



SOCIAL MEDIA AND PAPERLESS LIBRARY SERVICES: THEIR ROLE IN ENHANCING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN COLLEGE LIBRARIES

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Abstract:

The increasing use of digital technologies has changed the way college libraries provide information and communicate with their users. Earlier, they used conventional print resources, but now students can access e-books, e-journals, online databases, Web OPAC, and other ICT-based services. Social media and mobile communication are additional channels for sharing information with students. The goal of the present study is to examine the use of social media and paperless library services and their contribution to student engagement in selected college libraries. A descriptive survey method was used for the study. Data were collected using structured questionnaires, from which responses from 306 students and 27 librarians were collected, representing educational institutes in Mumbai. Microsoft Excel was used for descriptive and inferential analysis and visual representation. The study found that 76.5% of students visited the library regularly, and 71.2% used both print and digital resources. Students used digital platforms for library-related purposes. The use of the library website/web page was reported by 45.1%, Web OPAC (35.9%) and WhatsApp (29.1%). Institutional libraries offered e-books, e-journals, online databases, and library automation facilities. In addition, Librarians offer free Wi-Fi (85.2%), N-list Subscription (74.1%), and RFID (7.4%). It is observed from the above study that students do make use of print resources, Library websites, Web OPAC, WhatsApp, and electronic resources. They participate in user-orientation activities. This highlights the importance of conventional facilities, digital library services, and paperless services.

Keywords: *Social Media, Paperless Library Services, Student Engagement, Academic Libraries, ICT, Digital Library, Web OPAC, Library Automation*

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Introduction:

Traditionally, college libraries have books, journals, reference materials, and other physical collections that support teaching and learning. The increasing use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has considerably expanded the range of resources and services libraries can provide. Students can now search

catalogues electronically and access online databases independently. They can access e-books and e-journals, and obtain library-related information via digital communication channels. This results in an increase in the library's combination of physical and digital information.

Internet access, smartphones and online academic



resources increasingly influence students' information-seeking practices. Students do visit the physical library. They also depend on electronic databases, Web OPAC, institutional websites and mobile communication for academic information. Paperless library services form one important section of this changing environment. E-books, e-journals, online databases, Web OPAC, automated circulation systems and other electronically delivered services can simplify access to information and reduce dependence on paper-based processes. Students and users should be made aware of these facilities so they can use them effectively.

Communication regarding the services and facilities available in the library to its users is important too. Through proper use of social media and websites, this can easily be attained. The use of apps like WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Telegram, and YouTube offers additional ease in communicating notices, promoting resources, and maintaining contact with users.

In the present study, student engagement is considered by students' 'perception of library resources, services and communication facilities. Frequency of library visits, preference for print and digital resources, use of ICT-enabled services, and participation in library-related activities are considered indicators of student engagement with the library. The study does not consider that the digital services would be treated as substitutes for conventional library facilities. This user engagement would also help institutional libraries take the necessary actions based on the observed use and requirements for library upgrades.

Research Gap:

Many articles and research reports have examined ICT, e-resources, library automation and social media in academic libraries. Still, limited attention has been given to the use of social media and paperless library services in the context of student engagement. Reviewed studies also focus either on users or on the

library facilities available during their execution, as well as the challenges faced by the library. The views of students and librarians are less often studied together. This study considers both groups. It examines the use of social media, paperless services and digital facilities in selected college libraries and also studies their role in student engagement.

Review of Literature:

ICT has changed academic libraries from service providers to service providers. Along with print resources, E-resources, online databases, automation and social media are now commonly used. Many researchers have studied these changes and their impact on library use.

Soni, Rani, and Kumar (2020) studied the use of electronic resources and library services at the INMAS Library. Users frequently used the library website and electronic resources for academic and research work. The study stressed the need for good internet connectivity and ICT facilities. It also suggested that electronic resources should be selected based on user feedback.

Appleton's (2020) article was regarding student engagement in academic libraries. The study reported that engagement is not limited to the use of library resources. Student participation, communication, collaboration and digital literacy are also important. Libraries can therefore support learning through both resources and student-centred services.

Chaputula, Abdullah, and Mwale (2020) studied the use of WhatsApp at Mzuzu University Library, Malawi. WhatsApp was useful for reference services and sharing information with users. However, infrastructure, staffing and technical support affected its use.

Deng et al. (2020) examined the use of Facebook and Instagram in an academic library. Students appreciated the library's presence on social media. Their participation depended on the relevance of the content



shared. The study suggested that libraries should make social media communication more interactive and useful to students.

Islam, Sultana, and Mostofa (2024) studied students' use of social media for academic library services. Students used social media to obtain library information and share academic resources. The study also noted its usefulness for research-related activities. User awareness was important for better use of these services.

Pasipamire (2025) reviewed studies on the use of social media in higher education libraries from 2010 to 2024. Social media supported quick communication and access to information. It also helped libraries interact with their users. However, lack of staff training, privacy concerns and weak institutional strategies were reported as major difficulties.

Athukorala and Jayasundara (2025) studied social media as a tool for library marketing and communication. Social media was useful for promoting library resources and services. It also helped libraries improve their visibility. The authors stressed the need for staff training and proper communication strategies.

The reviewed studies show the growing importance of ICT and social media in academic libraries. E-resources provide wider access to information. Social media supports communication with users. However, availability of technology alone may not increase its use. Internet facilities, staff support and user awareness are also important.

Most studies examine e-resources or social media separately. Few studies consider paperless library

services and social media together. There is also a need to consider the views of both students and librarians. The present study attempts to address these aspects in selected colleges.

Objectives of the Study:

The present study aims to examine the role of social media and paperless library services in enhancing student engagement in college libraries. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the social media platforms used by college libraries for communicating with students.
2. To examine the extent of students' utilisation of digital and paperless library services.
3. To assess the adoption of paperless library practices in college libraries.
4. To identify the digital initiatives that enhance student engagement in college libraries.

Research Methodology:

The study employed a descriptive survey research design to analyse the role of social media and paperless library services in enhancing student engagement in college libraries. Responses were collected from 306 students and 27 librarians at selected institutions using two structured questionnaires via purposive sampling. The collected data were coded, classified, and analysed using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistical techniques, including frequency and percentage calculations and graphical representations, were used to interpret the findings. The study is limited to selected college libraries and focuses on social media usage, paperless library services, digital initiatives, and their contribution to student engagement.



Results and Discussion:

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Category	Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Students (n = 306)	Gender	Male	148	48.4
		Female	158	51.6
	Student Level	Undergraduate	191	62.4
		Postgraduate	67	21.9
		Ph.D.	20	6.5
		Others	28	9.2
Total 27 institutions represented by Librarians (n = 27)		Librarians	27	100.0

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents included in the study. A total of 306 students and 27 college libraries represented by librarians participated in the survey. Among the student respondents, 158 (51.6%) were female, and 148 (48.4%) were male, indicating a balanced gender distribution. Regarding academic level, 191 (62.4%) respondents were undergraduate students, followed by 67 (21.9%) postgraduate students, 20 (6.5%) PhD scholars, and 28 (9.2%) respondents from other academic categories. In addition, responses were obtained from 27 librarians, each representing one selected college library. The inclusion of both student and librarian perspectives provides a comprehensive understanding of the adoption of social media and paperless library services, and of their roles in enhancing student engagement across the participating institutions.

Table 2. Library Visit Behaviour and Resource Preferences of Students (n = 306)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Frequency of Library Visit	Daily	84	27.5
	Once in 2 Days	78	25.5
	Once a Week	72	23.5
	Rarely	37	12.1
	Once a Month	30	9.8
	Not Using	5	1.6
Preferred Resource Format	Print Only	70	22.9
	Digital Only	18	5.9
	Both Print & Digital	218	71.2

Table 2 presents students' library visit behaviour and preferred resource formats, both of which are important indicators of student engagement with library services. The findings reveal that 84 (27.5%) students visited the library daily, 78 (25.5%) visited once every two days, and 72 (23.5%) visited once a week. Thus, 234 students (76.5%) visited the library regularly (daily, every two days, or weekly), indicating a high level of engagement with library resources and services. Only 5 (1.6%) students reported not using the library, suggesting that library utilisation among the respondents was generally high.

Regarding resource preferences, the majority of respondents (218; 71.2%) preferred using both print and digital resources, while 70 (22.9%) preferred only print resources and 18 (5.9%) relied exclusively on digital resources. This finding demonstrates that students favour a hybrid library environment in which traditional print collections complement digital resources. The continued preference for both formats indicates that paperless library initiatives enhance rather than replace conventional library services. The high frequency of library visits, combined with the



widespread preference for hybrid resource use, suggests that the integration of digital services has strengthened students' engagement with college libraries by providing flexible, convenient access to academic information.

Table 3. Students' Digital Library Resource Usage (n = 306)

Digital Library Service	Excellent n (%)	Good n (%)	Fair n (%)	Poor n (%)	No Comment n (%)
Internet Facility	149 (48.7)	90 (29.4)	16 (5.2)	15 (4.9)	36 (11.8)
OPAC / Web OPAC	122 (39.9)	90 (29.4)	27 (8.8)	9 (2.9)	58 (19.0)
Online Database Search Service	130 (42.5)	96 (31.4)	25 (8.2)	9 (2.9)	46 (15.0)
Digital Reference Service	128 (41.8)	92 (30.1)	28 (9.2)	11 (3.6)	47 (15.4)
Mobile-Based Services	134 (43.8)	89 (29.1)	21 (6.9)	13 (4.2)	49 (16.0)

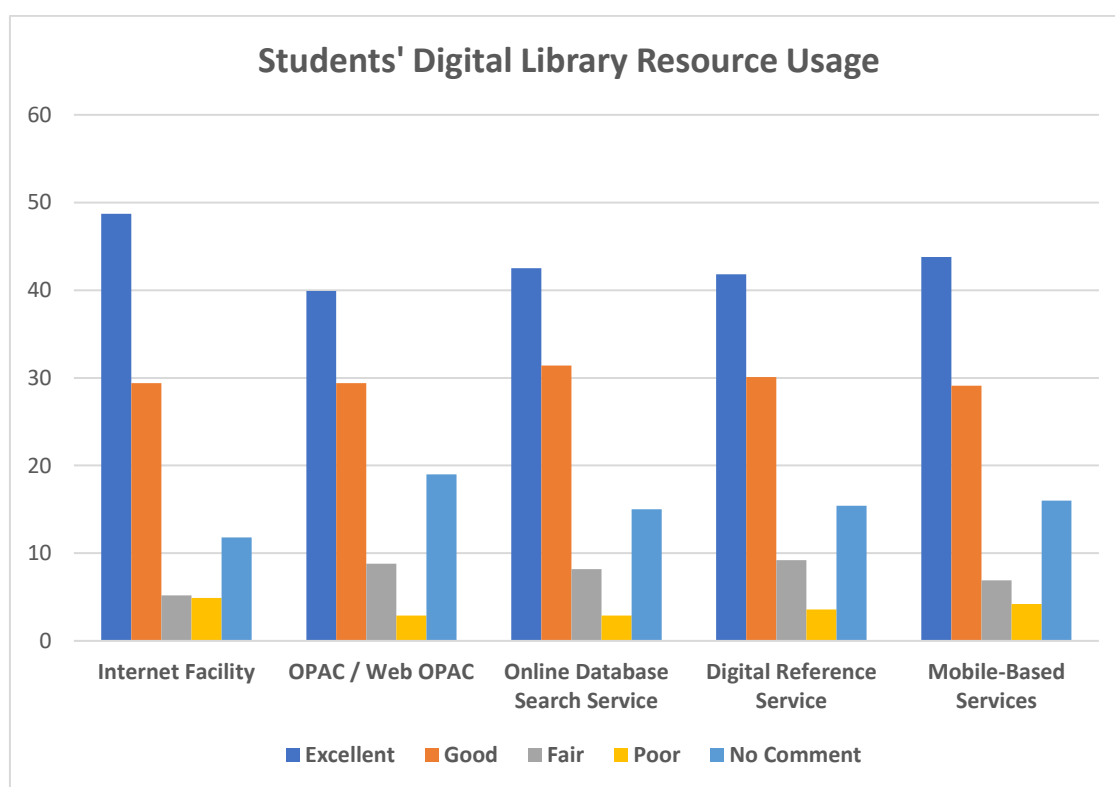


Figure 1. Students' Digital Library Resource Usage

The table values indicate a positive perception of digital library services among students. Nearly half of the respondents (48.7%) rated the Internet Facility as *Excellent*, making it the highest-rated digital service. Similarly, Online Database Search Service (42.5%), Mobile-Based Services (43.8%), Digital Reference Service (41.8%), and OPAC/Web OPAC (39.9%) also received a large proportion of *Excellent* ratings. When *Excellent* and *Good* responses are combined, more than two-thirds of the respondents expressed satisfaction with each digital service. These findings suggest that ICT-enabled services are well established in the participating college libraries and play a significant role in supporting students' academic and research activities. The results fulfil Objective 2 by demonstrating that students actively utilise digital library resources and services.



Table 4. ICT and Social Media Platforms Used for Library Communication

Digital Platform	Students (n = 306)		Librarians (n = 27)	
Library Website/Web Page	138	45.10%	27	100.00%
Web OPAC	110	35.90%	27	100.00%
WhatsApp	89	29.10%	24	88.90%
Instagram	56	18.30%	12	44.40%
Facebook	42	13.70%	10	37.00%
Telegram	35	11.40%	8	29.60%
YouTube	31	10.10%	9	33.30%

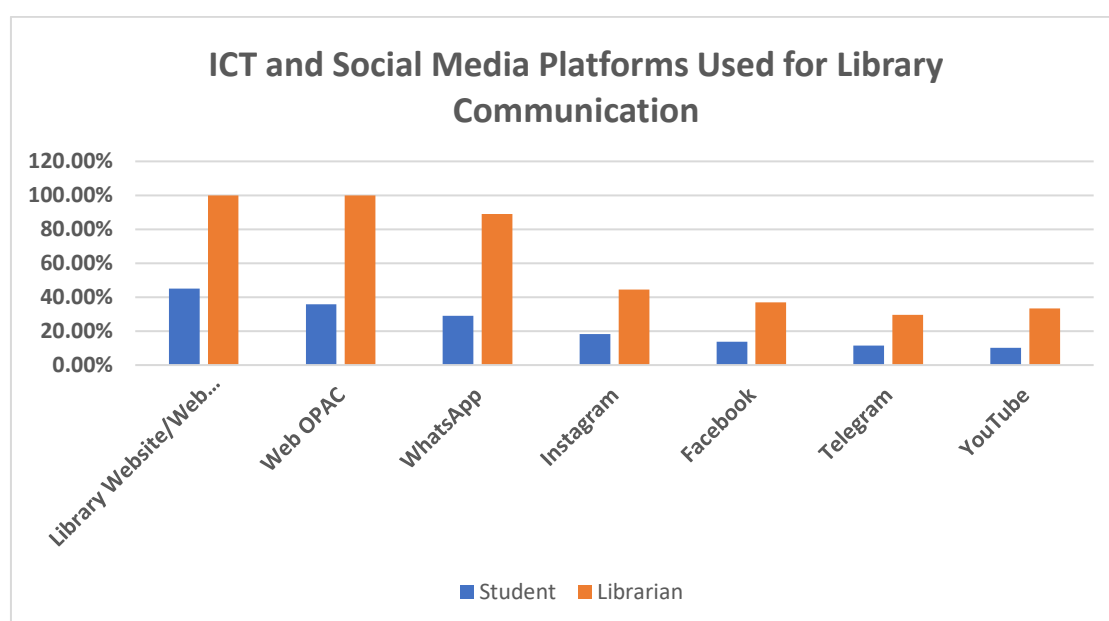


Figure 2. ICT and Social Media Platforms Used for Library Communication

Table 4 presents the ICT and social media platforms used for library communication from the perspectives of both students and librarians. Among the students, the Library Website/Web Page was the most frequently used platform, with 138 (45.1%) respondents reporting its use, followed by Web OPAC (110; 35.9%) and WhatsApp (89; 29.1%). Fewer students used Instagram (18.3%), Facebook (13.7%), Telegram (11.4%), and YouTube (10.1%) to access library-related information.

The responses from librarians indicate a strong institutional adoption of digital communication platforms. All 27 (100%) participating libraries maintained a Library Website/Web Page and Web OPAC, demonstrating that these are the primary digital channels for disseminating library information and providing access to library collections. In addition, 24 (88.9%) libraries used WhatsApp for communicating notices, service updates, and announcements to students. Social media platforms such as Instagram (44.4%), Facebook (37.0%), YouTube (33.3%), and Telegram (29.6%) were also utilised, although to a lesser extent.

The findings indicate that library websites and Web OPAC constitute the core digital infrastructure for library communication. At the same time, WhatsApp serves as the most effective interactive platform for timely communication between libraries and students. The comparatively lower use of other social media platforms suggests that academic libraries continue to prioritise information-oriented platforms over promotional social media channels.



Overall, the combined evidence from students and librarians demonstrates that ICT-enabled communication has strengthened access to library services and contributed to greater student engagement by providing timely information, convenient access to resources, and improved interaction between libraries and their users. These findings indicate that Objective 1 of the study has been achieved by identifying the library website, Web OPAC and WhatsApp as the primary digital communication platforms.

Table 5. Paperless Library Services and ICT Infrastructure in College Libraries (n = 27)

Paperless Library Services and ICT Infrastructure in College Libraries	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Libraries with E-books	27	100.0
Libraries with E-Journals	27	100.0
Libraries with Databases	27	100.0
Libraries with Library Consortium	27	100.0
Libraries with N-LIST Subscription	20	74.1
Libraries with Free Wi-Fi	23	85.2
Libraries with RFID Technology	2	7.4
Libraries using Automation Software	27	100.0
Libraries reporting ICT improves utilisation	27	100.0

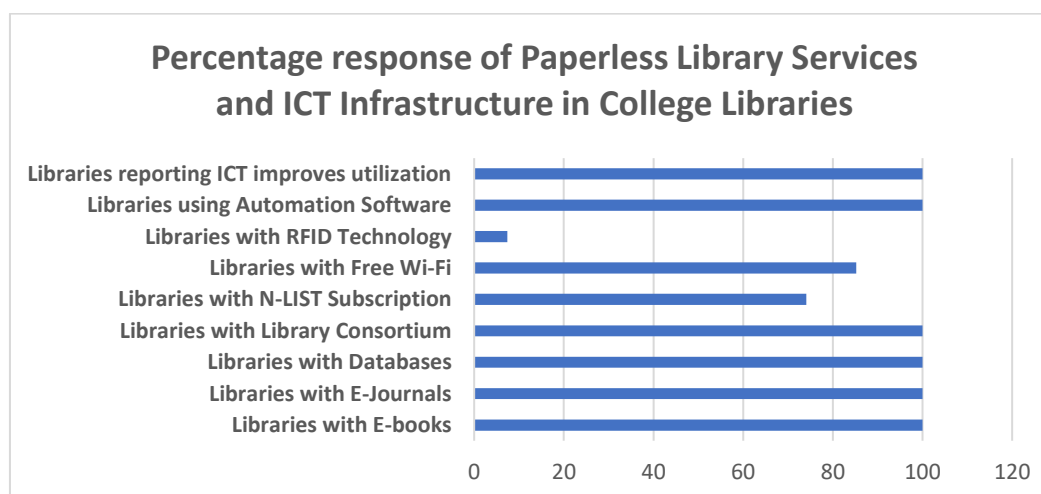


Figure 3 response of Paperless Library Services and ICT Infrastructure in College Libraries

Table 5 presents the adoption of paperless library services and ICT infrastructure in the participating college libraries. The findings reveal a high level of digital transformation among the surveyed libraries. All 27 (100%) libraries reported the availability of e-books, e-journals, online databases, library consortium membership, and library automation software, indicating that digital resources and automated systems have become integral components of library operations. Furthermore, all librarians unanimously agreed that ICT has significantly improved the utilisation of library resources, highlighting the positive role of technology in enhancing library services. 23 (85.2%) libraries provided free Wi-Fi, enabling students to access electronic resources seamlessly within the library premises. Additionally, 20 (74.1%) libraries subscribed to N-LIST, thereby expanding access to scholarly e-books and e-journals for their users. In contrast, only 2 (7.4%) libraries had implemented RFID technology, suggesting that although libraries have broadly adopted paperless services, advanced automation technologies are still in the early stages of implementation.



These findings indicate that the selected college libraries have successfully embraced paperless library practices by providing digital collections, online information resources, ICT infrastructure, and library automation. These initiatives have created an enabling digital environment that supports efficient access to information, promotes continuous learning, and strengthens student engagement. The relatively low adoption of RFID technology suggests scope for further modernisation as financial and technological resources become more widely available. The findings confirm Objective 3 by showing that the participating libraries have widely adopted paperless library services and ICT infrastructure.

Table 6. Digital Initiatives Supporting Student Engagement

Digital Initiative	Student Evidence (n = 306)	Librarian Evidence (n = 27)	Contribution to Student Engagement
Library Website	138 (45.1%) students use the library website	26 (96.3%) libraries use the library website for communication	Website providing library information, notices and digital resources for timely access by users. Helps in communication
Web OPAC	110 (35.9%) students use Web OPAC	26 (96.3%) libraries provide Web OPAC	Helps in quick searching and retrieval of library resources, encouraging sole use.
WhatsApp Communication	89 (29.1%) students receive library information through WhatsApp	22 (81.5%) libraries use WhatsApp groups	Helps with instant communication to users about new arrivals, events, and service updates.
Online Databases	UGC-INFONET: 136 (44.4%); N-LIST: 50 (16.3%); DELNET: 19 (6.2%)	20 (74.1%) libraries subscribe to N-LIST; all libraries provide databases	Supports academic learning, assignments and research by providing access to scholarly resources.
Digital Library Resources	218 (71.2%) students prefer both print and digital resources	27 (100%) libraries provide e-books, e-journals and databases	Promotes continuous access to information through a hybrid learning environment.
User Orientation / Information Literacy Programmes	Students reported participation in orientation programmes	20 (74.1%) libraries conduct these programmes regularly; 5 (18.5%) conduct them as required	Enhances students' awareness and smart utilisation of digital library services.
Display of New Arrivals	Students become aware of newly added resources	23 (85.2%) libraries regularly display new arrivals	Encourages students to explore recently acquired print and electronic resources.
Social Media Awareness Activities	Students use library social media platforms	16 (59.3%) libraries regularly use social media for awareness; 5 (18.5%) use it sometimes	Increases visibility of library services and promotes greater student interaction with library resources.

Table 6 shows the digital initiatives used by the selected libraries. According to students' responses, 45.1% used the library website, 35.9% used Web OPAC, and 29.1% used WhatsApp. As per librarians' responses, libraries do provide e-resources and conduct user awareness activities. These initiatives supported access to library information and resources. Hence, Objective 4 was attained through the digital initiatives reported by students and librarians.



Conclusion:

The study concludes that social media and paperless library services play a remarkable role in enhancing student engagement in college libraries. Students actively utilised digital library resources and showed a strong preference for a hybrid approach combining print and digital resources. Library websites, Web OPAC, and WhatsApp emerged as the most effective platforms for communication and access to library services.

The findings also reveal that the participating libraries have widely adopted paperless practices through e-books, e-journals, online databases, library automation, and ICT infrastructure, although RFID implementation remains limited. User orientation programmes, information literacy initiatives, and digital communication have further strengthened students' awareness and utilisation of library resources.

The above study highlights that the effective integration of ICT, social media, and paperless library services has improved access to information, promoted greater utilisation of library resources, and fostered a more engaging learning environment in college libraries.

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