



Enhancing Academic Library Services through Social Networking Sites Utilisation and OER Integration: A Study

Sharadamma C A
Research Scholar
DLIS, Tumkur University, Tumakuru
Karnatka. India
ca.sharadagfgc@gmail.com

Hemavathi B N
Associate Professor
DLIS, Tumkur University, Tumakuru
Karnataka. India

ABSTRACT

In the rapidly evolving digital environment, technological skills are essential for librarians to effectively utilize tools such as Social Networking Sites (SNS) and Open Educational Resources (OER). Librarians' digital literacy acts as a bridge between technology and users, enabling efficient access to information resources. This study examines the utilization of SNS and OER among librarians working in Government First Grade Colleges (GFGCs) and State Government Universities in Karnataka. A survey of 379 librarians was conducted using structured questionnaires distributed through both online and offline modes. The findings reveal that 275 (72.55%) librarians actively use SNS, with WhatsApp (144, 52.36%) and YouTube (65, 23.63%) emerging as the most widely used platforms. SNSs are primarily used for marketing library services (155, 56.36%), promoting libraries (134, 48.72%), and engaging users (110, 40%). However, the study indicates relatively low participation in research collaboration and academic networking, with only 106 (27.96%) respondents using academic social networking platforms. Awareness of Open Educational Resources (OER) is high among respondents, with 292 (77.04%) reporting familiarity with these initiatives. Platforms such as e-PG Pathshala, SWAYAM, UGC-MOOCs, and Shodhganga are widely utilized, while resources like Ekalavya, E-BIDYA, and Sakshat show comparatively lower adoption levels. The study highlights the need for enhanced awareness, training, and institutional support to optimize the use of SNS and OER for improving library services and user engagement in higher education institutions.

Keywords: Digital Literacy, Social Networking Sites (SNS), Open Educational Resources (OER), Librarians, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Library Promotion

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1. Introduction

Digital literacy has become an essential competency for librarians working in higher education institutions. The ability to use digital tools effectively enables librarians to select appropriate online platforms, communicate with users efficiently, and analyze user engagement to enhance library services. With the emergence of Social Networking Sites (SNS) and Open Educational Resources (OER), librarians are increasingly required to integrate digital technologies into their professional practices.

In the contemporary information environment, digital technologies have transformed the ways in which information is accessed, disseminated, and utilized in academic institutions. Social networking sites such as WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram provide new avenues for communication, collaboration, and information sharing. These platforms allow libraries to promote services, communicate announcements, and interact directly with users in real time.

Similarly, Open Educational Resources (OER) play a critical role in expanding access to academic knowledge. These openly accessible resources promote collaborative learning, support teaching and research, and reduce barriers to information access. The integration of SNS and OER within library services allows librarians to improve user engagement and enhance academic communication.

Despite these advantages, the adoption and effective use of SNS and OER depend significantly on librarians' digital literacy, institutional support, and training opportunities. Therefore, examining how librarians utilize these digital tools is essential for understanding their role in modern academic library services.

2. Literature Review

Libraries continue to play a vital role in promoting digital literacy and facilitating access to information resources in the digital era. Librarians are increasingly expected to guide users in navigating complex digital environments and accessing online resources effectively [1]

Digital literacy enables library professionals to efficiently manage digital information systems and support users in accessing digital resources. In the evolving information landscape, librarians must continuously upgrade their technological skills to remain relevant and effective [2]. Continuous professional development and training programs are, therefore, necessary to ensure that librarians can adapt to emerging digital technologies [3].

Furthermore, librarians play an important role in raising awareness about online safety and responsible digital information usage among their user communities [4]. Social networking literacy also enables librarians to provide improved services and communicate effectively with library users [5]

The use of social networking platforms by library professionals has expanded rapidly in recent years. These platforms facilitate communication with broader audiences and help libraries extend their services beyond

physical spaces [6]. Through social networking tools, librarians can reach global professional networks and share knowledge resources.

In addition, Open Educational Resources (OER) have emerged as an important component of modern academic libraries. Librarians play a key role in promoting OER adoption by supporting faculty and students in accessing and utilising these resources [7]. Academic librarians are therefore expected to develop the necessary skills to promote and integrate OER effectively.

The increasing integration of social networking tools into library services has significantly influenced digital library operations and user engagement [8] (Naeem, Hashmi, & Farid, 2023). Similarly, social media platforms have enhanced digital library services by enabling users to remain informed, educated, and connected in the digital environment [9].

Recent studies have examined the integration of emerging digital technologies and social media platforms in enhancing library services and user engagement. [10, 11, 12]

Monica Mensah [13] investigated the level of awareness and engagement of academic library users with social media platforms in Ghana. The study highlighted that social media tools play an important role in facilitating communication between libraries and patrons, improving access to library services, and increasing user participation in academic library activities.

Similarly, Madaki [14] explored the use of social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram in school libraries. The findings indicated that these platforms enhance communication, improve access to information resources, and help build stronger connections between libraries and their user communities.

Focusing on emerging technologies, Wagwu V. [15] examined the implementation of AI-driven chatbots in Nigerian university libraries to support library services. The study found that chatbot technologies significantly improve patron engagement by providing automated responses to routine queries and enabling faster information delivery. AI-driven digital tools were also identified as useful for managing repetitive inquiries, offering continuous user support, and enhancing the scalability of library services.

However, several challenges were also identified in adopting these technologies. These include inadequate technological infrastructure, resistance among library professionals toward adopting new systems, a shortage of skilled personnel, and limited awareness regarding the potential benefits of digital tools in library environments.

3. Objectives of the Study

The present study aims to examine the role of Social Networking Sites (SNS) and Open Educational Resources (OER) in enhancing academic library services within higher education institutions. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the extent of adoption and usage of Social Networking Sites (SNS) among librarians in Government First Grade Colleges and State Government Universities in Karnataka.

2. To analyze the purposes for which librarians utilize SNS, particularly in relation to library promotion, user engagement, information dissemination, and research support.
3. To assess the level of awareness and utilization of Open Educational Resources (OER) among librarians in providing library and information services.
4. To identify variations in the usage of different OER platforms and evaluate the extent to which these resources are integrated into library services.
5. To explore existing gaps and challenges in the adoption of SNS and OER within academic library environments.
6. To propose recommendations for enhancing the effective use of digital platforms and open educational resources in academic libraries.

4. Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the following research questions were formulated to guide the investigation of Social Networking Sites (SNS) and Open Educational Resources (OER) usage among librarians in higher education institutions:

1. RQ1: To what extent do librarians in Government First Grade Colleges and State Government Universities in Karnataka adopt and use Social Networking Sites (SNS) for library services?
2. RQ2: For what purposes do librarians utilize Social Networking Sites, particularly in relation to library promotion, user engagement, reference services, and research support?
3. RQ3: What is the level of awareness among librarians regarding Open Educational Resources (OER) and related national digital initiatives?
4. RQ4: How frequently are different OER platforms utilized by librarians in providing library and information services?
5. RQ5: Are there significant differences in the usage patterns of various SNS platforms and OER initiatives among librarians?
6. RQ6: What challenges or gaps exist in the effective adoption and utilization of SNS and OER in academic libraries?

5. Methodology

The study employed a survey research method using random sampling techniques. The target population consisted of librarians working in Government First Grade Colleges (GFGCs) and State Government Universities in Karnataka.

Data were collected via a structured questionnaire distributed via both online and offline channels. The questionnaire was shared via email and social media, and printed copies were distributed to librarians at selected institutions.

A total of 379 responses were collected for analysis. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS and MS Excel, and the results were presented through tables and descriptive interpretations.

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

6.1 Demographic data of the respondents

Demographic criteria	Responses	Frequency		Total
		Nature of organisation		
		Government First Grade College	State Government University	Total
Gender Distribution	Male	212(55.93%)	41(10.81%)	253 (66.75%)
	Female	100(26.38%)	26(6.86%)	126(33.24%)
Total		312(82.32%)	67(17.67%)	379(100%)
Age Group	25-30 years	33(8.70%)	5(1.31%)	38(10.02%)
	31-40 years	49(12.92%)	22(5.80%)	71(18.73%)
	41-50 years	184(48.54%)	26(6.86%)	210(55.40%)
	above 50	46(12.13%)	14(3.69%)	60(15.83%)
Total		312(82.32%)	67(17.67%)	379(100%)
Designation	Senior scale librarian	136(35.88%)	-	136(35.88%)
	Selection grade librarian	141(37.20%)	-	141(38.25%)
	University librarian	-	9(2.37%)	9(2.37%)
	Assistant librarian	-	50(13.19%)	50(13.19%)
	Guest librarian	35(9.234828)	-	35(9.23%)
	In-charge librarian	-	2(0.52%)	2(0.52%)
	Deputy librarian	-	6(1.58%)	6(1.58%)
Total		312(82.32%)	67(17.6781)	379(100%)
professionalExperience	1-5 years	38(10.02%)	6(1.58%)	44(11.60%)
	6-10 years	8(2.11%)	17(4.48%)	25(6.59%)
	11-15 years	206(54.35%)	18(4.74%)	224(59.10%)
	16-20 years	1(0.26%)	6(1.58%)	7(1.84%)
	above 20 years	59(15.56%)	20(5.27%)	79(20.84%)
Total		312(82.32%)	67(17.67%)	379(100%)

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 379 librarians who participated in the survey. The distribution shows a clear predominance of male respondents, with 253 (66.75%) males compared to 126 (33.24%) females. This indicates that male professionals currently dominate the library workforce within the sampled institutions. Although female participation is notable, the imbalance suggests a need to further encourage gender diversity within the profession.

Institutionally, the majority of respondents, 312 (82.32%), belong to Government First Grade Colleges (GFGCs), whereas only 67 (17.67%) represent State Government Universities. This distribution reflects the larger number of GFGCs in Karnataka and also highlights the study's focus on college-level academic libraries.

The age distribution shows that the largest proportion of respondents falls within the 41–50 age group, accounting for 210 respondents (55.40%). This indicates that a substantial portion of the workforce comprises mid-career professionals with significant experience. Younger librarians aged 25–30 years represent only 10.02%, suggesting relatively limited entry of early-career professionals into these institutions.

In terms of designation, Selection Grade Librarians (38.25%) and Senior Scale Librarians (35.88%) together account for nearly three-quarters of respondents, indicating that the majority hold experienced professional positions. Positions such as Deputy Librarian (1.58%), University Librarian (2.37%), and In-Charge Librarian (0.52%) are comparatively fewer, reflecting the hierarchical structure of academic library staffing.

Professional experience data further reinforces this observation. A majority of respondents, 224 (59.10%), have 11–15 years of professional experience, while 79 (20.84%) have more than 20 years of experience. In contrast, only 11.60% have less than five years of experience, suggesting that the surveyed institutions rely heavily on experienced personnel. The relatively low proportion of early career librarians may have implications for technological adoption and innovation within library services.

Overall, the demographic profile indicates that the respondents are largely mid-career and senior professionals, which may influence their adoption of digital technologies such as SNS and OER.

6.2 Social Networking sites use

SN	Criteria	Responses	
a.	Status of social Networking sites usage	Yes	275 (72.55%)
		No	104 (27.44%)
b.	Name of Social Networkingsites used	WhatsApp	144 (52.36%)
		Telegram	35 (12.72%)
		Youtube	65 (23.63%)
		Facebook	53 (19.27%)
		Instagram	14 (5.09%)
		Twitter	12 (4.36%)

Table 2. Usage of Social Networking Sites and Academic Social Networking Sites

Table 2 illustrates the extent to which librarians utilize social networking platforms. The findings reveal that 275 respondents (72.55%) actively use social networking sites, whereas 104 (27.44%) do not. This indicates that SNS adoption among librarians is relatively high, demonstrating growing recognition of their potential for information dissemination and user engagement.

Among the various platforms, WhatsApp emerges as the most widely used SNS, with 144 respondents (52.36%) reporting it. The popularity of WhatsApp may be attributed to its accessibility, ease of use, and widespread adoption among students and faculty. Through WhatsApp groups, librarians can easily share updates, announcements, and academic resources with users.

YouTube is the second-most-frequently used platform, with 65 respondents (23.63%), followed by Facebook with 53 respondents (19.27%). These platforms are often used for instructional videos, library tutorials, and promotional content related to library services.

Other platforms, such as Telegram (12.72%), Instagram (5.09%), and Twitter (4.36%), show comparatively low adoption rates among respondents. The lower usage of these platforms may be due to limited familiarity or institutional restrictions on their use for professional communication.

From an analytical perspective, the distribution suggests that librarians tend to favor communication-oriented platforms rather than academic networking platforms. This indicates that SNS usage is primarily focused on information dissemination and user communication rather than professional collaboration or scholarly networking.

SN	SNS used for the services promotion of library	Always	Often	Sometimes	rarely	Never
a.	Marketing of library services	55(56.36%)	39(14.18%)	29(10.54%)	23(8.36%)	29(10.54%)
b.	Promoting libraries	134(48.72%)	74(26.90%)	28(10.18%)	16(5.81%)	23(8.36%)
c.	To provide reference services	101(36.72%)	80(29.09%)	53(19.27%)	20(7.27%)	21(7.63%)
d.	To attract and encourage users	110(40%)	62(22.54%)	58(21.09%)	16(5.81%)	29(10.54%)
e.	To assist in research	65(23.63%)	62(22.54%)	64(21.09%)	37(13.45%)	47(17.09%)
f.	For collaborative sharing of information	66(24%)	63(22.90%)	70(25.45%)	37(13.45%)	39(14.18%)
g.	Bring libraries to the user's desktop	82(29.81%)	65(23.63%)	55(20%)	36(13.09%)	37(13.45%)
h.	To provide Details on library activities	96(34.90%)	62(22.54%)	46(16.72%)	30(10.90%)	41(14.90%)

Table 3. Social networking sites used for promotion of library services

Table 3 examines the frequency with which librarians use SNS for different library related purposes. The results demonstrate that SNS are widely used for promotional and user engagement activities.

A majority of respondents, 155 (56.36%), reported that they always use SNS for marketing library services, indicating that digital platforms have become an important tool for promoting library resources. Similarly, 134 respondents (48.72%) always use SNS to promote libraries, while 110 respondents (40%) consistently use them to attract and encourage users.

The findings also indicate that SNSs are frequently used for reference services, with 101 respondents (36.72%) reporting regular use. This suggests that librarians increasingly rely on social media channels to respond to user queries and provide quick information support.

However, the data reveal a notable decline in the use of SNS for research assistance and scholarly collaboration. Only 65 respondents (23.63%) reported always using SNS to assist in research, while 47 respondents (17.09%) reported never using them for this purpose. Similarly, collaborative information sharing shows relatively moderate levels of engagement.

These findings suggest that librarians primarily use SNS as marketing and communication tools rather than as platforms for academic collaboration or research support. This trend may be influenced by institutional priorities that emphasize user outreach and service promotion.

Additionally, approximately 20–25% of respondents reported occasional use of SNS for activities such as research assistance, collaboration, and user engagement, suggesting potential opportunities to expand their use for more academically oriented purposes.

Table 4 presents respondents' awareness and usage levels of various Open Educational Resource initiatives. The results indicate a high level of awareness, with 292 respondents (77.04%) reporting familiarity with OER initiatives, while 87 respondents (22.95%) indicated lack of awareness.

Among the different OER platforms, Shodhganga shows the highest level of usage, with 179 respondents (61.30%) reporting use to a larger extent. This reflects the importance of Shodhganga as a national repository for doctoral theses and dissertations.

Similarly, e-PGPathshala demonstrates strong adoption, with 169 respondents (57.87%) using it extensively. This platform provides high-quality postgraduate educational content and appears to be well integrated into academic library services.

Other major initiatives, such as SWAYAM (48.97%), NDLI (48.63%), UGC-MOOCs (49.65%), and SWAYAM Prabha (39.72%), also exhibit moderate to high levels of utilisation, indicating that national digital learning initiatives are increasingly integrated into library services.

In contrast, several platforms show significantly lower adoption rates. For instance:

- E-BIDYA is not used by 63.35% of respondents

- Sakshat is not used by 59.93%
- E-Grid is not used by 57.19%

SN	Criteria	Responses		
		Yes 292(77.04%)	No 87(22.95%)	
a	Knowledge of Open Educational Resources (OER) initiatives			
b	Use of OER in providing services to users	Extent of Use		
		To a Larger Extent	To a Lesser extent	Not using
1	NPTEL (National Program on Technology Enhanced Learning)	100(34.24%)	117(40.06%)	75(25.68%)
2	Ekalavya	60(20.54%)	81(27.73%)	151(51.71%)
3	E-Grid	43(14.72%)	82(28.08%)	167(57.19%)
4	eGyanKosh	85(29.10%)	90(30.82%)	117(40.06%)
5	Sakshat	42(14.38%)	75(25.68%)	175(59.93%)
6	e-PGPathshala	169(57.87%)	90(30.83%)	33(11.30%)
7	National Science Digital Library	119(40.75%)	90(30.82%)	83(28.42%)
8	National Repository of Open Educational Resources	99(33.90%)	94(32.19%)	99(33.90%)
9	E-BIDYA	45(15.41%)	62(21.23%)	185(63.35%)
10	SWAYAM	143(48.97%)	90(30.82%)	59(20.20%)
11	SWAYAM PRABHA	116(39.72%)	101(34.58%)	75(25.68%)
12	UGC- MOOC	145(49.65%)	87(29.79%)	60(20.54%)
13	NDLI (National Digital Library of India)	142(48.63%)	83(28.42%)	67(22.94%)
14	Shodhganga	179(61.30%)	63(21.57%)	50(17.12%)

Table 4. Awareness and use of Open Educational Resources (OER) initiatives in providing Library services

These figures suggest that despite high awareness of OER initiatives, actual usage varies significantly across different platforms. The lower adoption of certain platforms may be attributed to factors such as limited promotion, lack of training, or insufficient integration into institutional learning environments.

From a broader perspective, the results indicate that librarians tend to prioritize well-established national repositories and learning platforms, while lesser-known initiatives receive comparatively little attention.

6.5 Chi-Square Analysis of SNS Platform Usage

A chi-square goodness-of-fit test was conducted to determine whether the distribution of social networking site usage among librarians differs significantly across platforms.

Results

- Chi-square statistic (χ^2) = 221.92
- p-value = < 0.001

Since the p-value is far below the significance threshold ($p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis that SNS usage is evenly distributed across platforms is rejected.

This indicates that librarians show significant differences in preference among social networking platforms. The graphical distribution demonstrates that:

- WhatsApp dominates SNS usage, accounting for the largest share of respondents.
- YouTube and Facebook show moderate usage, suggesting their role in instructional and informational communication.
- Instagram and Twitter are minimally used, indicating limited adoption of these platforms for professional library services.

The findings suggest that librarians tend to favor instant messaging platforms for direct user communication rather than microblogging or image-based social media platforms.

6.5.1 Chi-Square Analysis of OER Utilization

A second chi-square test was conducted to examine whether the use of Open Educational Resources differs significantly across the various OER platforms.

Results

- Chi-square statistic (χ^2) = 265.32
- p-value = < 0.001

The statistically significant result indicates that OER usage is not evenly distributed among platforms. The results show clear disparities in the adoption of different OER initiatives:

6.5.2 Highly utilized platforms

- Shodhganga
- e-PGPathshala
- UGC-MOOCs
- SWAYAM

- NDLI

These platforms are widely used because they provide reliable academic content and are strongly supported by national educational initiatives.

6.5.3 Moderately utilized platforms

- NPTEL
- National Science Digital Library
- SWAYAM Prabha

These platforms serve specialized academic purposes and therefore attract a moderate level of engagement.

6.5.4 Low-usage platforms

- E-Grid
- Sakshat
- E-BIDYA

The relatively low adoption rates of these resources may be attributed to limited awareness, insufficient institutional promotion, or lack of training among librarians.

Overall, the statistical results confirm that librarians prefer nationally recognized repositories and learning platforms over lesser-known OER initiatives.

6.6 Graphical Analysis

Three statistical graphs were generated from the data to visually support the analysis.

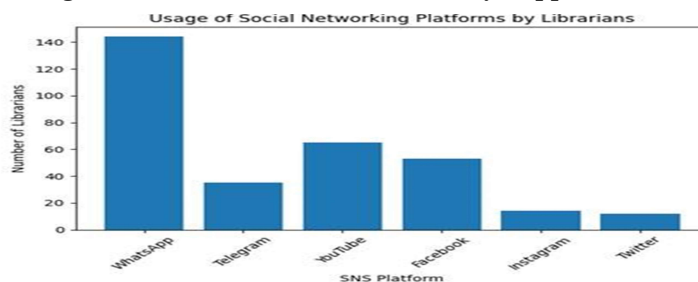


Figure 1. Usage of Social Networking Platforms by Librarians

Description

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of social networking site (SNS) usage among librarians in the surveyed institutions. The results reveal a clear dominance of WhatsApp, used by 144 respondents (52.36%), making it the most preferred platform for professional communication and disseminating library information. The popularity of WhatsApp can be attributed to its widespread accessibility, ease of use, and ability to enable instant communication.

The second most utilized platform is YouTube, with 65 respondents (23.63%), indicating that librarians increasingly employ video-based platforms for instructional content, tutorials, and informational outreach. Facebook follows with 53 respondents (19.27%), reflecting its continued relevance for institutional communication and promotional activities.

In contrast, Telegram (12.72%), Instagram (5.09%), and Twitter (4.36%) demonstrate comparatively low usage levels among respondents. The limited adoption of these platforms suggests that librarians prefer communication oriented, widely used applications over microblogging or image focused platforms for delivering library services.

Overall, the figure highlights that librarians prioritize instant messaging and video-sharing platforms to enhance communication with users and promote library resources in the digital environment.

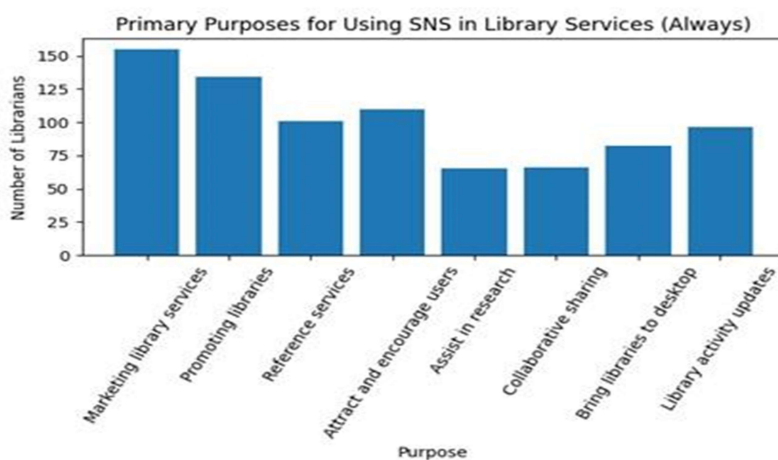


Figure 2. Purposes of Using Social Networking Sites in Library Services

Description

Figure 2 presents the primary purposes for which librarians utilize social networking sites in their professional activities. The results indicate that marketing library services is the most common application of SNS, with 155 respondents (56.36%) reporting consistent use for this purpose. This reflects the growing reliance on digital platforms to promote library collections, services, and programs.

Similarly, 134 respondents (48.72%) use SNS to promote library activities, while 110 respondents (40%) use these platforms to attract and engage library users. These findings demonstrate that social media tools play a significant role in enhancing user outreach and improving the visibility of library services.

In contrast, relatively fewer respondents utilize SNS for research assistance (65 respondents, 23.63%) or collaborative knowledge sharing (66 respondents, 24%). This suggests that although SNS are widely adopted for promotional and communication purposes, their potential as tools for academic collaboration and scholarly support remains underutilized.

Overall, the figure highlights that SNS are predominantly employed for marketing, promotion, and user engagement, while their application in research support and collaborative academic communication is comparatively limited.

OER Usage Across Platforms

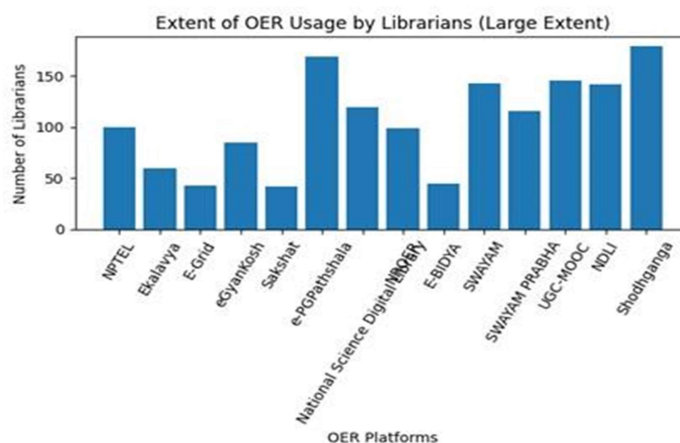


Figure 3. Extent of Open Educational Resource (OER) Usage by Librarians

Description

Figure 3 illustrates the extent to which librarians utilize various Open Educational Resource (OER) platforms. The results indicate that Shodhganga is the most widely used OER initiative, with 179 respondents (61.30%) reporting extensive use. This reflects its importance as a national repository of doctoral theses and dissertations, supporting research and academic scholarship.

The second most widely used platform is e-PGPathshala, with 169 respondents (57.87%), followed by UGC-MOOCs (145 respondents, 49.65%), SWAYAM (143 respondents, 48.97%), and NDLI (142 respondents, 48.63%). These platforms provide structured academic content and digital learning resources that are widely integrated into higher education systems.

Moderate usage levels are observed for platforms such as NPTEL and the National Science Digital Library, which provide specialized educational resources. However, several initiatives, including E-BIDYA, Sakshat, and E-Grid, exhibit comparatively low levels of adoption, with more than half of the respondents indicating that they do not utilize these resources.

The findings suggest that librarians tend to prefer well-established national educational repositories and digital learning platforms, while lesser-known initiatives require greater awareness and institutional promotion.

7. Overall Analytical Interpretation

The results collectively demonstrate that librarians in Karnataka are increasingly integrating digital tools into their professional practices. The relatively high adoption rate of social networking sites suggests that librarians recognize their value in enhancing communication, promoting services, and improving user engagement.

However, the analysis also highlights several gaps. SNS are predominantly used for promotion and communication rather than scholarly collaboration or research assistance. Similarly, although awareness of OER initiatives is high, usage remains uneven across different platforms.

These findings indicate the need for capacity-building programs, institutional support, and targeted training initiatives to encourage more effective and diversified use of SNS and OER within academic library environments.

By strengthening digital competencies and expanding awareness of available digital resources, libraries can significantly enhance their role in supporting teaching, learning, and research activities in higher education institutions.

8. Conclusion

The study highlights the increasing importance of Social Networking Sites (SNS) and Open Educational Resources (OER) in academic library services. Librarians are progressively integrating digital tools to enhance user engagement, promote library services, and support teaching and research activities.

While awareness of digital initiatives is relatively high among librarians, adoption levels vary across platforms. The findings indicate that librarians actively utilize SNS for promotional activities but less frequently for research collaboration and academic networking.

To maximize the potential of these digital tools, continuous training, institutional support, and increased awareness of underutilized OER platforms are essential. Strengthening these aspects will enable librarians to further enhance library services and contribute to the advancement of academic communities.

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