A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON APPLICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM AMONG LIS PROFESSIONALS OF NORTH-EAST INDIA DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT -

Purpose: In this era of new science and technologies, transfer and sharing of knowledge are quite easier than the traditional one. Social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram is some of the most popular platforms for immediate sharing and transfer of information among people. It is a popular place where people can discuss their issues and challenges. Social media is an internet and computer-based technology, which provides virtual facilities for sharing ideas, thoughts, and information. It provides the user with quick information transfer including photos, videos, voice messages, etc. This paper examined the use of Social media among North-Eastern LIS professionals to retrieve and access information during the lockdown. The survey method was adopted to analyze and data collection. An online questionnaire was designed and distributed among 220 LIS professionals in North-East India. Out of these 78.5% of the questionnaire was received. This paper discusses the major findings regarding awareness about new tools, popularity, and maximum use of social media sites and tools and also measures maximum spending hours on social media for various purposes. The study is based on original research data based on primary data received from North-Eastern LIS professionals. It depicts the activities of LIS professionals on social media during the lockdown.

Keywords - Coronavirus; social media; LIS professionals

INTRODUCTION

A coronavirus is an *Orthornavirae* group of viruses that consists of ribonucleic acid (RNA) which directly attacks the respiratory tract of humans and birds. Mild illness in human beings because of common cold and fiver while more illness may cause of SARS, MERS, and COVID-19 (Stokes et al, 2020).

SARS (Severe acute respiratory syndrome) and MERS (Middle East respiratory syndrome) is a viral respiratory infection that has similar symptoms as coronavirus (Canty, 2012). During this pandemic period of COVID-19, social media provides a good platform for information transfer and social connectivity among people beyond the traditional means. The first lockdown was imposed by the government on 25th of March 2020 and it would continue to 30th June as lockdown 5.0, but some of the organizations and institutions have been working throughout the time of lockdown such as food delivery service, medical, defense, airlines, telecoms, media, libraries, etc (Drahosova, 2017).

Social media is a popular communication platform for friends, family, and business to quick interaction among people throughout the world (Kooperundevi, 2017). It is the main factor for fast changes in society and fast connectivity among people. According to Maya E. Dollarhide, around 3 billion social media users are using social media sites. Some of the social media sites are WhatsApp, Facebook, WeChat, Instagram, Youtube, QQ, Tik-Tok, etc. These forms of social media include activities like sharing photos and videos, voice chat, creating social and business networks, blogging, social gaming, election campaign, advertisement, etc (Steeg & Galstyan, 2011). It is not only used for sharing and transfer of information but also a source of virtual income. It is the best option to start online marketing. Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn In, Snapchat are the best place to invest money for virtual income (Edosomwan et al, 2011). Social media is not only the platform for sharing and discussion but it has the potential areas that help people to reach to next level such as Communication: WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram are some common sites for common discussion. Besides these Kickstarter or Zopa are the crowdfunding commercial communication sites where people can discuss funding, investment, and business (Ahlqvist et al, 2008); Collaboration: there have some tools for collaboration of information and data such as Wikipedia and Googledocs- share and edit data, dropbox- upload and download of files and can be accessed from various devices; Review and Opinion: It is an open platform like communication where people can freely ask a question and can reply such as Quora, Yahoo Answer, CNET, and Amazon. CNET and Amazon focused on blog format with articles and expert reviews and customer's products respectively (Boynd & Ellison, 2016); Brand Monitoring: it is a process of monitoring brands and mentioning what is being said. This can be measured by looking at the level of awareness, consideration, and advocacy (Nezakati et al, 2015). Social media can also be monitored by measuring the level of keywords, hashtags, URLs, and user names. Some of the monitoring tools are Brand 24, Google Alerts, Brand watch, Hootsuite, Aherfs, etc.; Entertainment: Duster, Onverse, Gamers, Raptr, Zynga are some popular social media sites for gaming and entertainment; Education: one of the most positive aspects of social media is to provide a platform for class and assignments in real-time aspect, on the other hand, it has some negative aspects also during the online class teachers are not able to recognize who is paying attention; Society: it helps people to share their ideas and thoughts beyond geographical boundaries. Whereas it has some negative impact on people, lots of time they are wasting in social networking sites and pay less

attention in their social life; and Business: No doubt social media is a good platform for online marketing and advertisement of new products but side by side it has some bad effects on business, the negative comments of people can lead bad impression on marketing organization (Siddiqui, 2016).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following are some particular piece of literature which was opted to review for the study, such as Gao, S., Ver Steeg, G., & Galstyan, A. (2015) in their paper explore the role of social media in changing status, human behaviour, and characteristics of information diffusion. They also discuss the large and small groups of influencers; Martina Drahosova and Peter Balco (2017) in their examined the use of social media and for what purpose. They also discussed the positive and negative aspects of social media; Kopperundevi (2017) in the paper describe the types of social networks used in library services. It also describes how libraries use these networks in a meaningful and purposeful way; Canty (2020) in his paper describes the use of social media platforms in libraries across the world. This paper also measures the data collected from Youtube, Facebook, and Twitter-based for library between the months of July and August 2012; Siddiqui and Singh in their paper discussed the positive and negative aspects of social media in the area of Education, Society, business, and youth; Nezakati et al (2015) in their paper discuss the role of social media in disseminating information specifically in the field of tourism. The study has found that the previous studies concerning the use of revolutionized telecommunication in the tourism aspects are less

concerned and not much intersect was taken so far. The paper stresses the areas such as understanding the usability of social media in the tourism sector, integration of tacit knowledge, and its contribution for tourism researchers and experts in the decision-making process; Choudhury et al (2014) in their paper discuss the vital role of social media and search engines for the retrieval of health-related online search information. The study has examined the platforms used on large-scale log analysis and for the study it has taken around 210 as the size of the sample. The study has shown that the majority of the search was related to serious or highly sensitive information that was retrieved from search engines while the health information was shared on social media platforms; Chakraborty et al (2013) in their paper explore the privacy and security concerning the sharing of information in the social media platform and understand the practices related to privacy that was observed among the elderly generation. The study has also observed the extent to which the information is shared between the old user of Facebook and their respective friends in the respect of their sharing habits and the difference across the gender aspects.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has been carried out to measure the usage of social media among Library professionals for sharing and retrieving information among LIS professionals in North – East India. The study includes the following objectives:
- To study the activities of LIS professionals during lockdown;
- To know the purpose of using social media;

- To measure the criteria of using social sites; and
- To measure the effective mood of social media on libraries.

METHODOLOGY

The main objectives of the study have led the researchers to adopt the survey method for the conduct of the further experiment. The survey method can be understood as the process where the collection of data is used to test concepts, established some level of measurement for understanding the concept, and set out another purpose. The survey methods include personal observations, websites, interviews, and interaction with the LIS professionals, and at the same time, the researchers have also collected the data through online questionnaires which have been distributed among the library professional in North-East India.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

The basis of data received from respondents is the analysis and interpreted in the following ways:
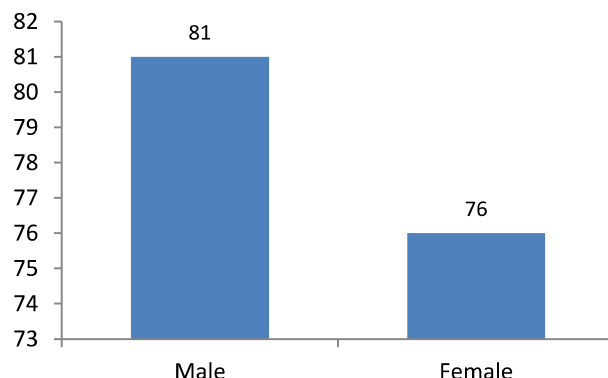
Response Received Gender Wise (157)

Figure 1 represents the gender-wise distribution of respondents who were received by the researchers from different parts of North-East India. The table depicts that 81 respondent belongs to the male category and the number of female respondents is 76. The aggregate number of respondents is 157 in total.

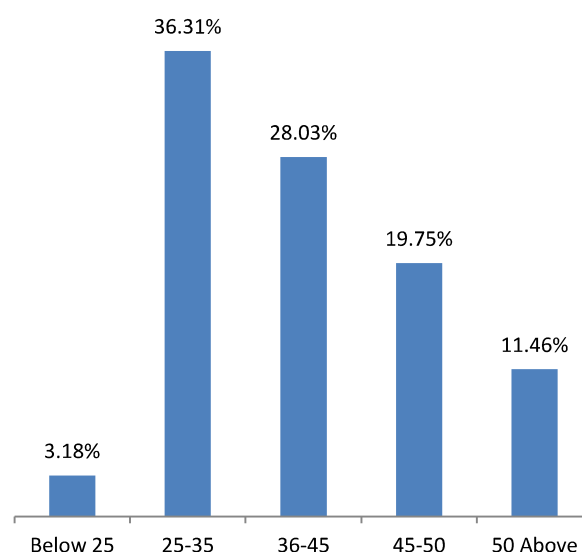**Respondents received by Age Group (157)**

Figure 2: Age wise respondents

It is seen from the above figure 2 that the number of respondents in the category below 25 is 3.18% which is least in the age group category. The highest number of the respondent can be observed in the category of 25-35 age groups with 36.31%. The number of respondents in the category of 36-45, 45-50, and 50 <age groups can be accounted as 28.03%, 19.75%, and 11.46% respectively. As the actively participating group is observed in the age group of 25-35, the LIS professionals are eager and proactive to learn and acquire new concepts and avenues.

Designation of the respondents (157)
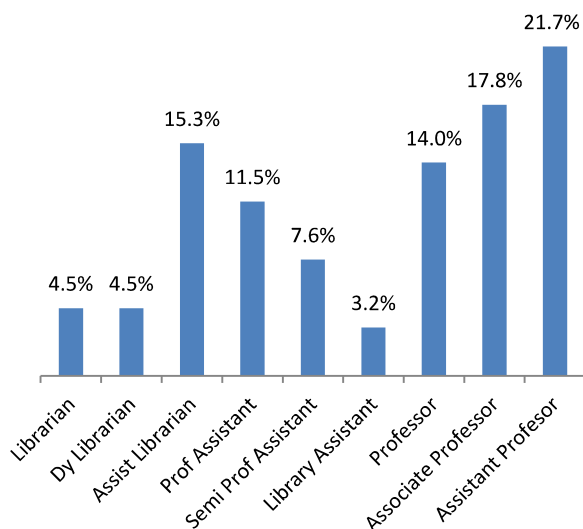
Figure 3: Designation wise respondents

The above figure 3 represents the category-wise distribution of respondents based on their work occupation. The work occupation is distributed based on LIS professionals and teaching professionals. On the category of LIS professional, it is seen that Assistant Librarian has respondent the highest number with 15.3% in total. The least number of professionals can be seen in the category of Library assistants with 3.2%. The distribution of professionals in the categories of Librarian, Deputy Librarian, Professional Assistant, and Semi-professional Assistant is 4.5%, 4.5%, 11.5%, and 7.6% respectively. In the case of teaching professionals, the Assistant professor has the highest number of the respondent with 21.7% in aggregate. The least number of categories can be observed in the category of professor with 14%. In the category of Associate professor, it is seen

that 17.8% have responded to the questionnaire. There are around 157 respondents in total.
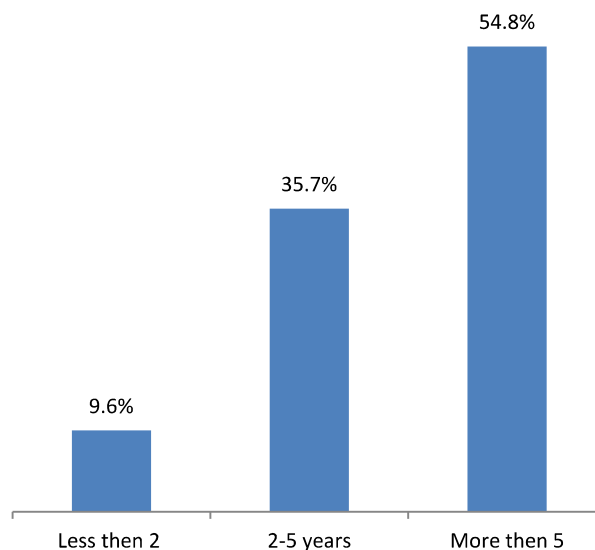
Working experience in year on social media (157)

Figure 4: respondents received based on working experience

Figure 4 represents the working experience of the respondent on the social media platform. Based on 157 respondents, it is noticed that the majority of the respondent in the category of more than 5 years' experience is 54.8%. The number of professionals who has had worked on the social media platform in the category of 2-5 years is 35.7%. It is also observed that the respondent which has less than 2 years of experience on social media is 9.6% which is the least among the category. The figure depicts that the majority of LIS professionals are inclined with the use of social media and know its application in contemporary times.

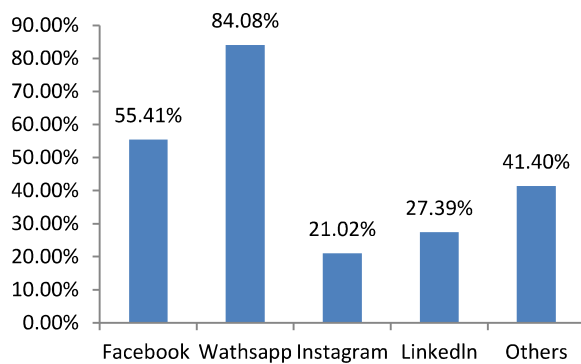**Usage of social media for professional activities (157)**

Figure 5: Respondents received usage of social media

Figure 5 represents the usage of social media by the LIS in different social media platforms. Around 84.08% of the LIS professionals use Whatsapp for different academic and professional activities. The least social media platform used by the professionals is Instagram with 21.02% of the respondents. Social media such as Facebook, Linkedin, and other media have been explored by 55.41%, 27.39%, and 41.40% respectively of the LIS professionals in North-East India. The other media includes Twitter, Snapchat, WeChat, and likewise for various academic activities.
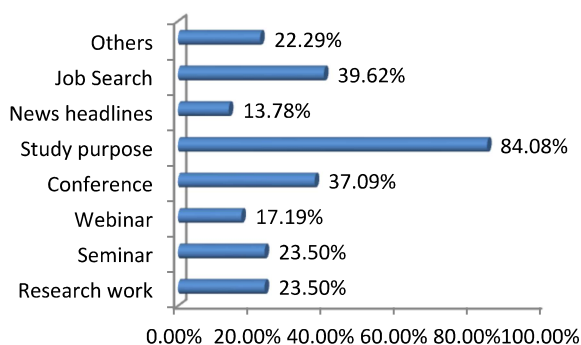
Purpose of using social media (157)

Figure 6: Respondents received purpose of using social media wise

There are various purposes behind the application and usage of social media. The social media platform has enabled students and academicians to remain connected and communicate. In figure 6, it is observed that 84.08% of the social media are used basically for study purposes. Around 39.62% of the social media applications are basically for job-related searches. 23.50% of the social media application is applied for research-related activities and for attending or organizing seminars. 13.78% of the LIS professionals are using social media for hunting the news headline. A total of 37.09% of the social media application is for organizing seminars and workshops. The purpose of using social media in the others category is 22.29% which includes some holistic activities such as sharing tweets, stories on Instagram and Facebook, and likewise.
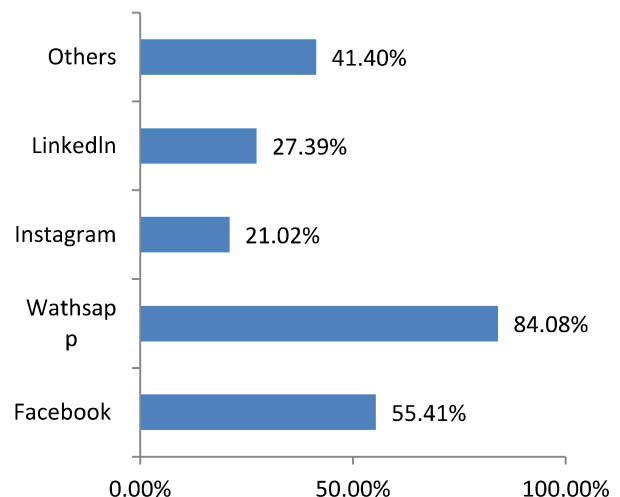
Groups of LIS professional in social media (157)

Figure 7: Respondents received according to LIS professional group

Figure 7 depicts the picture of a group of LIS professionals in social media among 157 respondents among the professionals in North-East India. As per the analysis of the data, a total of 84.08% of the professionals have their different groups on social media. An aggregate of 55.41% of respondents are using Facebook and have their respective groups for different purposes. In the category of social media platforms such as LinkedIn and Instagram, 27.39% and 21.02% of the respondents are being involved in different groups for the different academic activities. There are around 41.40% of the LIS professionals who fall in the category of "others" are having different groups for academic activity.

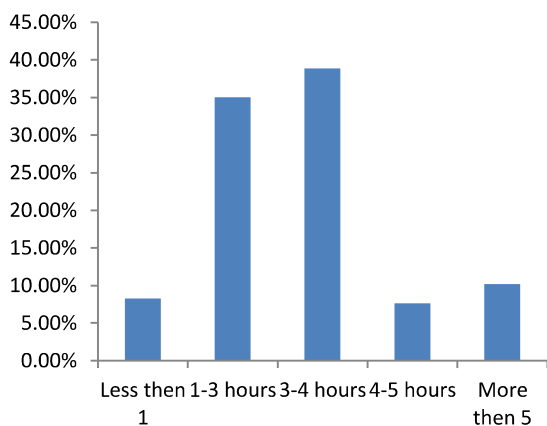**Average daily times spend on social media (157)**

Figure 8: Average time spend on social media

Figure 8 represents the average daily time spent by the LIS professionals on different social media platforms for various academic activities. An average of 40% of the total respondents is using

social media for the time frame of 3-4 hours. 30% of the respondent are using their average time spend between 1-3 hours for social media. It is observed from the data analysis that around 10% of LIS professionals spent their average time with more than 5 hours.

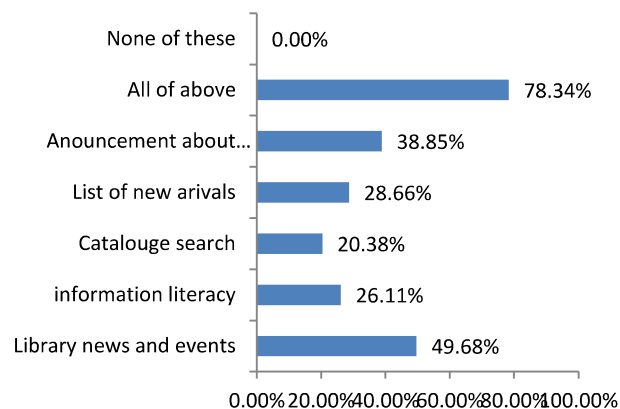**Services received from social media (157)**

Figure 9: service offered by social media

There are numerous services received from online social media platforms. Services include literature search, management of references, Library news, and many more. It is observed from figure 9 that 78.34% of the respondent has availed all the major services received from the social media platform. It is seen that 49.68% of the LIS professional had received library news and events-related information on social media. Social media has offered 38.85% of the library professionals about the announcement news regarding the library. Around 28.66% of the respondent has received the services such as the list of a new arrival. Social media has also offered services such as catalog search and information literacy program where 20.38% and 26.11% respectively of the respondent has availed the

received this offering. The entire library professional has received these services in one way or the other.

Whether social media provides updated information (157)
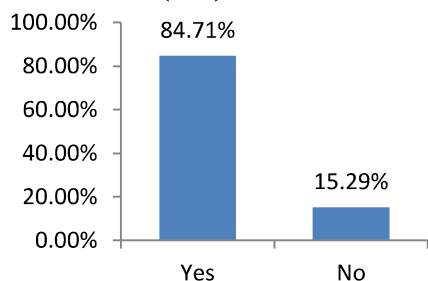

Figure 10: Respondents received updated information for LIS profession

Figure 10 shows the upgraded information received by the LIS professionals concerning different academic activities. The analysis shows that there are around 84.71% of the respondent who has received updated information on social media for various purposes and on the other hand 15.29% of the LIS professionals responded that they don't receive or rather don't avail any upgraded information on the different social media platform.

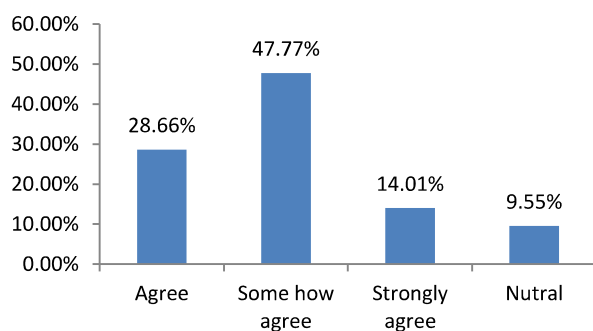**Social media as effective mode of library services (157)**

Figure 11: Social media as effective mood of library services

Figure 11 shows whether social media works as an effective mode of library services or not? The figure shows that 47.77% of the respondents are in a position of somehow agreeing. On the other hand, 28.66% of LIS professionals agree that social media is effective to perform different library functions. 14.01% of the LIS professionals strongly agree that social media is an effective tool and 9.55% of the total respondents are neutral in this regard.

RESULTS

The following are some of the major findings of the study:

- It was found that 81 respondents belong to the male category and the number of female respondents is 76. The aggregate number of respondents is 157 in total;

- It is found that the number of respondents in the category of below 25 is 3.18% which is least in the age group category. The highest number of the respondent can be observed in the category of 25-35 age groups with 36.31%. The number of respondents in the category of 36-45, 45-50, and 50 < age groups can be accounted as 28.03%, 19.75%, and 11.46% respectively;

- Based on the category of LIS professional, it is seen that Assistant Librarian has respondent the highest number with 15.3% in total. The least number of professionals can be seen in the category of Library assistants with 3.2%. In the case of teaching professionals, the Assistant professor has the highest number of the respondent with 21.7% in aggregate. The least number of

categories can be observed in the category of professor with 14%;

- The analysis reveals that the majority of the respondent in the category of more than 5 years' experience is 54.8%. The number of professionals who has had worked on the social media platform in the category of 2-5 years is 35.7%;

- 84.08% of the LIS professionals use Whatsapp for different academic and professional activities. The least social media platform used by the professionals is Instagram with 21.02% of the respondents. Social media such as Facebook, Linkedin, and other media has been explored by 55.41%, 27.39%, and 41.40% respectively of the LIS professionals in North-East India;

- It is observed that 84.08% of social media are used basically for study purposes. Around 39.62% of the social media applications are basically for job-related searches. 23.50% of the social media application is applied for research-related activities and for attending or organizing seminars;

- As per the analysis of the data, a total of 84.08% of the professionals have their different groups on social media. An aggregate of 55.41% of respondents are using Facebook and have their respective groups for different purposes. In the category of social media platforms such as LinkedIn and Instagram, 27.39% and 21.02% of the respondents are being involved in different groups for the different academic activities;

- An average of 40% of the total respondents is using social media for the time frame of 3-4 hours. 30% of the respondent are using their average time spend between 1-3 hours for social media;

- 78.34% of the respondent has availed all the major services received from the social media platform. It is seen that 49.68% of the LIS professional had received library news and events-related information on social media. Social media has offered 38.85% of the library professionals about the announcement news regarding the library;

- The analysis shows that there is around 84.71% of the respondent who has received updated information on social media for various purposes and on the other hand 15.29% of the LIS professionals responded that they don't receive or rather don't avail any upgraded information on a different social media platform; and

- The analysis shows that 47.77% of the respondents are in a position of somehow agreeing. On the other hand, 28.66% of LIS professionals agree that social media is effective to perform different library functions.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Social media has always played a vital role in the performing of different academic activities

among academicians and LIS professionals. The diverse group of the profession has used social media platforms to avail different types of services for their own personal and self-development. While the study was carried out, the researchers have observed and put forward some suggestions. The respondents said that Social media is an open platform for everyone wherein it becomes necessary to keep all the personal data of LIS professionals secret. It was also suggested that all the conversations should be limited to professional ethics and there should be regular online training to trainee the LIS professionals from time to time. There should be a continuous interaction program where the professionals will avenue new learning skills and develop confidence among themselves. This pandemic brings many changes in human life. Some tools of social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and LinkedIn brings LIS professional together virtually (chakraborty et al, 2013). They use these social tools for information exchange and sharing ideas. But only 47.77% of LIS professionals are somehow agreed to connect people for professional talks (De Choudhury, 2014). Moreover, LIS professionals have created professional groups for an online discussion and online training. During this covid pandemic, social media are the sole tools that keep the academicians and research pushing forward. As Saud, Mashud, and Ida in their study found that social media has gained popularity due to society's seeking health and medically related information during the time of the pandemic. Social media has fascinated the public to gain utter information related to all the symptoms of the covid virus. The different social media platform has enabled people to remain connected and stay motivated with their relative and friends.

This media was considered as the most effective medium to share, react and post any health-related information. Again a case study carry forward by (Nadeak,2020). tends to study the effectiveness of social media platforms that are used in distance learning where 250 online questionnaires were distributed among the students by using the Multi-Attribute Utility Theory. The study concludes that online teaching with the use of social media is helpful only for theoretical courses but its results are ineffective for practical-based courses (Kwayu, Abubakre, & Lal, 2021). Despite its several drawbacks, it's having managed to conquer an important phase in everyone's life and especially to all the working professionals where the concept such work from home was possible due to social media.

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