
ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION: A STUDY OF FACULTY MEMBERS OF SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE, MIZORAM UNIVERSITY, AIZAWL

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ABSTRACT:

The present paper is an endeavour to find out the role and effectiveness of Social Media in scholarly communication among the faculty members of school of Social Science, Mizoram University, Aizawl, Mizoram, India. The study conducted through a structured questionnaire administrated among the faculty members of the entire department (06) of the school of Social science. It indicates that most of the respondents were found to be aware and making affective use of such sites in their communication, teaching and research. The majority of the faculty members (57.69%), who accesses social media for various purposes are in the age group of 31-40 years. It was revealed from the study that facebook is the most popular SNS followed by LinkedIn in all categories of the faculty members.

Keywords: Social Networking Sites, ICT, Facebook, LinkedIn, Web 2.0, World Wide Web.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, Social Media among users became more and more popular. Due to the increased popularity of it, professors and researchers are questioning whether research is being affected by how much time is being spent on these sites? Social Networking became popular between 2004 and 2006, after Facebook and MySpace were created. Facebook have over 500 million users and it is still growing. The recent trends and developments in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have changed the information seeking scenario in the new era. A few years ago the Internet was providing very limited set of services such as searching, browsing, emailing, chatting and so on. But at present it has become more essential part of our day to day life. It is facilitating new services to the users of various areas. World Wide Web (www) is one of the most useful and important service of internet. The ever increasing contribution of internet and the revolution of information

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distribution over the last few decades have significantly increased the relationship between the individuals, institutions, communities etc. According to Boyd and Ellison (2007) “Web based services allow individuals to build a Social and professional profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within a system”. Social networking sites, allow users to create a personalised account that includes the information like; date of birth, hobbies, preferences, education status, relationships status and personal and professional interest etc. The applications of web 2.0 facilitate the users to provide very interactive and constructive information sharing, user based environment on the internet. It also provides a platform to all the users to interact with content creator, sharing their ideas with colleagues, friends, professionals, intuitions and so on.

1.1 Social Media Social Media comprise the competencies to recognize social and information needs of the individuals and to locate, evaluate, create and disseminate information within economical, cultural and social context. The term Social Networking is a composition of individuals, professionals or institutions, which are attached with one or more individuals like colleague, friend, neighborhood, small society and so on. Social networking is possible in everywhere i.e. school, college, university, organization, institution or in the work place among the individuals of the same group. This is because of the widely spread of internet in the work places like universities, research institution etc, where the individuals gather and share their first hand experiences, their ideas, their views, their emotions and finally the information among them. In this way they are getting new experiences, they are updating themselves about their surroundings, about their profession and society as well.

1.2 Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

A social networking site is an online portal, or web service, which attract to develop a social relationship among group of individuals like a small rural community or cluster of professionals. It is a relationship between individuals who belongs to different religion, different region as well as different profession but with the same purposes. It provides a very vital platform to connect and share their feelings, emotions, views, new ideas, sharing professional information and other activities related to the real life situation among the mass. Therefore it is an online community of users on the web. The services provided by social networking sites based on a representation of each individual, his/her social links, and a limitation of the additional services. A social networking site provides a huge number of web based services for their users to interact to the individuals through the internet i.e. e-mail, chatting, instant massaging etc. It is estimated that there are more than 300 Social Networking

sites which are available on internet and the membership of these websites are open to all. Anybody can become a member through a very small justification. The below images show the various types of Social Networking sites.



Source: <https://www.google.co.in/#q=picture+of+social+networking+sites>

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The undertaken study is quite new thus very limited studies have been conducted by the faculty members and research scholars across the world to investigate into issue related to the social networking sites in terms of their role and characteristics. The studies which were found appropriate were methodically reviewed along with their findings which are as follows:-

Mahajan *et al.* (2013) explored to study the activities and purposes for using SNSs by the research scholars of Panjab University, Chandigarh. The findings of their study shows that majority of the respondents were found to be aware and making use of such applications in their research work. Their study also reveals that facebook is the most popular SNSs by all categories of researchers. Chakraborty (2012) pointed out the bustle and purpose of using SNSs by the research scholars of North-East Hill University, Shillong, and originate that the most of the respondents were from the social science stream and using it for group discussions in input matters, compilation exploring and inventing new concepts, etc. Parveen (2011) examine the alertness and use of SNSs by LIS professionals in the university libraries of Uttar Pradesh and noticed that the most of the LIS professionals are well conscious about Facebook as it provide them a vital platform to share their views, ideas etc. Singh and Gill (2011) explored the awareness and use of social Networking Sites by the research scholars of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. In their study they found that social networking sites are useful for all the researchers and most of them are using SNSs. They observed that majority of

scholars were using Facebook followed by Orkut. They also found that the use of SNSs is very easy and user friendly. Bicen and Cavus (2010) explored the uses of internet by the students in the department of computer education instructional technology and found that most of them are preferably accessing social networking sites. The study shows that Live space and facebook are most common sites used by the students. Kluemper and Rosen (2009) explored use of social networking website in employment election through accessing the personal profile of candidates on the sites. This study was conducted at a large public university in the southern USA. Boyd and Ellison (2007) In the study it is reported that the students used SNSs to keep in touch with old friends and to sustain or deepen relationships characterised by some, form offline link such as residence closeness or a shared class explain the widespread ideas, description and character of Social Networking Sites. They also offered the chronological growth of these sites and changes which had happened over the time. They discussed the recent scholarship on SNSs, pointed out key job and gave the suggestions for future research in related areas.

3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study is restricted to all the Faculty members of school of social science department (06) of Mizoram University, Aizawl (Mizoram) who are performing their teaching/research work in concern discipline.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find out the role of social media in scholarly communication used by the faculty members of school of social science, Mizoram university;
- To find out the most accessed SNSs by the faculty members.
- To explore the purpose of accessing the social media;
- To find out the frequency of using social media;
- To know the reliability of information accessed by the faculty members and
- To know the problems being faced by the faculty members while using social media.

5. METHODOLOGY ADOPTED

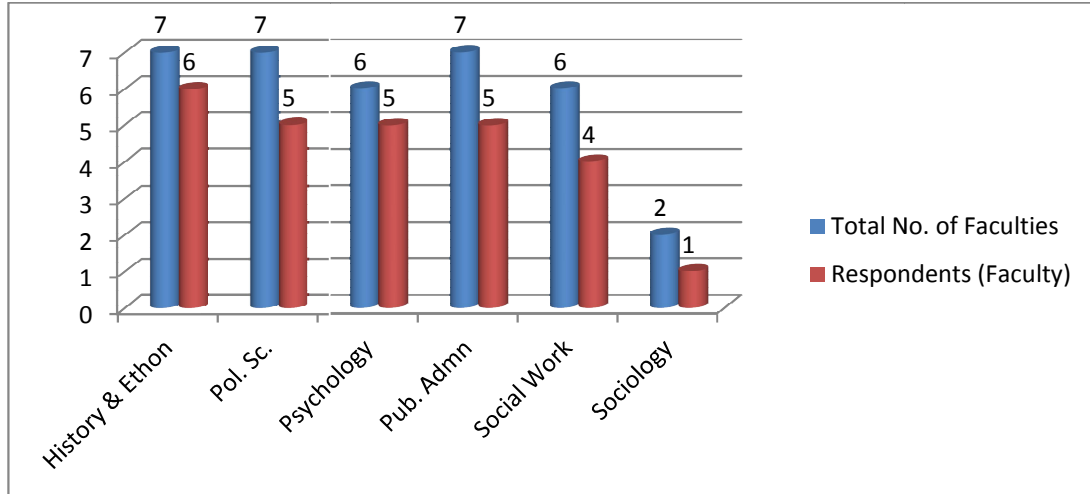
For collection of data a structured questionnaire was prepared and was distributed during the month of July to September-2015 to all the faculty members of school of social science, Mizoram University covered under the study. Total 35 questionnaire were distributed and 26 (74.28%) duly filled questionnaire were received back from the respondents. Which have been analyzed using statistical package for social Sciences (SPSS) and their interpretations have been undertaken in the light of framed objectives.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Specialisation of the Respondents

There are total 35 faculty members from all six departments comes under school of social science, Mizoram university, out of 35 faculty members 26 were provided their feed back through questionnaire. (Figure i)

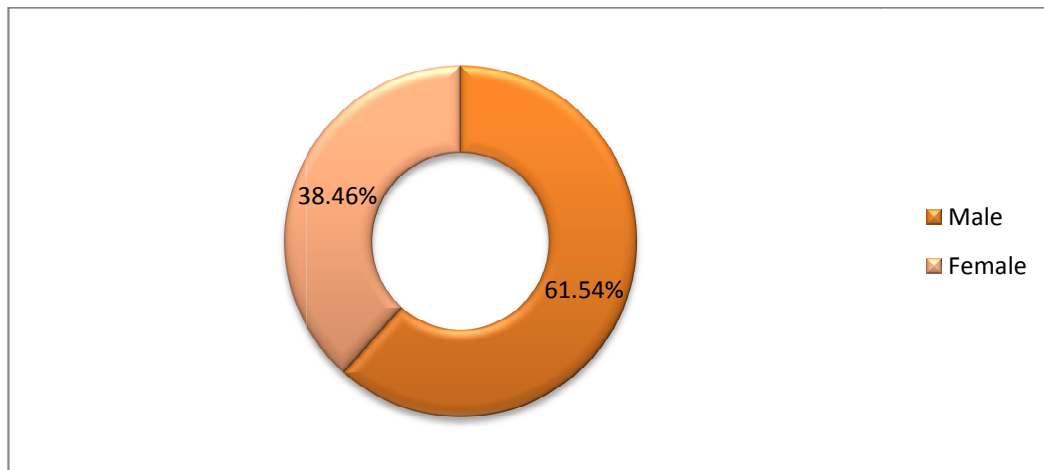
Figure i (Department wise distribution of the Respondents)



6.2 Gender wise distribution of the Respondents:

Figure ii presents the gender wise distribution of the faculty members which shows that 61.54% of respondents are male and 38.46% respondents are female who are actively using the social media.

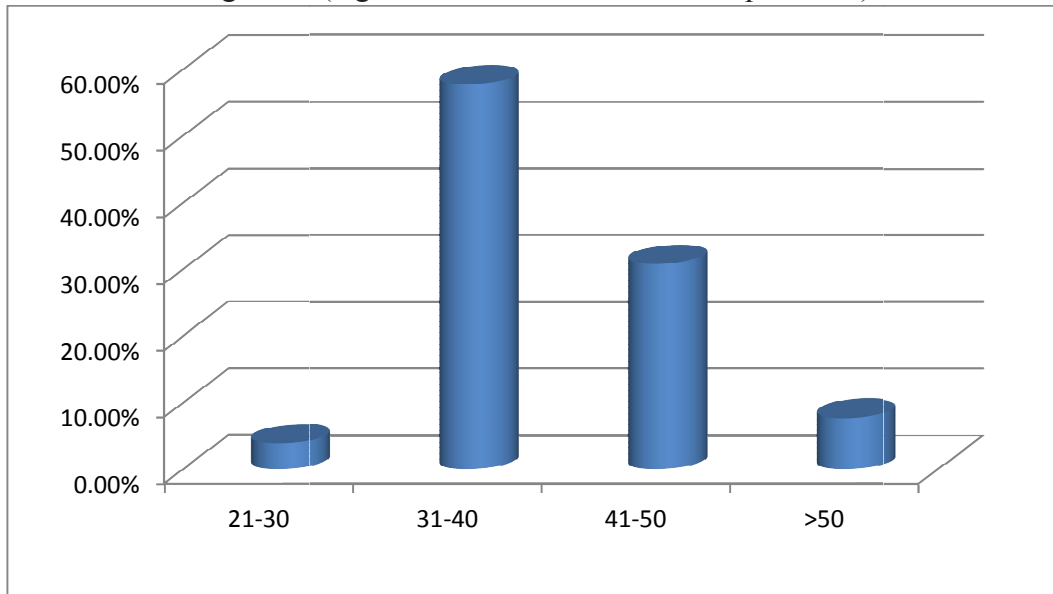
Figure ii (Gender wise Respondents)



6.3 Age group wise distribution of the Respondents

Figure iii provides the data related to the age group of the respondents. Which shows that 3.85% respondents falls between the age group of 21-30. Most of the respondents (57.69%) are in the age group of 31-40, who are actively using these sites for scholarly communication followed by the 30.77% of respondent falls between the age group of 41-50. Further 7.69% respondents are more than 50 years age who are accessing social media.

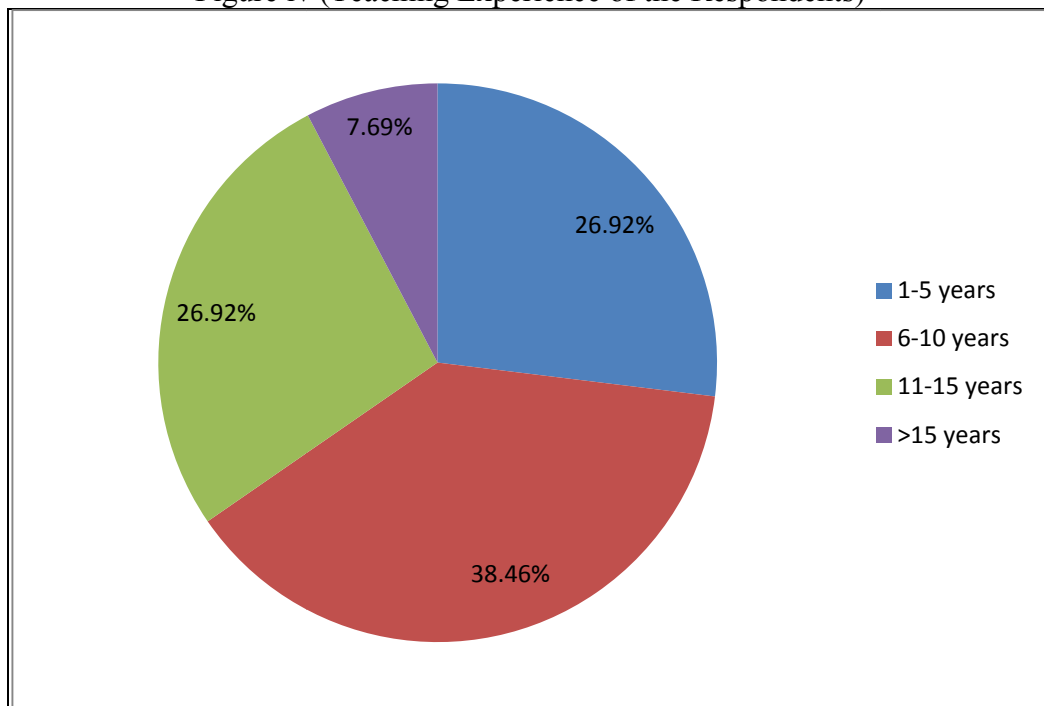
Figure iii (Age wise distribution of the Respondents)



6.4 Teaching experience wise distribution of the Respondents

Figure IV shows the teaching experiences of the faculty members. It finds that 26.92% of respondents having teaching experience in between 1-5 years, whereas most of the respondents i.e. 38.46% are having the teaching experience in between 6-10 years, further it is observed that 26.92% respondents have teaching experience of 11-15 years, whereas 07.69% respondents have more than 15 years teaching experiences.

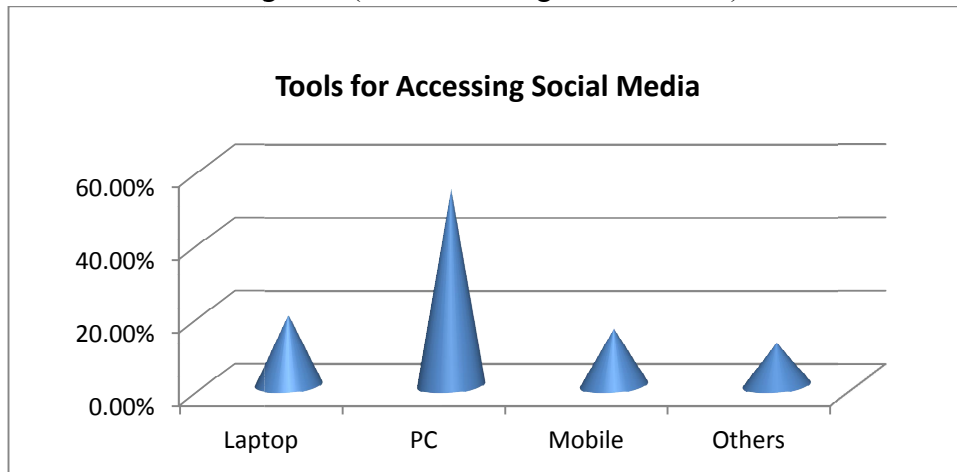
Figure iv (Teaching Experience of the Respondents)



6.5 Tools for accessing social media by the Respondents

Figure v Indicates devices that are being used for accessing social media. It shows that 19.23% of faculty members are using Laptop for accessing such sites, whereas most of the faculty members i.e. 53.85% are using Personal Computer for the same, while 15.38% respondents are using mobile as tool and 11.54% use I-Pad, Palm top, Tablet etc.

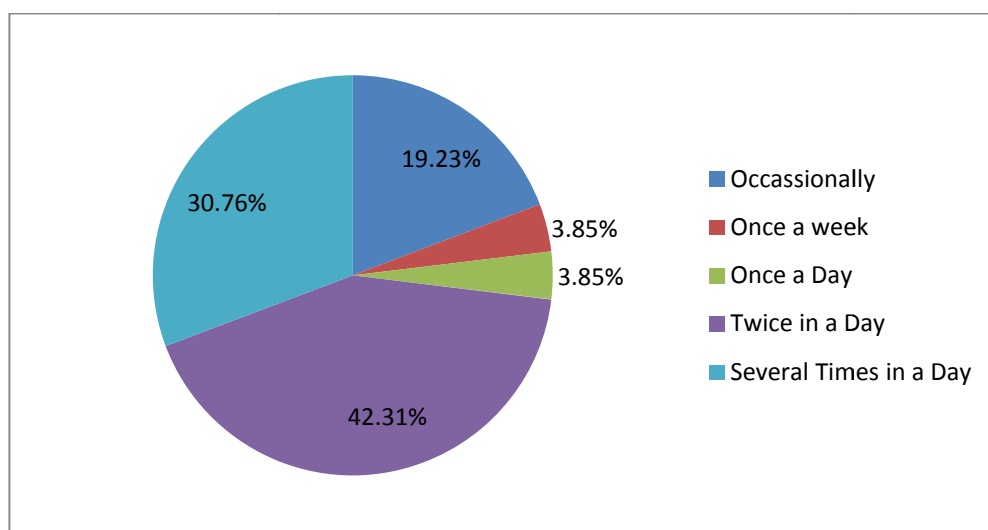
Figure v (Tools of Using Social Media)



6.6 Frequency of Accessing Social Media

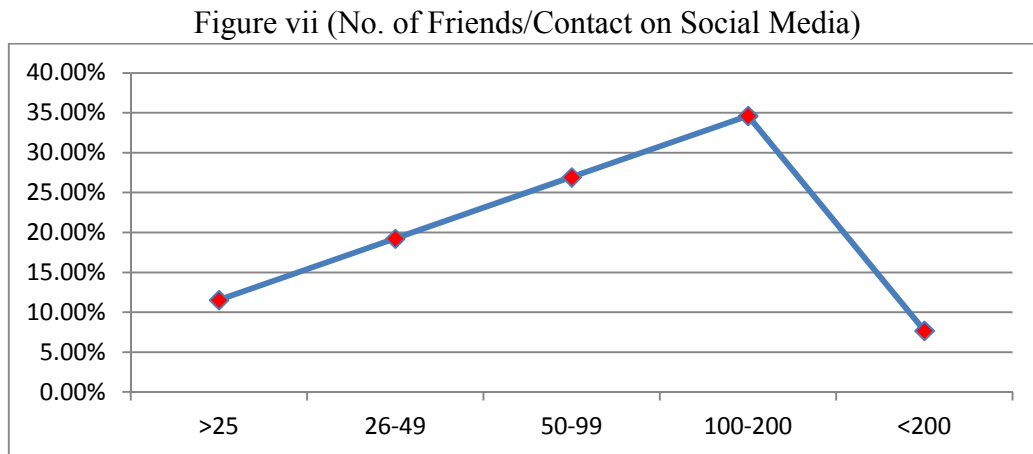
Figure vi presents the distribution of respondents according to the frequency of accessing social media. The result shows that 19.23% of the faculty members are accessing the social media occasionally, whereas 3.85% respondents access once a week and once a day as well, most of the faculty members i.e. 42.30% access these sites twice in a day, whereas 30.77% respondents access such media several times in a day.

Figure vi (Frequency of Accessing Social Media)



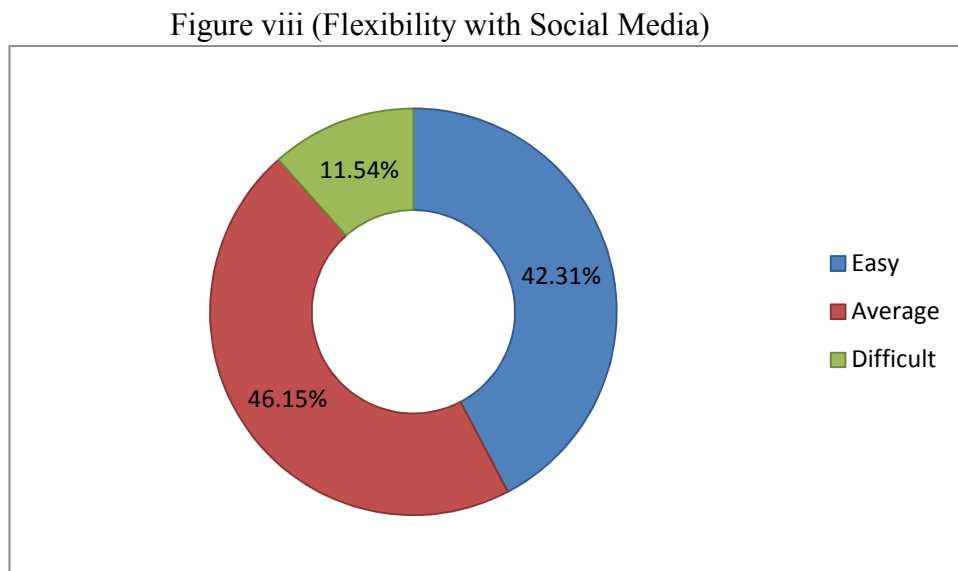
6.7 Friends/contacts on social media of the Respondents

Figure vii presents the numbers of friends/contacts on social media of the faculty members, which shows that 11.54% of respondents having less than 25 friends/contacts on social media, whereas 19.23% of respondents have friends/contacts in between 26-49, 26.92% respondents have friends/contacts in between 50-99, whereas 34.62% have contacts in between 100-200 and 7.69% respondents have more than 200 friends on SNSs.



6.8 Flexibility with Social Media while Accessing

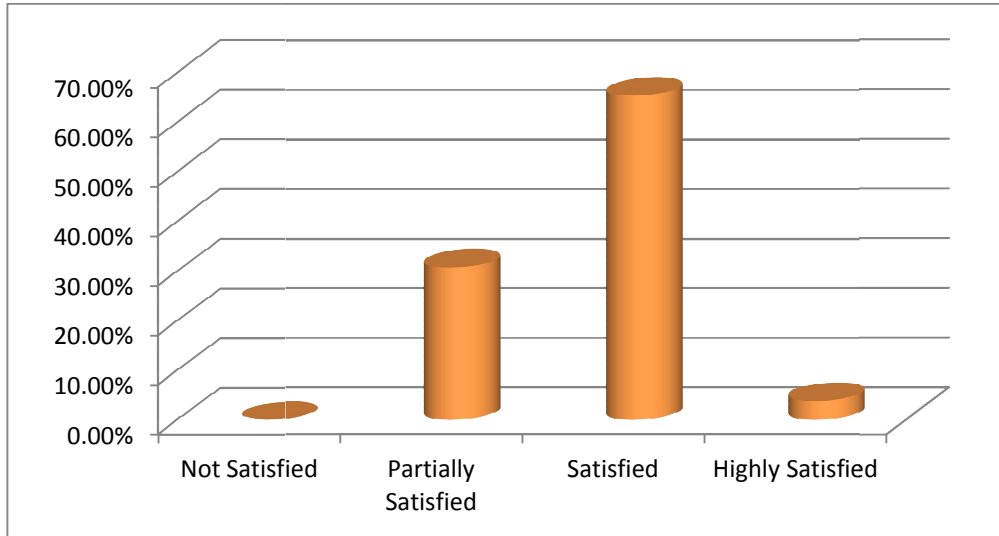
Figure viii presents the flexibility with social media while using, which shows that for 42.31% of faculty members it is very easy to access, whereas 46.15% find it average and 11.54% respondents find it difficult while using.



6.9 Satisfaction level from Social Media

Figure ix indicates that 30.77% of the faculty members are partially satisfied from the services provided by the social media, whereas most of the respondents i.e. 65.38% are satisfied and 3.85% respondents are highly satisfied from the information provided by such sites.

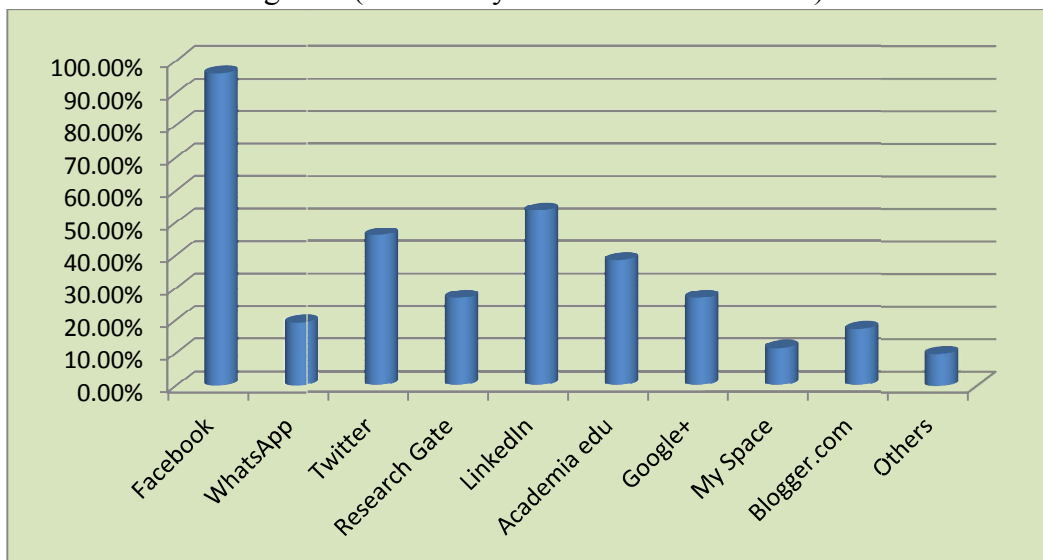
Figure ix (Satisfaction Level on Social Media)



6.10 Commonly accesses Social Media by the Respondents

Figure x shows the commonly accessing social media by the faculty members. It shows that most of the respondents i.e. 96.15% access Face book, 19.23% accesses Whatsapp, 46.15% of respondents access Twitter, 26.92% access Research Gate, whereas 53.85% accesses LinkedIn, 38.46% respondents accesses Academia edu, 26.92% accesses Google+, 11.54% accesses My Space, 3.85% accesses others like YouTube, HI5, Bing etc.

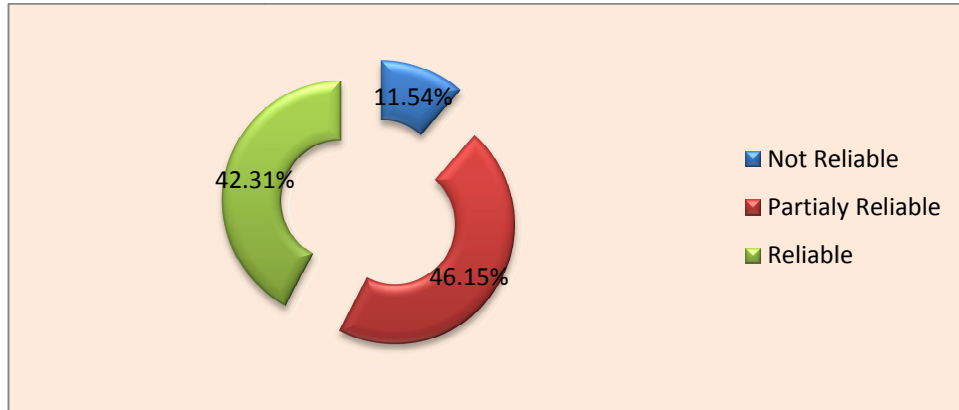
Figure x (Commonly Accessed Social Media)



6.11 Reliability of Information on social media

Figure xi presents the data related to the reliability of information accessed by the respondents on social media. It shows that 11.54% of faculty members believe that information which is available on social media is not reliable. Whereas most of the respondents i.e. 46.15% believe that it is partially reliable and 42.31% faculty members feel that information is available on such sites are reliable.

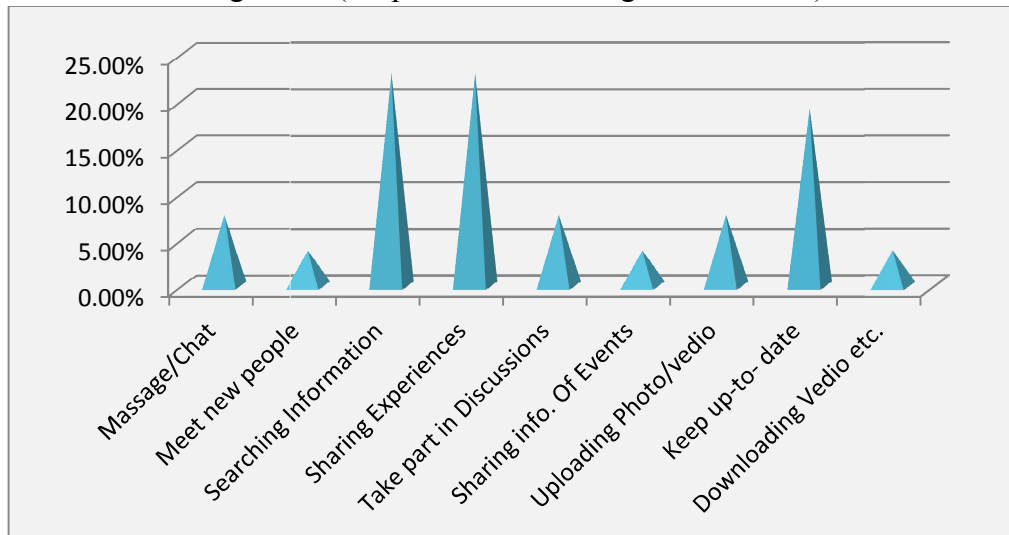
Figure xi (Reliability of Information on Social Media)



6.12 Purpose of Accessing social media by the Respondents

Figure xii indicate the data related to purpose of accessing social media by the Faculty members. Which shows that most of the respondents i.e. 23.08% accessing social media for searching relevant information and sharing experiences too, followed by 19.23% of respondents who are using it to keep up-to-date, 7.69% use for chat/massages, 3.85% used for find new friends, 7.69% accesses it for participating in discussions, 3.85% use for sharing information of seminar/conferences, 7.69% respondents using it for shaering veidio/picture of events and 3.85% of respondents accesse social media for downloading vedio/pictures.

Figure xii (Purposes of Accessing Social Media)

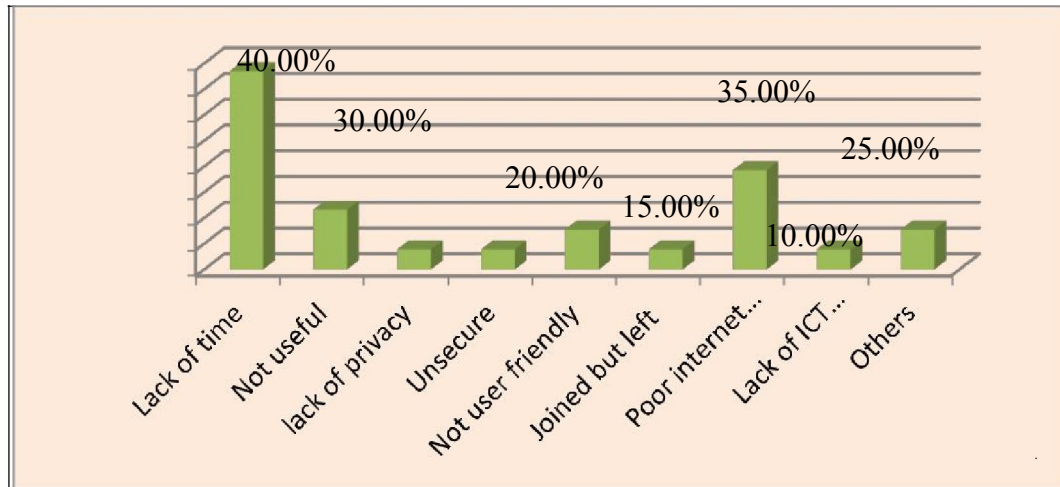


6.13 Problems in Accessing Social Media by the Respondents

Figure xiii shows hurdles faced by faculty members while accessing social media. It indicates that most of the respondents i.e. 38.46% feels that it is time consuming, followed by 19.23% of respondents faced poor internet facility, 11.54% believe that it is not useful for academic, 3.85% joined but due to some reason left out, 3.85% find that it's leaks their privacy, 7.69% feels that it is not user friendly, 3.85% agree that it is unsecure while accessing, 3.85% cannot

access it due to lack of ICT knowledge and 7.69% respondents face others difficulties like electricity etc..

Figure xiii (Problems of Accessing Social Media)



7. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The followings are the major findings of the present study:

- The study finds that most of the faculty members accessing the social media actively for their scholarly and personal communications,
- The majority of the Faculty Members i.e. 57.69% are in between the age group of 31-40 years,
- Most of the faculty members i.e. 53.85% using Personal computer as accessing tools followed by Laptop for the same,
- The Facebook is the most popular site being accessed by all category of the faculty members i.e. 96.15% followed by LinkedIn,
- Majority of the faculty members i.e. 42.31% logging social media twice in a day followed by several times in a day,
- Most of the faculty members i.e. 34.62% have in between 100-200 friends/contacts on Social Media,
- Most of the faculty members i.e.46.15% are of the opinion that information available on social media is partially reliable,
- Majority of the respondents i.e. 63.38% are satisfied about features available on social media,
- It is observe that most of the faculty member agree that it is time consuming and
- 42.31% of the faculty members are in the opinion that it is very easy to access.

8. CONCLUSION

At presents the Social Media provide a very vital platform to share and access the relevant information for academic as well as personal purposes to connect and enlarge their professional and professional network. The above findings show that social media are being accessed very actively by the faculty members of the school of social sciences, Mizoram University. The social media provide very largest role to interact and communicate with each others. Several features of these sites such as profile surfing, posting of new information, sharing photo & videos making friends, meeting new people, participating in discussion and so on are the medium by which the faculty members keep update and share their experiences to each others. The Colleges and Universities library should create an environment to support library activities and access social networking as a promotion apparatus for the services available to the faculty members.

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