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Dr. Narendra D Parmar
Librarian, Shri ST Javeri Arts
College, Gadh, Gujarat, India

Use of library resources in the era of social media: A study of H.N.G.U, Patan students

Narendra D Parmar

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Abstract

In the digital era, social media platforms have emerged as dominant sources of information and communication, significantly influencing students' academic behavior. This study investigates the use of library resources among students of Hemchandracharya North Gujarat University, Patan (H.N.G.U.) in the context of increasing social media usage. A total of 300 students from Arts, Commerce, and Science faculties were surveyed using a structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and correlation analysis. Findings reveal that while WhatsApp and YouTube are widely used for academic purposes, the library continues to serve as an essential source of authentic, structured, and curriculum-based information. However, frequent use of social media has reduced physical library visits for nearly half of the respondents. The study concludes that library services should be integrated with digital platforms and recommends strengthening information literacy programs to ensure balanced use of social media and library resources.

Keywords: Patan students, H.N.G.U., library resources, social media, information behavior, academic use, digital age

1. Introduction

Biomass is the main source of fuel both in the rural and urban areas within countries like In the present information society, the ways in which students access, process, and utilize information have undergone significant transformation. The rapid advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has revolutionized the academic environment, giving rise to new sources of knowledge and alternative modes of learning. Among these, social media platforms have emerged as highly popular tools that provide instantaneous access to information, encourage collaboration, and facilitate interactive learning (Manca & Ranieri, 2017) ^[6].

Traditionally, the academic library has been regarded as the intellectual hub of higher education institutions. It provides structured, reliable, and peer-reviewed information resources that support teaching, learning, and research activities (Kumar & Sharma, 2016) ^[5]. However, the emergence of social media has introduced new dynamics in students' information-seeking behavior. While students increasingly rely on social networking sites, online tutorials, and digital communities for quick academic references, there is a growing concern that the frequency of physical library visits is declining (Singh & Gill, 2020) ^[8].

At the same time, libraries are not passive in this changing environment. Many university libraries are actively embracing digital transformation by integrating e-resources, digital repositories, and even social media-based outreach services. Such initiatives are aimed at bridging the gap between traditional and contemporary information needs (Tripathi & Kumar, 2017) ^[10].

This research focuses on the students of Hemchandracharya North Gujarat University, Patan (H.N.G.U.). As a regional university with diverse faculties including Arts, Commerce, and Science, HNGU provides an appropriate context to explore how students balance the use of social media and library resources. The study attempts to analyze whether social media has replaced, supplemented, or transformed the role of university libraries in students' academic lives.

Corresponding Author:
Dr. Narendra D Parmar
Librarian, Shri ST Javeri Arts
College, Gadh, Gujarat, India



2. Objectives of the study

- To examine the frequency and purpose of library usage among H.N.G.U. students.
- To analyze the impact of social media on students' reliance on library resources.
- To identify challenges faced by students in integrating traditional library resources with digital and social media platforms.
- To suggest strategies for improving library services in the social media era.

3. Review of Literature

A considerable body of research exists on the relationship between social media usage and library resource utilization. The literature can be categorized into four major themes:

Library Usage in the Digital Era

Academic libraries remain vital to higher education despite the growth of online resources. Kumar and Sharma (2016) ^[5] observed that libraries continue to play a central role in providing credible, peer-reviewed, and curriculum-based resources, particularly for research purposes. Similarly, Tella (2019) ^[9] argued that the authenticity of library resources differentiates them from unverified online information, thereby ensuring their continuing relevance.

Social Media as an Academic Tool

The use of social media in academic contexts has expanded significantly in the last decade. Al-Daihani (2018) ^[2] found that students increasingly utilize social networking platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook for collaborative learning, knowledge sharing, and academic discussions. Manca and Ranieri (2017) ^[6] emphasized that social media fosters informal learning opportunities and enhances student engagement. However, they also warned that such platforms cannot fully replace the structured and curated information provided by academic libraries.

Impact of social media on library use

Several studies have reported a decline in physical library visits as students spend more time on social media. Singh and Gill (2020) ^[8] discovered that excessive reliance on social networking platforms directly correlates with reduced library usage among university students. Adebayo (2021) ^[1]

supported this finding, noting that YouTube tutorials and WhatsApp study groups often substitute for traditional library consultation, especially for undergraduate students seeking quick solutions.

Integration of Social Media with Library Services

Rather than viewing social media as a threat, some researchers highlight its potential as a complementary tool. Tripathi and Kumar (2017) ^[10] argued that libraries should adopt social media to disseminate information, announce new arrivals, and promote library services. Arif and Mahmood (2019) ^[3] demonstrated that university libraries which actively use Facebook pages and WhatsApp groups to engage with students witnessed a significant increase in awareness and usage of library resources.

Indian Context

Research conducted in the Indian higher education sector further validates these trends. Patel and Desai (2020) ^[7], in their study of Gujarat university libraries, found that students heavily depend on social media for academic assignments but still turn to libraries for examinations and research projects. Joshi (2021) ^[4] emphasized the importance of information literacy training to equip students with the skills to critically evaluate information obtained from social media and to differentiate it from the more reliable resources available in libraries.

This review highlights a research gap in understanding how students in regional universities such as H.N.G.U. utilize library resources in comparison to their social media usage. The present study seeks to fill this gap by providing empirical evidence based on a sample of 300 HNGU students.

4. Research Methodology

- **Population:** Undergraduate and postgraduate students of H.N.G.U.
- **Sample Size:** 300 students (randomly selected across various faculties).
- **Data Collection Tools:** Structured questionnaire, interviews, and observation.
- **Data Analysis:** Descriptive statistics, frequency analysis, and cross-tabulation to examine patterns of library use and social media influence.

5. Data Analysis section

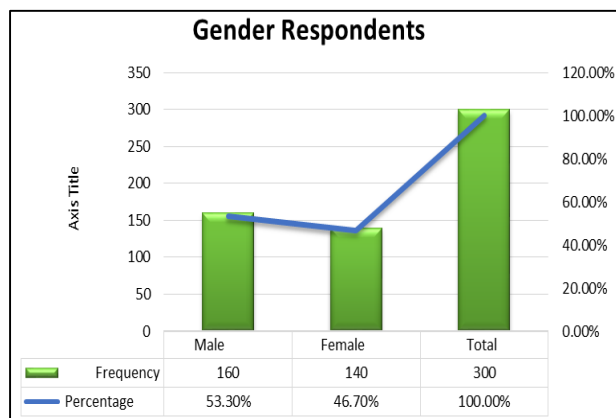
The present study collected primary data from 300 students of Hemchandracharya North Gujarat University, Patan (H.N.G.U.) through a structured questionnaire. The purpose of the data analysis is to examine students' patterns of library usage, their reliance on social media for academic purposes, access methods, and challenges faced in utilizing information resources.

The analysis has been carried out using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage distribution, which provide a clear representation of the respondents' academic information-seeking behavior. Each table highlights a specific dimension of the study, such as gender and educational level distribution, frequency of library visits, purposes of social media usage, preferred access methods, and challenges encountered.

Gender Respondents

Table 1: Respondents

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Male	160	53.30%
Female	140	46.70%
Total	300	100.00%

**Fig 1: Gender Respondents**

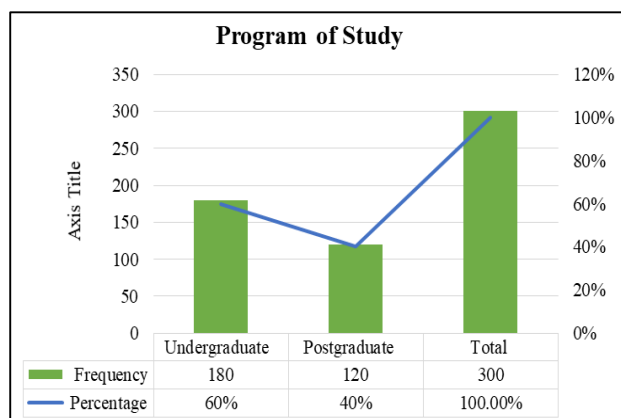
Analysis and Interpretation

- Out of the total 300 respondents, 160 (53.30%) were male students and 140 (46.70%) were female students. The gender distribution shows that male students slightly outnumbered female students in the sample.
- This representation indicates a balanced proportion of both genders, with the difference being marginal (6.6%). Such a distribution strengthens the reliability of the findings, as the responses collected reflect the perspectives of both male and female students.

From an interpretive perspective

- Male students (53.3%) have a marginal dominance in the study, which could reflect the actual enrollment ratio in Hemchandracharya North Gujarat University, Patan (H.N.G.U.).
- Female students (46.7%) form a nearly equal portion, which ensures that gender-based comparisons can be drawn during analysis (e.g., differences in library use vs. social media use).
- The near-equal participation provides scope to analyze whether gender influences the choice between library resources and social media platforms for academic purposes.

Program of study

**Fig 2: Program of study****Table 2: Program of study**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Undergraduate	180	60%
Postgraduate	120	40%
Total	300	100.00%

Analysis and Interpretation

- Out of the 300 respondents, the majority (180 students, 60%) were undergraduates, while 120 students (40%) were postgraduates.

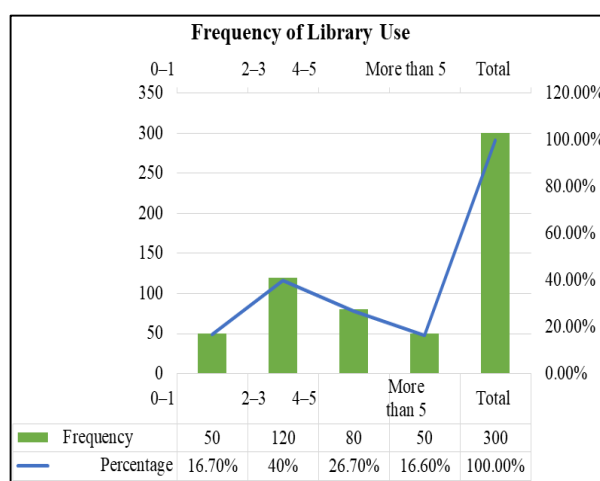
This distribution suggests that

- Undergraduate students are more represented in the study, which may reflect the larger enrollment of undergraduate programs at H.N.G.U. compared to postgraduate programs.
- The presence of 40% postgraduate students ensures that the study captures perspectives from both levels of higher education.
- Since undergraduates often rely on quick, easily accessible information (such as social media), while postgraduates tend to use in-depth, research-based resources (such as library materials, journals, and databases), this distribution allows for meaningful comparative analysis of information-seeking behavior.
- The representation indicates that the findings will provide balanced insights into the use of library resources in the era of social media across both undergraduate and postgraduate student populations.

Frequency of library use

Table 3: Frequency of library use

Library Usage (Times/Week)	Frequency	Percentage
0-1	50	16.70%
2-3	120	40.00%
4-5	80	26.70%
More than 5	50	16.60%
Total	300	100.00%

**Fig 4: Frequency of library use**

Analysis and Interpretation

- The analysis of library usage per week shows that the majority of students (120 respondents, 40%) reported visiting the library 2-3 times per week. This suggests that moderate library usage is the most common pattern among HNGU students.

- A significant proportion (80 students, 26.7%) reported visiting the library 4-5 times per week, which indicates a fairly regular use of library resources. Interestingly, 50 students (16.7%) admitted that they use the library only 0-1 times per week, while another 50 students (16.6%) reported using the library more than 5 times per week.

Interpretation

- The distribution indicates that while most students use the library regularly (2-3 times per week), there is a visible variation between low users (0-1 times) and high users (more than 5 times).
- The low-frequency group (16.7%) may represent students who rely heavily on social media or online resources instead of the physical library.
- On the other hand, the high-frequency group (16.6%) likely consists of students with greater academic or research needs, such as postgraduates or students from science faculties.
- Overall, the data highlights a moderate to high level of library engagement, though there is still a substantial segment of students whose usage remains minimal, potentially due to the influence of social media or lack of awareness about available library resources.

Use of social media for academic purposes

Table 4: Use of social media for academic purposes

Purpose	Frequency	Percentage
Information sharing	200	66.70%
Discussion on academic topics	180	60.00%
Locating resources / e-books	150	50.00%
Group assignments / projects	130	43.30%

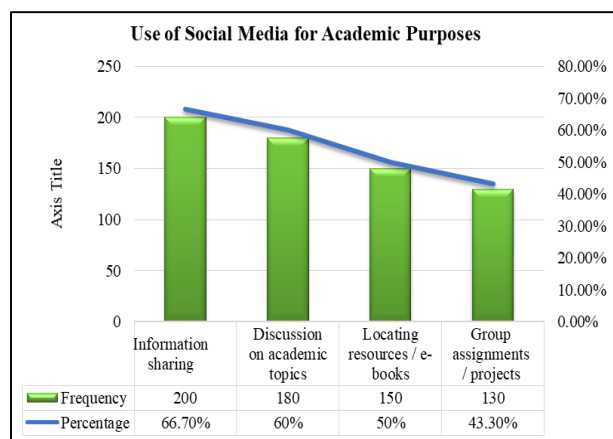


Fig 5: Use of social media for academic purposes

Analysis and Interpretation

- The data reveals that the primary purpose of social media use among students is information sharing (200 respondents, 66.7%). This indicates that students frequently utilize social networking platforms to exchange academic updates, study materials, and notices among peers.
- The second most common purpose is discussion on academic topics (180 respondents, 60%), suggesting that students are increasingly engaging in collaborative learning, using platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, and Facebook groups for academic dialogue.

- Further, 150 students (50%) reported using social media for locating resources and e-books, which reflects the growing dependency on digital platforms for accessing study materials and open educational resources. Additionally, 130 students (43.3%) acknowledged using social media for group assignments and projects, showing its utility as a tool for coordination and teamwork.

Interpretation

- The findings suggest that social media is not merely a source of entertainment but is being actively integrated into academic practices.
- The high percentage of information sharing (66.7%) shows that social media acts as an informal extension of academic communication channels.
- The use of social media for locating e-resources (50%) demonstrates a partial substitution of traditional library reference services.
- However, the fact that less than half of the respondents (43.3%) use it for group assignments indicates that while social media supports collaborative work, it has not fully replaced in-person academic collaboration or library-based group study.
- Overall, social media is emerging as a complementary academic tool, with functions that overlap with some traditional roles of the library.

Combined Library & Social Media Use

Table 5: Combined Library & Social Media Use

Access Method	Frequency	Percentage
Library only	60	20.00%
Social media only	70	23.30%
Library + Social media (combined)	170	56.70%

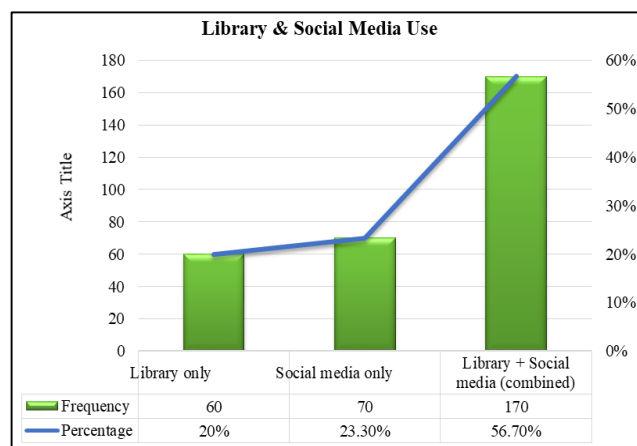


Fig 6: Library & Social Media Use

Analysis and Interpretation

- The analysis shows that the majority of students (170 respondents, 56.7%) access academic information through a combined approach of both library resources and social media platforms. This indicates that students prefer to complement the depth and reliability of library resources with the speed and convenience of social media.
- Meanwhile, 70 students (23.3%) reported using social media only as their primary access method. This reflects the growing trend of relying on easily available

digital platforms such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, WhatsApp, and online academic communities instead of visiting physical libraries.

- On the other hand, 60 students (20%) still rely exclusively on library resources, suggesting that a segment of the student population continues to value traditional academic sources, such as books, journals, and print materials, as their primary mode of learning.

Interpretation

- The dominance of the combined method (56.7%) highlights a hybrid academic information-seeking behavior among HNGU students.
- The social media only group (23.3%) may represent students who prefer convenience and quick access, but their overreliance on digital sources could raise concerns regarding information credibility.
- The library only group (20%) reflects students with traditional learning preferences or those enrolled in disciplines where printed material is still highly valued.
- Overall, the data indicates that integration, rather than replacement, is the defining trend: most students blend library use with social media, which underscores the evolving role of libraries in the digital age.

Challenges Faced by Students

Table 6: Challenges Faced by Students

Challenge	Frequency	Percentage
Limited awareness of e-resources	120	40.00%
Difficulty evaluating online info	90	30.00%
Lack of training on library tools	70	23.30%
Time constraints	20	06.70%

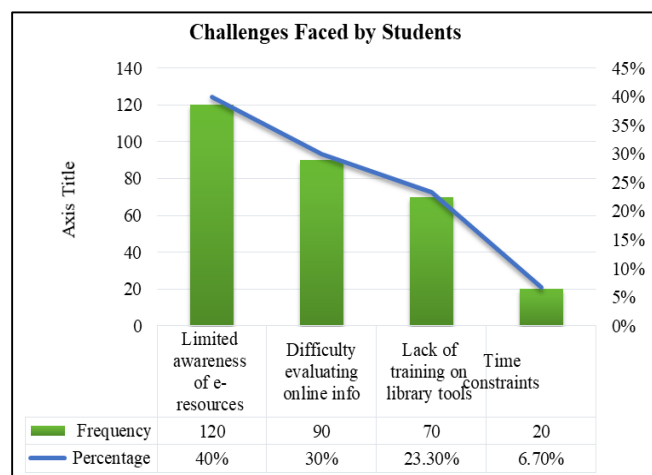


Fig 7: Challenges Faced by Students

Analysis and Interpretation

- The data indicates that the most common challenge faced by students is limited awareness of e-resources (120 respondents, 40%). This highlights the need for better orientation and promotion of electronic databases, e-journals, and digital library facilities provided by H.N.G.U.
- The second most reported challenge is difficulty in evaluating online information (90 respondents, 30%). This suggests that while students increasingly rely on social media and web-based platforms, they face

difficulties in assessing the authenticity, reliability, and academic credibility of digital content.

- Further, 70 students (23.3%) reported lack of training on library tools, reflecting a gap in information literacy programs and workshops. Only 20 students (6.7%) cited time constraints as a barrier, indicating that access to resources is more affected by knowledge and skills than by availability of time.

Interpretation

- The findings reveal that awareness and skill-related challenges outweigh logistical ones in the information-seeking process.
- The high percentage (40%) of students with low awareness of e-resources shows the importance of proactive user education by the library.
- The 30% struggling with online information evaluation underlines the critical role of academic librarians in teaching students how to differentiate between reliable and unreliable sources.
- The relatively lower figure for time constraints (6.7%) suggests that students are generally willing to invest time in information seeking if proper guidance and accessible tools are available.

Overall, the data emphasizes the need for information literacy training, e-resource orientation, and user support services to enhance effective utilization of both library and social media resources.

6. Findings

Based on the analysis of responses from 300 students of Hemchandracharya North Gujarat University, Patan (H.N.G.U.) the following key findings emerged:

Gender and Educational Level

- The sample was fairly balanced by gender, with 53.3% male and 46.7% female respondents.
- A majority (60%) were undergraduates, while 40% were postgraduates, ensuring perspectives from both levels of study.

Library Usage

- Most students (40%) visited the library 2-3 times per week, while 26.7% used it 4-5 times weekly.
- A small but significant proportion (16.7%) reported minimal use (0-1 times/week), suggesting reliance on alternative sources.

Purpose of Social Media Use

- The dominant purposes were information sharing (66.7%) and discussion on academic topics (60%).
- Half of the students (50%) used social media to locate e-books and resources, while 43.3% engaged in group assignments/projects through social platforms.

Access Methods

- A majority of students (56.7%) adopted a combined approach (library + social media), while 23.3% relied exclusively on social media and 20% on library only.
- This demonstrates the emergence of a hybrid academic information-seeking model.

Challenges in Accessing Information

- The major challenges were limited awareness of e-resources (40%) and difficulty in evaluating online information (30%).
- 23.3% reported lack of training in library tools, while only 6.7% cited time constraints.
- This highlights the need for information literacy and awareness programs.

7. Suggestions

Based on the findings, the following suggestions are proposed:

Strengthening Information Literacy Programs:

- Conduct regular workshops and training sessions to improve students' ability to evaluate online information critically.
- Develop awareness campaigns about the availability and benefits of university e-resources.

Enhancing Library Services

- Expand digital library collections (e-journals, databases, and e-books) to meet the rising academic needs.
- Provide user-friendly online catalogs and virtual reference services to support remote learners.

Integration of Social Media and Library Platforms

- Libraries should strategically use social media (WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook groups) to disseminate information, promote new arrivals, and engage students in academic discussions.
- A blended model of formal library services + informal social media channels can better serve students' academic requirements.

Customized support for different user groups

- Undergraduate students should be provided with guidance on basic academic research skills.
- Postgraduates and research scholars should be given advanced training in databases, citation tools, and plagiarism-checking resources.

Collaboration between faculty and library staff

- Faculty members should actively encourage students to balance social media use with library resources.
- Joint initiatives (orientation sessions, project guidance, and assignment support) can improve students' reliance on quality academic sources.

8. Conclusion

The study highlights that HNGU students increasingly rely on a hybrid model of information access, combining both library resources and social media platforms. While the library continues to play a central role in academic resource provision, social media has emerged as a complementary platform for information sharing, discussions, and collaborative learning.

However, challenges such as limited awareness of e-resources, inadequate training, and difficulty in evaluating online information limit the effective use of available resources. To address these gaps, information literacy training, digital awareness programs, and integration of social media with library services are essential.

In conclusion, the findings underscore that in the era of social media, academic libraries must redefine their role not as competitors to social media, but as collaborators ensuring that students receive credible, accessible, and user-friendly academic information. This balanced approach will enhance the academic performance of students and strengthen the relevance of libraries in the digital age.

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