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Social Media Tools Used by Students of North East India Central Universities

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Abstract: This study examines the patterns, purposes, and impacts of social media usage among students of North East India Central Universities. Data collected from 570 respondents reveal that WhatsApp is the most preferred platform, followed by YouTube and Instagram. The majority of students spend 3 - 5 hours daily on social media, with many using it regularly for educational purposes. Social media is primarily used for accessing news and information, though academic and socialization purposes are also significant. Findings indicate that social media strongly influences academic performance, with most students reporting maximum or moderate impact. While many adapt easily to new social media platforms, a notable minority face challenges. Issues of distraction, authenticity, information overload, and platform fragmentation highlight both the benefits and drawbacks of social media in students' academic lives.

Keyword: Social media tools, North East India, Central Universities, students, social media challenges.

INTRODUCTION:

Social media tools are becoming a central part of a student's life these tools have become powerful platforms for the interaction, collaboration and dissemination of knowledge. The evolution of digital communication technology has greatly transformed and enhanced how we create, share and access information. Social media tools are widely used not only for social interaction but also for academic support using popular platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube etc and they have transformed and enhanced how student connect with their peers and how they engage with course materials. Social media tools serve multiple purposes such as facilitating group discussion, sharing of notes and resources, organization of events, promotion of student activities and enables online learning environments.

As digital connectivity continues to expand, understanding the specific social media tools used by the students of North East India Central Universities becomes essential. Examination of their usage patterns provides insight to the influence of technology in academic performance, the students' social relations and the overall engagement of students. This article will explore the most commonly used social media tools among the students and analyze the impact of social media on their education.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Fatte (2024) examines the impact of social media on collaborative learning and student performance in college libraries in Goa. The study highlights that modern college libraries have transformed from being mere repositories of books into dynamic community spaces that encourage interaction and learning. It emphasizes that when used effectively, social media can support collaborative initiatives, facilitate research activities, and promote knowledge sharing among users. The findings indicate that social media-based group or collaborative learning enhances academic performance, as collective efforts among students lead to greater engagement and improved achievement. The study also notes that the enjoyable nature of social media platforms plays a significant role in motivating user participation and interaction. Overall, the research concludes that institutions and library services can use social media to strengthen student engagement, create more inclusive learning environments, and mitigate the challenges associated with remote and hybrid learning models.

Mali (2024) examined how social media technologies have strengthened library and information services. The study discusses the significant influence of ICT on libraries and information centres through tools such as computers, smartphones, laptops, interactive whiteboards, tablets, notebooks, e-readers, and scanners. It also explains how emerging technologies and cloud computing have transformed the social and economic landscape of libraries, while systems like RFID have enhanced operational efficiency and improved security for users. Furthermore, the research explores the role of artificial intelligence and machine learning, noting that AI applications can assist users by recommending relevant documents and addressing inquiries through chatbots and virtual assistants. The study concludes that as social media platforms and technologies continue to evolve, LIS professionals and librarians must stay up to date to effectively promote services and strengthen engagement between libraries and their users.

Punith (2023) investigated the use of social media in undergraduate colleges to promote library resources and services. The study noted that in its early stages, social media had limited functionality, mainly restricted to sharing images and certain audio formats. However, it has since evolved significantly, removing communication barriers and enabling rapid information exchange. The research highlights that social media allows users to connect with large audiences in a short period, encouraging librarians to adopt these platforms to promote library resources and services within academic communities. The findings reveal that most undergraduate students consider social media an important tool for accessing and promoting library services. Students also agreed that social media enhances the visibility and reputation of library resources and can serve as a reliable platform for delivering authenticated services to verified users. Among the various platforms, WhatsApp emerged as one of the most widely used social media tools by students. The study further indicates that integrating WhatsApp into library services both for promoting resources and facilitating quick information searches through WhatsApp's AI features has proven highly beneficial for users.

Chitumbo (2015) examined the use of social media tools for library service delivery in higher learning institutions and found that over 60% of the students surveyed were well aware of social media platforms and used them for academic purposes. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Myspace were identified as the most popular tools among students for supporting their studies. The majority of participants recognized the advantages of social media and expressed strong support for its integration into their institutions' library services. However, the study also pointed out several challenges, including limited internet access points, poor connectivity, and insufficient awareness of both existing and emerging social media tools among librarians and users.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To identify the most preferred social media tools used by students in the North East India Central Universities.
2. To examine the duration of social media usage per day among students of North East India Central Universities
3. To discover the frequency of social media usage per week for educational purpose among students of North East India Central Universities
4. To determine the purpose of using social media tools among students of North East India Central Universities.
5. To assess the impact of social media usage on academic performance among students of North East India Central Universities
6. To identify challenges in adapting to new social media platforms among students of North East India Central Universities
7. To examine the extent to which North East India Central University students are distracted by other applications while using social media.

METHODOLOGY:

This study employed a descriptive survey method to examine the patterns, purposes, and impacts of social media usage among students of North East India Central Universities. A structured questionnaire was constructed and distributed to nine selected Central Universities, with 100 copies provided to each institution, making a total of 900 distributed questionnaires. Out of these, 570 responses were received, representing a response rate of 63%. The data collected was tabulated and analysed to identify trends in social media preferences, usage duration, frequency of use for educational purposes, perceived impacts on academic performance, challenges in adapting to new platforms, distractions, and disadvantages.

The sample size of 570 respondents was drawn from students across the nine Central Universities, ensuring representation from diverse student populations in the region. While the exact population size of all students in these universities is not specified, the study includes responses from each institution, making the sample broadly representative of students in North East India Central Universities.

Table 1: Total response from each University

Sl.No.	Name of the University	Total response
1	Assam University	54
2	Manipur University	52
3	Mizoram University	68
4	North Eastern Hill University	54
5	Nagaland University	62
6	Rajiv Gandhi University	78
7	Sikkim University	68
8	Tezpur University	66
9	Tripura University	68

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

Objective 1: To identify the most preferred social media tools used by students of the North East India Central Universities.

Table 2: Social media used by students

Sl.No.	Social media	Total Users	Percentage
1	WhatsApp	255	45 %
2	YouTube	138	24 %
3	Instagram	132	23 %
4	Facebook	29	5 %
5	X (Twitter)	10	2 %
6	Others	6	1 %
	Total	570	100%

Table 2 presents the most preferred social media tools among students. Out of 570 respondents, the majority, 255 (45%), selected WhatsApp as their preferred platform. This was followed by 138 respondents (24%) who preferred YouTube, and 132 respondents (23%) who chose Instagram. A smaller number of students preferred Facebook (29 respondents, 5%), X/Twitter (10 respondents, 2%), and other platforms (6 respondents, 1%).

These findings show that WhatsApp is the most popular social media tool among students, indicating its strong role in communication and information sharing. YouTube and Instagram are also widely used, reflecting students' interest in video content and social networking. In contrast, platforms like Facebook and X/Twitter are far less preferred, suggesting a shift in student preferences toward newer and more interactive platforms.

Objective 2: To study the duration of social media usage per day among students of North East India Central Universities

Table 3: Duration of social media usage among students

Sl.No.	Frequency	Total Users	Percentage
1	1 – 3 hours	193	34 %
2	3 – 5 hours	209	37 %
3	5 – 7 hours	109	19 %
4	More than 7 hours	59	10 %
	Total	570	100%

Table 3 shows the duration of social media usage per day among students. The majority of respondents, 209 (37%), reported using social media for 3 - 5 hours daily. Meanwhile, 193 respondents (34%) use it for 1 - 3 hours, 109 respondents (19%) spend 5 - 7 hours, and 59 respondents (10%) reported using social media for more than 7 hours per day.

These findings indicate that most students spend between 3 to 5 hours on social media each day, showing that it has become a significant part of their daily routine. A large group also spends 1 to 3 hours, while a smaller portion uses social media for longer durations of 5 to 7 hours or more than 7 hours daily. This

suggests that while moderate use is common, a notable number of students engage in heavy daily usage, which may have implications for their academic and personal lives.

Objective 3: To discover the frequency of social media usage per week for educational purpose among students of North East India Central Universities

Table 4: Frequency of social media usage for educational purpose among students

Sl.No.	Duration	Total Users	Percentage
1	2 times a week	48	8 %
2	3 times a week	65	11 %
3	4 times a week	57	10 %
4	More than 5 times a week	83	15 %
5	Everyday	317	56 %
	Total	570	100%

Table 4 shows the frequency of social media usage for educational purposes among students. The majority of respondents, 317 (56%), reported using social media for educational purposes on a daily basis. Additionally, 83 respondents (15%) use it more than five times a week, 65 respondents (11%) use it three times a week, 57 respondents (10%) use it four times a week, and 48 respondents (8%) use it only twice a week.

These findings indicate that most students rely on social media daily for educational purposes, showing its strong role in their academic routine. A smaller group uses it several times a week, while only a few limit their usage to two or three times weekly. This suggests that social media has become a regular and important tool for learning among the majority of students.

Objective 4: To determine the purpose of using social media tools among students of North East India Central Universities.

Table 5: Purpose of using social media among students

Sl.No.	Purpose	Total Users	Percentage
1	Academic	148	26 %
2	News and Information	242	42 %
3	Entertainment only	62	11 %
4	Socialization	118	21 %
	Total	570	100 %

Table 5 presents the purposes for which students use social media. The majority of respondents, 242 (42%), reported that they use social media primarily to acquire the latest news and information. A further 148 respondents (26%) indicated that they use social media for academic purposes, while 118 respondents (21%) use it mainly for socialization. Finally, 62 respondents (11%) stated that they use social media solely for entertainment.

These findings show that most students rely on social media as a source of news and information, making it their primary purpose of use. A significant portion also uses social media for academic activities, while others focus on socialization. Only a small group of students use social media mainly for entertainment. This suggests that social media is viewed more as an information and learning resource than just a platform for leisure.

Objective 5: To assess the impact of social media usage on academic performance among students of North East India Central Universities

Table 6: Impact of social media on academic performance

Sl.No.	Impact	Total Users	Percentage
1	Maximum	274	48 %
2	Moderate	246	43 %
3	Minimum	50	9 %
	Total	570	100%

Table 6 presents the impact of social media usage on academic performance among students. A majority of respondents, 274 (48%), reported that social media has a maximum impact on their academic performance. Meanwhile, 246 respondents (43%) stated that social media has a moderate impact, and 50 respondents (9%) indicated that social media has minimal or no effect on their education.

These findings show that most students believe social media strongly influences their academic performance, either positively or negatively. A large group (43%) feels the impact is moderate, while only a small portion (9%) think social media has little or no effect. This suggests that social media plays an important role in students' academic lives, with varying degrees of influence depending on how it is used

Objective 6: To identify challenges in adapting to new social media platforms among students of North East India Central Universities

Table 7: Challenges in adapting to new social media application

Sl.No.	Challenges faced	Total Users	Percentage
1	Yes	189	33 %
2	No	381	67 %
	Total	570	100%

From table 7, the data shows that out of the total respondents, 381 (67%) stated that they do not encounter difficulties when learning new social media applications and that they can easily adjust to the newer social media tools. In contrast, 189 (33%) acknowledged facing challenges in adapting to and using these applications effectively.

This shows that most students (67%) can quickly learn and adjust to new social media platforms without much difficulty. However, about one-third (33%) of the students still face challenges in adapting to these platforms, which means that while the majority are comfortable, a significant group struggles with the learning process.

Objective 7: To examine the extent to which North East India Central University students are distracted by other applications while using social media.

Table 8: Distractions faced by students

Sl.No.	Distractions by other applications	Total Users	Percentage
1	Easily distracted	235	41 %
2	Not easily distracted	239	42 %
3	I complete my work first, before opening other applications	96	17 %
	Total	570	100%

Table 8 highlights the distractions faced by students when using social media. The majority of respondents, 239 (42%), reported that they are not easily distracted by other applications while using social media. Meanwhile, 235 (41%) indicated that they are easily distracted. Additionally, 96 respondents (17%) stated that they prefer to complete their work first before opening notifications from other social media applications.

These findings suggest that while a large proportion of students can resist distractions, a nearly equal number struggle with maintaining focus, highlighting the dual impact of social media on academic productivity.

Objective 8: To identify the key disadvantages perceived by university students in using social media applications.

Table 9: Disadvantage of social media usage.

Sl.No.	Perceived disadvantage	Total Users	Percentage
1	Too much information	100	18 %
2	Authenticity of information	236	41 %
3	Too many social media applications	234	41 %
	Total	570	100%

Table 9 presents the perceived disadvantages of social media usage among students. A total of 236 respondents (41%) reported that the main disadvantage is the difficulty in determining the authenticity of information shared on social media. Similarly, 234 respondents (41%) indicated that the presence of too many social media applications makes it challenging to obtain the desired information. Additionally, 100 respondents (18%) stated that information overload is a major drawback, as it complicates the process of identifying valuable content.

These findings suggest that while social media provides access to vast information, issues of authenticity, overload, and platform fragmentation remain significant concerns for students

CONCLUSIONS:

The study demonstrates that social media has become an integral part of student life across North East India Central Universities. WhatsApp, YouTube, and Instagram dominate as preferred platforms, with most students spending 3 - 5 hours daily and frequently using social media for educational purposes. Social media is primarily valued for accessing news and academic resources, and its influence on academic performance is widely acknowledged, with most students reporting moderate to maximum impact. While many students adapt easily to new platforms, a significant minority face challenges, and distractions remain a concern for nearly half of the respondents. Furthermore, issues such as authenticity of information, information overload, and the multiplicity of platforms highlight both the opportunities and drawbacks of social media in academic contexts.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed to help universities and students maximize the benefits of social media while minimizing its challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. Promote Digital Literacy Programs:** Universities should organize workshops or seminars to help students critically evaluate the authenticity of information on social media. Training in fact-checking and source verification can reduce the risks of misinformation.
- 2. Encourage Balanced Usage:** Since many students spend 3 - 5 hours daily on social media, institutions can promote awareness campaigns on healthy usage habits. Time-management strategies should be shared to prevent excessive use that may affect academic performance.
- 3. Leverage Social Media for Academic Purposes:** Universities can create official academic groups or channels on popular platforms like WhatsApp and YouTube to share study materials, announcements, and collaborative opportunities. This aligns with students' existing preferences and ensures social media is used productively.
- 4. Support Students Facing Adaptation Challenges:** For the one-third of students who struggle to adapt to new platforms, universities can provide orientation sessions or peer-support groups to ease the transition.
- 5. Address Distractions and Overload:** Students should be guided on strategies to minimize distractions, such as prioritizing tasks before engaging with notifications. Universities can encourage the use of productivity tools or apps that help manage social media engagement.
- 6. Policy Development:** Institutions may consider developing guidelines on responsible social media use, emphasizing its role in academics while cautioning against overuse and distraction.

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