling on social media such as Facebook, and WhatsApp. With time, the library service has progressed in its rhythm. With resources freely available on the Internet through various web browsers, library services have reached users' homes with the help of social media. Social media has played an important role in bringing users closer to their libraries and information centers and has shaped the way, how they receive information and services from their libraries and access library services. This is very problematic for libraries to share and manage their resources with others manually. To overcome these problems, many technological developments have been revealed. Libraries have always linked users with information, social media is beginning to play a vital role in marketing information to library users and in marking the library as a community hub.

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2. Literature review:

Social media applications help library and information centres to achieve interlinked with their users. Social media sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Blog, and Twitter are being used to steep connection, relationships and sharing information's with their user community, to spread libraries and to provide information services (Parveen, 2011). Social networking sites were being used by huge number of academic libraries and were fixed to be helpful in enhancing library services and interacting with users. However, the embodiment of social sites by library and information centres staff was found to be challenged by short time and felt inadequacy of the library professionals to keep momentum with the development of new technologies and growing competition in the digital era, marketing within library 2.0 is a ultimate factor for anointment and library professionals are aware about the marketing with new technologies and techniques (Gupta, 2003). Most college libraries are using Facebook as a platform for promoting themselves and their services and to promotion their resources. The use of social media sites helps to raise library and information services and assists library marketing and the teaching of social site literacy, which will help library professionals by giving them knowledge about these technologies and how users can use them in library (Alkindi).

A SNs interlinked to a college library's web page is to qualify users' have a live communication with a library professional on issues relating to the use of the library and information centre and allow the libraries to publicity their programs. Libraries can publish an information in their social media site, such as new additions to their resources, library events and news, user information, videos, the soliciting of responses and feedback to user (Kaur,2009). Library websites are not fully used by Library and Information Science professionals as a marketing equipment. Social media in marketing of library services will help to encourage alternation all over the worldwide (Fernandez, 2009).

3. Objectives:

The objectives of the research are to: (1) Investigation the present situation specially after COVID-19 situation of using social media for marketing of library services and resources in West Bengal; (2) evaluate the problems faced by library staff in using social media in libraries; and (3) Provide the suggestions of library professionals to enhance marketing of library services and information resources through social media.

4. Methodology:

The research sampled library professionals working in the Government aided college approved by the University Grants Commission of West Bengal. The total numbers of academic library (13) were considered as the research population. A face-to-face interview method are used for data collection in this study. Out of these 13 interviews, 11 Library professionals gives their important views and suggestions about ways of promoting library services through social media.

5. Analysis and results:

The collected data presented and analysed by various method and interpreted in tables. Total 11 libraries took part in this study and they all are using social media. Based on

the biological and other personal background data obtained, most of the participants were male 06 and only 05 were female. Out of 11 library professionals, the most of were tenured either as a librarian. Most of them were from age group 35-45 years.

5.1. **Academic Libraries using social media:** Social media is used for publicity of academic libraries is the way of marketing libraries, its product like print or electronic resources and services via different modern technologies. Total eleven academic libraries are using social media for their marketing. Though they are not aware about many social media sites but they are interested to use these media as marketing techniques for the publicity of their library and information centres.

5.2. **Types of social media used by Libraries:** Research in present situation most of the libraries have placed WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter as the most used social media sites in academic libraries, but in West Bengal the evidence from the results showed Table 1 that, the most of the respondents (out of 11) was frequently using WhatsApp with (10, 90 %) and Facebook with (8, 72.72 %) and Twitter with (4, 36.36%) in their libraries. As a social networking tool, Facebook is most popular in West Bengal than other tools.

Type social media	No. of User	Frequency
WhatsApp	10	90%
Facebook	8	72.72%
Twitter	4	36.36%

Table-1: Frequency of using social media
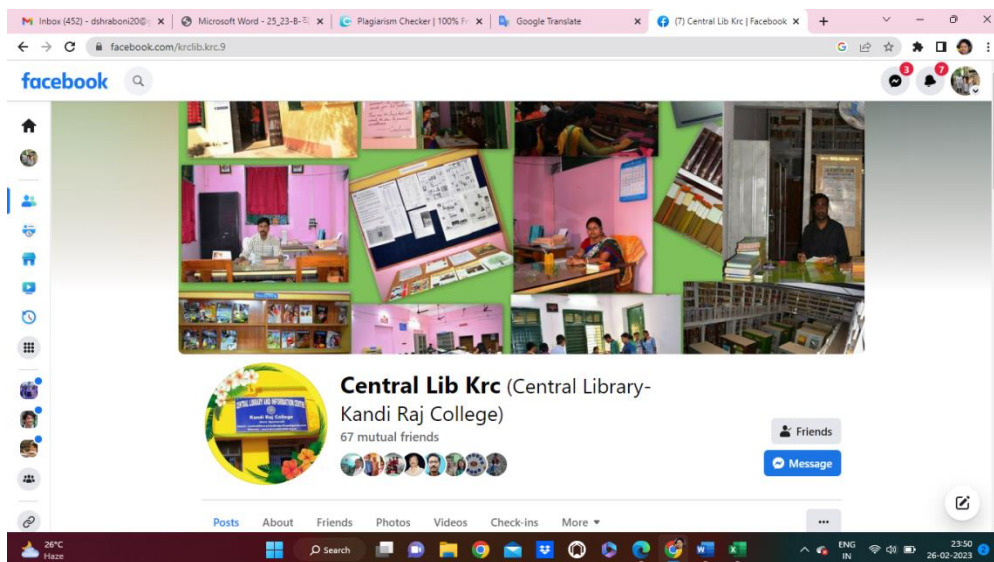
Pic 1: Facebook page of Kandi Raj College
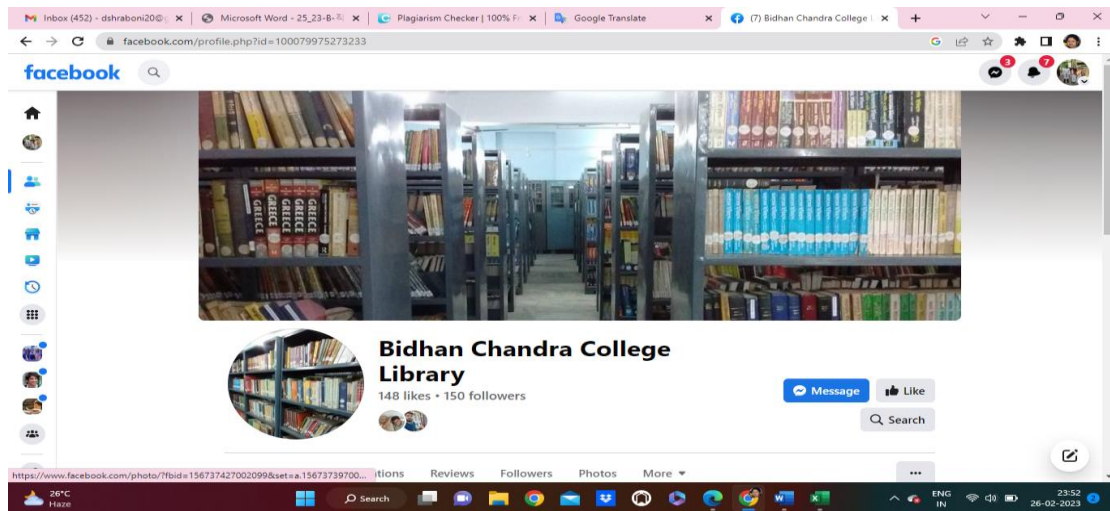
Pic 2: Facebook page of Bidhan Chandra College Library

5.3. **Importance of social media in Marketing of Library Resources and Services**: Most of the libraries in West Bengal are using social media for publishing their news. Table-2 shows that according to library professionals' perceptions on importance of social media in marketing of library resources and services on a four-point scale. It suggests by most of the participants that importance of social media in many aspects and with it helps libraries in building a strong collaborative network with their users.'

Table 2. Importance of social media in marketing of library resources and services

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not Know	Dis Agree
Social media is important to publicity library products and services	100%	0%	0	0
Space and time constraints in communication will overcome	90%	5%	5%	0
It helps knowledge sharing	80%	10%	0	10%
It facilitate library users in seeking library resources	60%	40%	0	0
It facilitate students, faculty and researchers to use library services and its resources	50%	40%	10%	0
Exchanging and processing information will be more convenien	60%	30%	10%	0
It helps academic libraries to get closer to the users	75%	15%	0	10%
It helps in enhance distance education	10%	40%	30%	20%
It facilitates libraries in building collaborative network with the users	85%	15%	0	0

5.4. **Why Using social media**: The participants were asked to express the purpose of using social media platform in their libraries. Table-3 disclose the research results of library professionals' views for purposes of using social media in academic libraries.

It suggests by respondents are awesomely agreed with the purposes of using of social media in libraries as all ratings are above four except the opinion on 'research work'.

Table-3: Purpose of using social media in Academic Libraries

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not Know	Dis Agree
Distributing useful links	75%	15%	0	10%
Sharing library events informations and news	90%	5%	5%	0
Research Work	100%	0%	0	0
Advertisement	60%	40%	0	0
Promoting group discussion and collaborative work	50%	40%	10%	0
For marketing of library resources and services	80%	10%	0	10%
Tagging related resources	90%	5%	5%	0
Updating the library infrustructure and e-reputation world wide	60%	40%	0%	0

5.5. Problems of Using social media: Although in present year social media is too much useful for academic libraries but library professionals are facing so many problems for using it. Though social media usage trends are increasing rapidly all over the world, there have been a lot of problems of using these media in West Bengal. Table-4 shows the which type of problems are arriving in front of library professionals' for using social media in their libraries. Most of the professionals are agreed with the problems in using social media in academic libraries as most ratings are above three except the statement on 'difficulties of understand to the website and its use.'

Table -4. Problems of using social media in libraries

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Dis Agree
Lack of knowledge how to use it	80%	10%	0	10%
Inadequate training opportunities for library staff	90%	5%	5%	0
Slow speed of internet	50%	40%	10%	0
Lack of security and privacy	60%	40%	0	0
Lack of advanced IT skills	100%	0%	0	0
Too many social media tools to learn	80%	10%	0	10%
Website is difficult to understand and use	50%	20%	10%	20%
People can post whatever they want	50%	30%	0%	20%
Inadequate training opportunities for library staff	75%	15%	0	10%
Low interest of librarians in learning and utilising social media	0%	10%	15%	75%

6. Conclusion:

Out of the 11 academic libraries, 10 libraries are using social media in West Bengal. All of the respondents (11) Social media is important to the publicity of library products and services. It was also found that most of the libraries use Facebook (08), WhatsApp (10), and Twitter (04) for marketing their services. Library Professionals agreed that social media is important for advertising library products and services; it helps students, faculties, and researchers to use their libraries. They also agreed that social media is also important for information sharing. Most academic libraries use social media for advertising library resources and events, sharing library news, video conferencing, marketing, and research work. It was also shown that participants faced problems while using social media for low internet speed, privacy, and security, for lacking advanced Information Technology skills personnel. Though a few academic libraries in West Bengal are not using social media sites, they express their positive says towards social media and plan to implement them in their library. Many Academic Libraries should have solved their problem and library staff should be educated and trained regarding social media use for marketing library products and activities in West Bengal.

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