

WHATSAPP AS A MEANS OF SHARING INFORMATION AMONG LIS PROFESSIONALS OF NORTH-EAST INDIA: A STUDY

Nilanjana Purkayastha¹ & Anupam Chanda²

¹*Research Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science, Assam University, Silchar, Cachar, Assam, India*

²*Librarian, Assam Don Bosco University, Airport Road, Azara, Guwahati, Assam, India*

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ABSTRACT

Social media has been blasted as a great source for information sharing and receiving; it provides a good platform for interaction among people belongs to any cultural settings. WhatsApp is an instant messaging app, invented in 2009 by Brian Acton and Jan Koum. It is available free at no monetary cost. It provides cross-section messaging and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) serviced. People are using WhatsApp very frequently in their day to day life to keep in touch with close one, sharing information, videos, images and many more. Nowadays, all the things are going digital; people are using WhatsApp more than they use other media's. Because this is instant messaging service and we easily come to know many issues through WhatsApp and can use it for our professional purpose. libraries can use WhatsApp to share information about Institution's Publications, Reports, etc. WhatsApp is a very useful tool to promote library services. We can achieve various library service goals through WhatsApp if we utilize its functionality properly in the proper direction. The present study has examined the extent to which LIS professionals currently have access to WhatsApp and whether they are using this app to disseminate information.

KEYWORDS: *What's App, Instant Messaging, Information, What's App Group, LIS Professionals*

INTRODUCTION

With the globalization of technology, we are living in the era of fast forwarding information. Today with the concept of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) we can provide information to anyone, anytime sitting anywhere with the help of internet. Earlier we used to make communication through telephones and telegraphs but with the invention of mobile device we can easily get and share information, the development in mobile technology also led to the development of mobile learning, there are many mobile apps developed, providing educational information and offering a platform to those who are interested in online reading and learning. Social media has been blasted as a great source for information sharing and receiving; it provides a good platform for interaction among people belongs to any cultural settings. Some of the popular instant messaging apps are namely, Line, Hike, We Chat, Hangout, Instagram, Facebook Messenger, What's App, Skype, Line, Nimbuzz, Blackberry Messenger, Viber, Telegram Messenger, IMO, Snapchat etc. These apps have become an important assets of people's daily life; they keep us in touch with our close ones.

ABOUT WHATSAPP

WhatsApp is an instant messaging app, invented in 2009 by Brian Acton and Jan Koum. It is available free at no monetary cost. It provides cross-section messaging and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) serviced. Presently the owner of the Whats App is facebook. Through this App user can send instant text messages, audios, videos, images, any document file, and the user can also make full-duplex communication using internet connectivity. According to the whats App blog 1 Billion are the daily active user of What's App, 1.3 Billion monthly active users and among them, 55 billion messages send per day, 4.5 Billion Photos and 1 billion videos shared per day. Over 60 languages supported. (<https://blog.WhatsApp.com/>)

Some Important Features of WhatsApp

Simple, Reliable Messaging: In WhatsApp, we can send free messages through using the phone's internet. We can send photos and videos on WhatsApp instantly.

Groups to Keep in Touch: InWhatsApp, we can create a group of peoples to have the discussion with group members at a time. With group chat people can send images, videos, documents, audio etc. and group chats are limited up to 256 people at once.

Speak Freely: ThroughWhatsApp we can make Audio calls and Video Calls with free of cost, even in another country by using phone's internet connectivity.

Keep the Conversation Going: We can use What's App in mobile as well as in desktop. We can seamlessly synchronize all our chats on our computer to chat on whatever device is most convenient for us.

Security by Default: In What'sApp we have end-to-end encryption to secure our messages and calls.

Document Sharing Made Easy: ThroughWhat'sApp we can send PDF, spreadsheets, slideshows and more without the hassle of file sharing app and email.

How to Operate Professional LIS group on Whats App?

A group model is developed (Shown in Figure 1) and discussed below to make it more understandable.

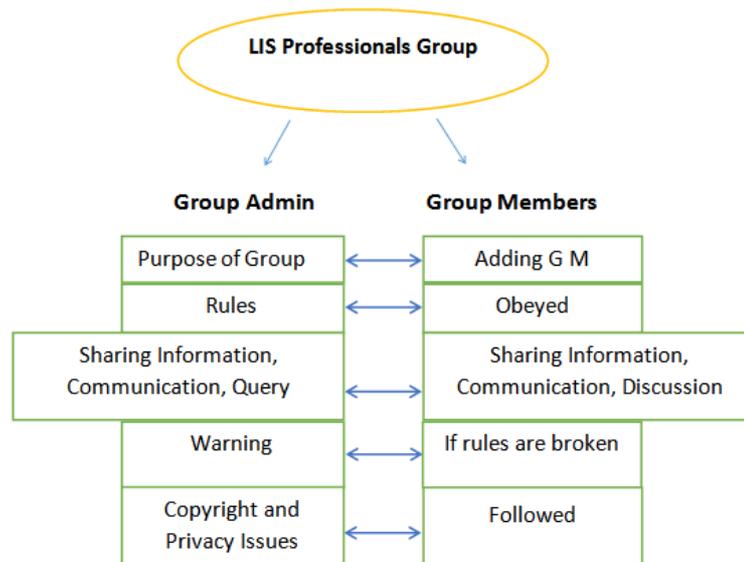


Figure 1: What's App Group Model

Probability of Including WhatsApp as a Tool for Providing Library Services

No doubt WhatsApp is the most effective and efficient way of sharing information and communication, library centers may also use WhatsApp for providing its own services, it has its own benefit. Following mentioned some benefits of using WhatsApp in library and information centers:

- A library can use WhatsApp for providing information on upcoming conferences/seminar, Library news, Reprographic services, hyperlinks of e-books, e-journal and other important announcements, notification, and reminder on a particular issues etc.;
- WhatsApp may help in promoting library services and may provide effective References Services in real time;
- WhatsApp may be used as acquisition feedback service, in this library can ask his patrons for the suggestion regarding the acquisition of best books;
- Use of WhatsApp in doing outreach activities like resource sharing of the library through Inter-Library Loan, a patron can easily ask for their required book from their libraries in a real-time through WhatsApp;
- Through WhatsApp library can provide Current Awareness Services (CAS) and Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI); Indexing and Abstracting Service (IAS);
- Through WhatsApp library may provide information regarding rules and regulation of library, the New arrival of books, list of the available journal, the arrival of successive issues of journals etc.;
- Through WhatsApp patrons can seek assistant while using the library, can give feedback to enhance library services;
- WhatsApp will help to make an effective communication between library staff and their patrons. It ensures involvement and discussion among library staff and their users.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Among all instant message app WhatsApp is the most popular one, currently millions of people are using WhatsApp worldwide. People are using WhatsApp very frequently in their day to day life to keep in touch with close one, sharing information, videos, images and many more. If WhatsApp are using so effectively than how to do LIS professionals best use WhatsApp for providing professional information and communication.? To address this, first, we need to find out whether LIS professionals are using WhatsApp to support their professional information sharing and communicating. The present study examines the extent to which LIS professionals currently have access to WhatsApp and whether they are using this app to disseminate information.

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study focused on finding the usage of WhatsApp among LIS professionals for sharing information and communication. Data collection of this study limited to LIS professionals and the geographical boundary of North-East India.

Following are the Objectives of the Present Study

- To find out the awareness about WhatsApp among LIS professionals;
- To know the purpose of using WhatsApp by LIS professionals of North-East India;
- To know if there any LIS professionals group create by professionals over WhatsApp;
- To examine LIS professionals attitude and perception towards getting services of the library over WhatsApp.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review is one of the most important parts of a research work through this we get an inside knowledge or depth knowledge about the topic of our research is concerned. Following mentioned some research studies that the researcher has gone through.

Ansari and Tripathi (2017) on their article *“Use of WhatsApp for Effective Delivery of Library and Information Services.”* in this paper the researcher tries to examine the librarians and users attitude towards getting WhatsApp as a tool for providing library information services. The researcher made an online survey to get the result; the finding of the study reveals that most of the respondent’s attitude towards using WhatsApp in Library is positive, out of 134 respondents 91.04% and 94.03% respondents are agreed to have WhatsApp as Virtual referencing and Current Awareness Service.

Ansari (2016) made a theoretical study on *“Using WhatsApp For Service Providing In Libraries And Information Centres.”* this study talks about WhatsApp and some of the benefits of using WhatsApp. This study has also mentioned WhatsApp a tool to provide library services like Current Awareness Service (CAS), Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), Reference service, Acquisition feedback, Library news, E-book searching, Reprography services etc.

Montag et.al. (2015) made a study on “*Smartphone usage in the 21st century: who is active on WhatsApp?*” This study examines the frequency of using WhatsApp over a large sample of 2,418 users and recorded their behavior over the duration of 4 weeks. An outcome of this study reveals that people are using most frequently rather than Facebook.

Hara et.al. (2014) made a study on “*Everyday Dwelling with WhatsApp.*” This study is a case study made on WhatsApp instant messaging app to find out its usability in maintaining the close relationship.

Terpstra (2013) made a study on “*WhatsApp & privacy.*” This study investigates the privacy security features of WhatsApp. How people can secure and maintain their privacy on WhatsApp. This study also made a brief analysis of WhatsApp such as the permissions that one has to give while installing the WhatsApp, capabilities of WhatsApp, what information does WhatsApp use from our phone? etc. Lastly, the study mentions some tools to look into the inner working of WhatsApp like tPacketCapture, Wireshark, Mitmproxy, Apktool.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Relevant data on the field of study were collected by adopting the following methods:

- Survey method through online questionnaires distributed to the library professionals in North-East India under-study to collect data;
- Interviews, interaction made with library professionals;
- Personal observation;
- Besides, information's were also collected by accessing some websites.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

On the basis of the responses collected online data is analyzed and interpreted in various ways. The interpreted data is presented in graphical mode using tables and charts for better understanding.

Gender Wise Response Received (N=148)

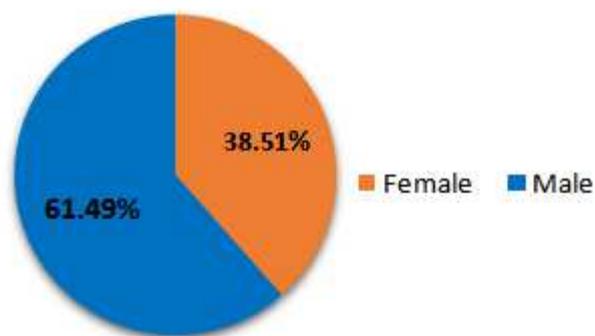


Figure 2: Gender Wise Respondents

Age Group of the Respondent (N=148)

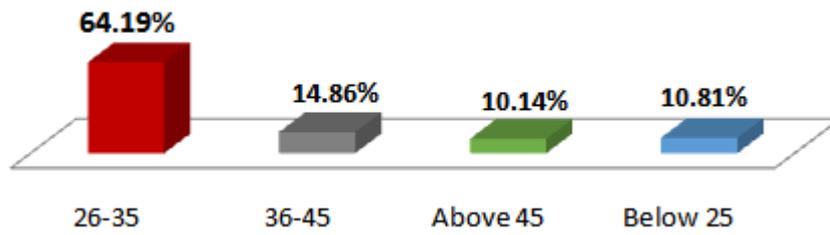


Figure 3: Age Wise Respondents

Designation of the Respondents (N=148)

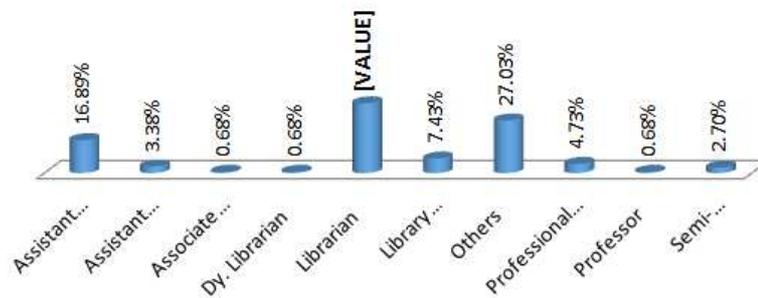


Figure 4: Designation of the Respondents

Total Working Experience of the Respondent (N=148)

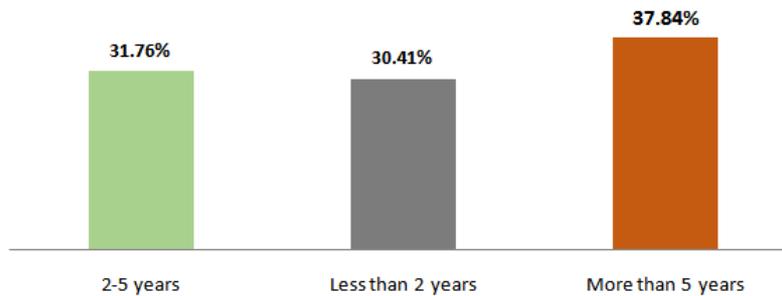


Figure 5: Working Experience of the Respondents

Availability of Smart Phone among the Respondent (N=148)

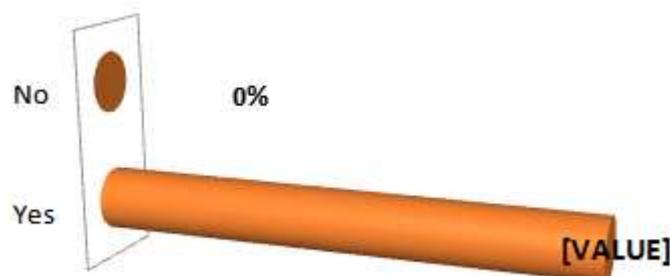


Figure 6: Availability of Smart Phone

Use of Internet in the Smart Phone among the Respondent (N=148)

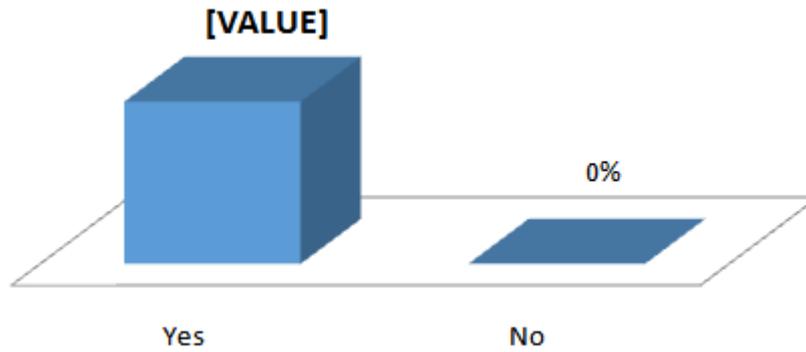


Figure 7: Use of Internet in Smart Phone

Purpose of Using the Internet by the Respondents? (Multiple Responses were Permitted) (N=148)

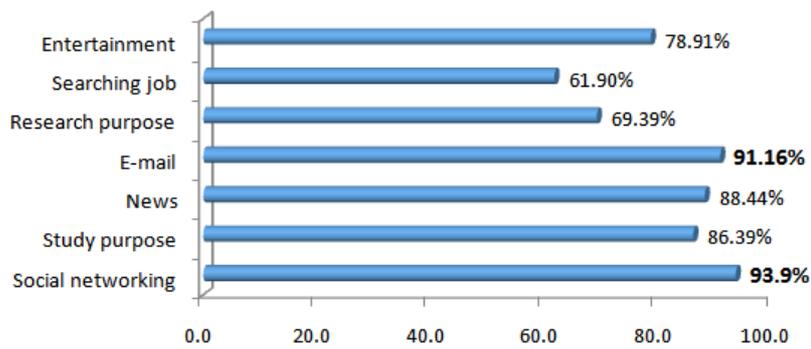


Figure 8: Purpose of using Internet

Respondents Awareness about WhatsApp (N=148)

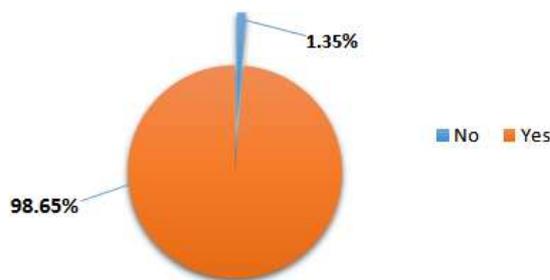


Figure 9: Awareness about WhatsApp

WhatsApp Usage Statistics (N=148)

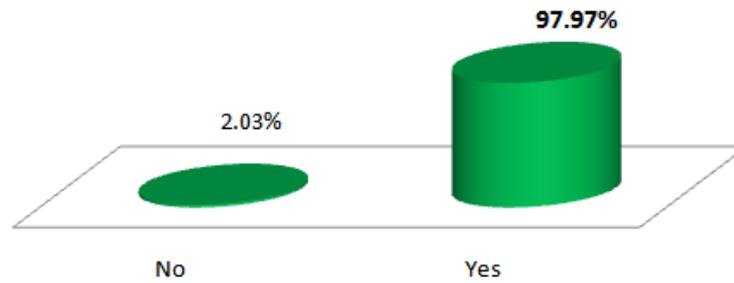


Figure 10: WhatsApp Usage Statistics

Duration of using Whats App (N=145)

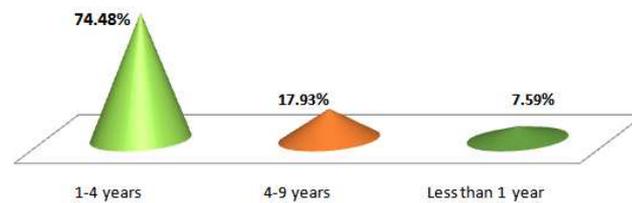


Figure 11: Duration of Using WhatsApp

Purposes of using the Whats App by the Respondents (Multiple Responses Were Permitted) (N=145)

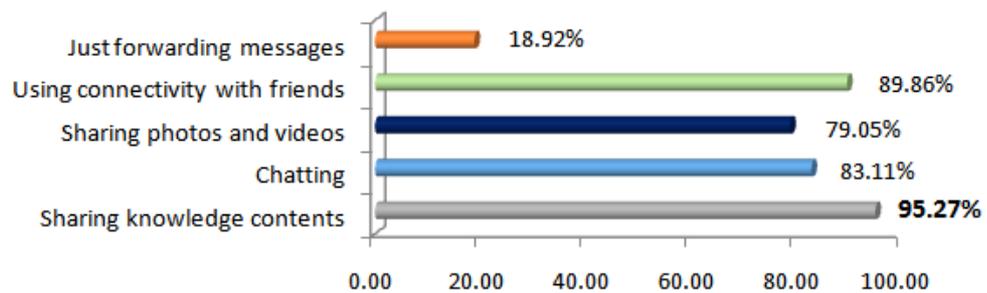


Figure 12: Purposes using Internet by the Respondents

Member of LIS Professional Group in Whats App (N=145)

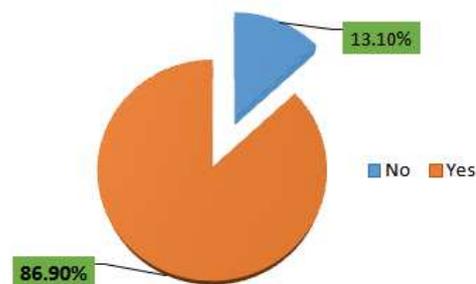


Figure 13: Member of LIS Professional Group in WhatsApp

Member of How Many LIS Professionals Groups (N=145)

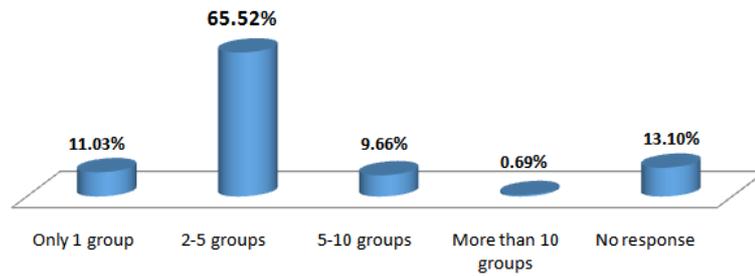


Figure 14: WhatsApp Group Member

Creation of LIS Professional Group (N=145)

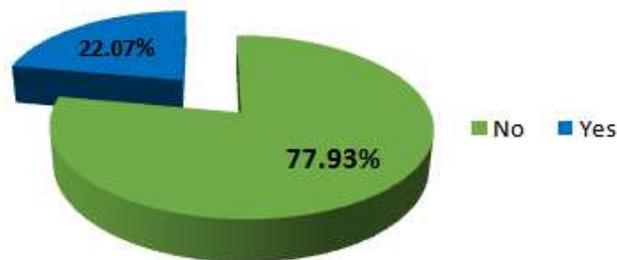


Figure 15: Creation of LIS Professional Group in WhatsApp

Average Daily Time Spent on WhatsApp (N=145)

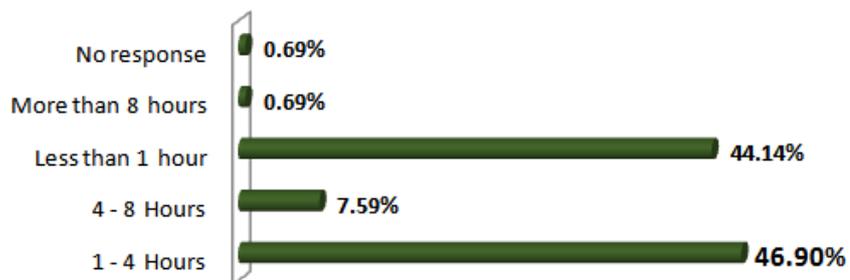


Figure 16: Average Daily Time Spent on WhatsApp

Opinion Towards Services that can be Offered on WhatsApp (N=145) (Multiple Responses Were Permitted)

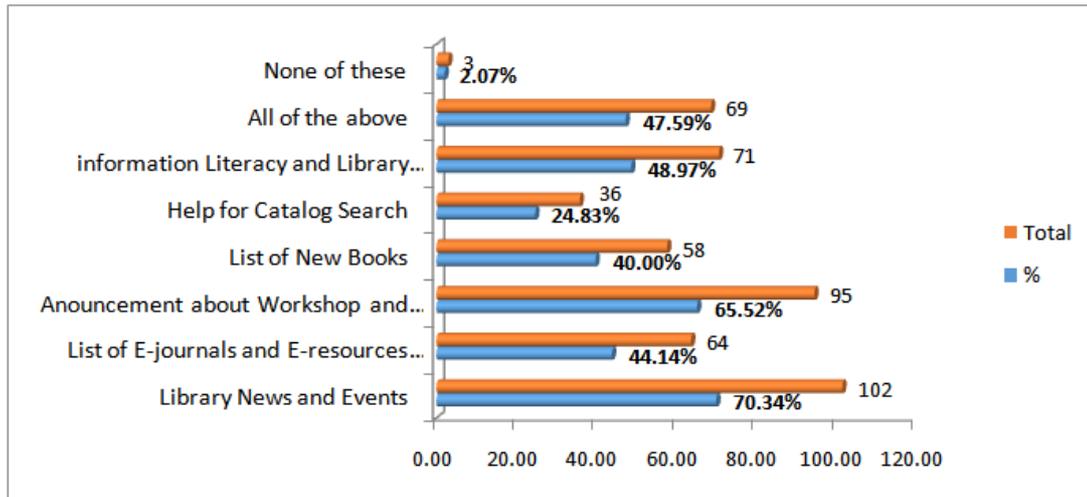


Figure 17: Opinion Towards Services that can be Offered on WhatsApp

WhatsApp for Virtual Reference (N=145)

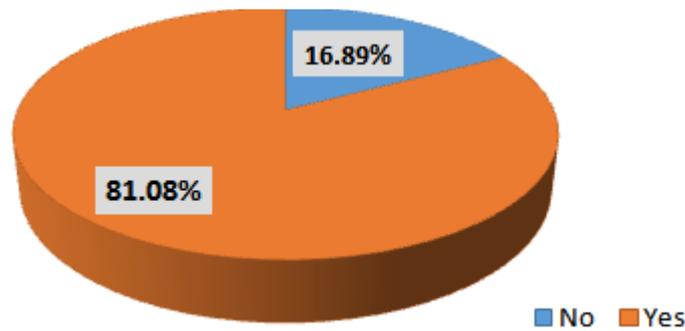


Figure 18: WhatsApp for Virtual Reference

WhatsApp for CAS (N=145)

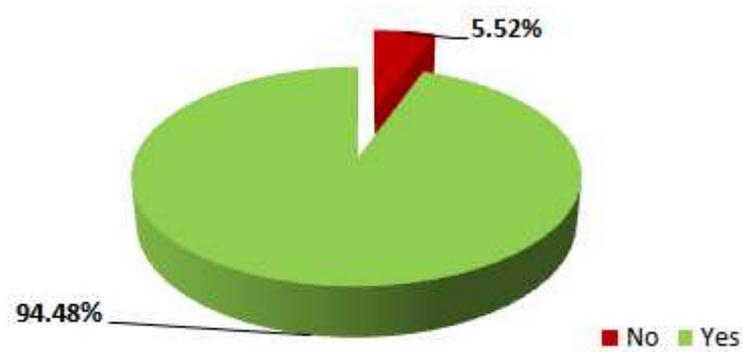


Figure 19: WhatsApp for CAS

WhatsApp to Get Notification Regarding Library Services (N=145)



Figure 20: WhatsApp to get Notification Regarding Library Services

Respondents Perception towards Effectiveness of Using WhatsApp in Libraries (N=145)

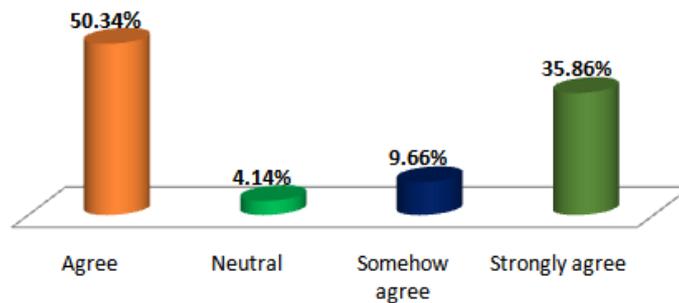


Figure 21: Perception towards Effectiveness of Using WhatsApp in Libraries

MAJOR FINDINGS

The findings based on the study are as follows:

- The popularity of WhatsApp among the LIS professionals of North-Eastern region is high.
- Majority of the LIS professional of North-Eastern region are using WhatsApp since 1-4 years which reflects that LIS professionals awareness and enthusiasm to use new tools.
- Majority of the LIS professionals of North-Eastern region are using WhatsApp for sharing knowledgeable contents.
- Results showed that LIS professionals of North-Eastern region are much involved in WhatsApp LIS group activity, the majority of the respondents are the member of 2-5 groups and also many have created their own LIS professional in WhatsApp.
- Majority of LIS professional are spending average time 4-9 hours to access in WhatsApp.
- Regarding the services that can be offered through WhatsApp, majority of the respondents agreed on providing services like library news and events, Virtual Reference Service, Current Awareness Service and Library Notification Service using WhatsApp.

- Result shows that majority of the respondent are agreed on regarding the effectiveness of WhatsApp in offering library services.

SUGGESTIONS

Following are some of the suggestions:

In future, we can use WhatsApp as a part of "Ask a librarian" for users to get quick help in finding information.

- Different groups can be created in WhatsApp according to the matter of interest like for job query, knowledge exchange, research & survey, even for chatting etc.
- If we use WhatsApp messenger in providing library service then our library service will become more effective and easy to disseminate information to the end user.
- Libraries can use WhatsApp to share information about the Institution's Publications, Reports, etc.
- LIS group on WhatsApp should allow only professional discussion on the group and admin of the group should be very strict on it.
- WhatsApp should be used for sharing information but LIS professionals should take care of privacy, copyright, authority etc.
- Fair use of WhatsApp will help the LIS professionals in delivering better services.

CONCLUSIONS

Today at this era of technology people cannot think of getting information without a smartphone with the use of internet connectivity, mobile has become the only source of fastest information communication whether for getting inform of close ones or information related to one's profession. People most use instant messenger app for communication, in that case, it will be very effective if the library uses instant messenger app like WhatsApp for delivering information, and it would be a great opportunity for the library to implement WhatsApp to reach end users of the library for better service satisfaction. On the other hand, WhatsApp may also act as a tool for disseminating knowledgeable information among library and information professionals of North-East state of India. This study has shown an overwhelming majority of LIS professionals are engaged in WhatsApp, it has created a very positive impact on the mind of LIS professionals who are using WhatsApp. LIS professionals have adopted this technology to share information it is almost adopted by ever age group due to its user-friendly platforms. Moreover, LIS professional have created group in WhatsApp and spending their valuable time in-sharing knowledgeable contents. There are no doubts that nowadays WhatsApp is a major part of online communication with a considerable growth rate of users and which almost satisfy the users need in every way like providing instant message delivery, multimedia sharing, real-time audio-video conversation and group messaging etc.

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