

# A Study on the Utilization Pattern of Social Media among the Students of Assam Agricultural University

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## Abstract

The study entitled “A Study on the Utilization Pattern of Social Media among the Students of Assam Agricultural University” was conducted with objective to examine the profile characteristics of its students, assess their social media utilization patterns, and describe the problems faced by them while using social media. A descriptive research design was employed, and a multi-stage random sampling technique was used to select 120 respondents from the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th-year undergraduate students of the college of Agriculture, AAU. Data were collected using a pretested, semi-structured research schedule through personal interviews.

Regarding the profile of the respondents, the study revealed that the majority of the students were belonged to the age group in between 21- 23 years. Nearly (60.00%) of the students had a medium CGPA, and sports were the most popular extracurricular activity. The majority had more than three years of social media experience. Around (60.00%) of their parents belonged to the medium-income category. Most students preferred using mobile devices to access social media and demonstrated the highest level of knowledge regarding WhatsApp, followed by YouTube.

The internet has become a necessary component of daily life, especially for younger generations who are very tech-savvy. Students' lives are significantly impacted by social media, which has become incredibly popular over the past 20 years. Social media has clear advantages for education, information sharing, and social interaction, but its effects on students are complex. Social media has both beneficial and detrimental effects on students' interpersonal relationships, mental health, and academic achievement.

Concerns have been raised about social media's impact on students' social and academic lives as its usage among them keeps growing. The question is whether social media use is influencing education or if students are using these platforms for educational purposes.

Furthermore, social media platforms raise questions about their effects on student behavior and performance even though they provide chances for cooperation, knowledge sharing, and academic discussion. Social isolation, anxiety, and depression are just a few of the detrimental effects of excessive social media use on mental health. Additionally, it calls into question how well students are interacting with their teachers and peers on these platforms. Despite social media's increasing significance in students' lives, little is known about its usage patterns and effects, especially in academic settings.

Assam Agricultural University (AAU), in contrast to other educational institutions worldwide, offers internet access to students, promoting the use of social media for both academic and extracurricular

purposes. Although students at AAU frequently use social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and DIKSHA, no study has been done to examine how they use these sites for socializing or for educational purposes. It's crucial to comprehend how students use social media, what platforms they favor, and how this affects their academic achievement, social behaviors, and general productivity.

How students manage their time and whether social media is causing distractions in their academic lives are two important issues that need further research. Given how important social media is to students' social lives, it is critical to determine whether their use of these platforms is helping or hurting their academic performance. Do students spend too much time on non-academic pursuits, which causes distractions, or are they participating in fruitful academic activities, like taking online courses, using educational resources, or working with peers?

The results of this study will offer important new information about how often, how much, and why AAU students use social media. It will look at how these platforms affect students' interactions and behaviors on an academic, cultural, and social level. These kinds of insights are essential for guiding university policies and procedures, such as how to successfully incorporate social media into the classroom. Teachers and administrators at the relevant educational institutions will be better able to encourage responsible use of digital technologies, fostering positive engagement while reducing potential risks, if they have a better understanding of the dynamic relationship between students, social media, and education.

## INTRODUCTION

A global online platform for socialization and interaction between people is referred to as social media. "Social media is a way to share information and communicate with others through the internet or mobile phones," according to the Cambridge Dictionary (2016). According to the Merriam Webster dictionary, social media refers to electronic communication platforms like social networking websites and microblogging, which allow users to establish online communities and exchange ideas, information, private messages, and other content like videos. "Social media refers to the online interaction between individuals or groups where they create, share, and occasionally trade ideas, images, videos, and many other things." "It is an online platform and technology that allows people and communities to produce, share, and trade multimedia content, ideas, and information in virtual networks." These platforms are made to help people interact, work together, and communicate via a variety of digital platforms. The term "social media" refers to a broad category of online services, such as social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), video-sharing websites (YouTube), and other web-based programs that let users interact and connect with one another in real time.

Approximately 63% of the world's population uses social media, with audiences over the age of 18. Around the world, people use social media for two hours and twenty minutes every day on average. From 970 million users in 2010 to over 5.17 billion users today, social media platforms have nearly tripled their user base in the past ten years (Backlinko, 2024). According to Pillai (2017), 70% of Indians use their phones to access social media, with each user spending an average of three hours per day on the platform.

Social media serves as a link between formal and informal education, claim Greenhow et al. (2019). Significant chances for cooperation and improved community ties are offered by active learning. Social media has produced a digital environment that can both contain and improve the complexity of digital or

multimodal learning in the current paradigm. But according to Greenhow and Lewin (2015), it was crucial that students act more like consumers than like participants. In their study, Price et al. (2018) found that social media frequently assisted students in developing their social, emotional, and academic abilities. Other advantages include ease of dissemination and sharing. Learning groups are connected to improved learning experiences through interactive communication tools. Students' social and academic integration through the use of social media.

Social media platforms have completely changed how students interact, communicate, and share information. These platforms give students the chance to interact with their classmates, express their creativity, and access a wealth of information and resources. However, despite all of the benefits, students' extensive use of social media raises concerns about academic performance, mental health, privacy, and responsible online conduct. Understanding the motivations behind students' use of social media is crucial to comprehending the effects it has on their lives.

### Research Methodology

The Assam Agricultural University students participated in the research study. One college, the College of Agriculture, Jorhat, was chosen for the study out of nine. There were 120 undergraduate students in total, with an equal number of male and female students. Only three batches of undergraduate students—second, third, and fourth years—were considered in the study, and forty (40) students—equal numbers of boys and girls—were selected from each batch. A research schedule with pertinent variables was created based on the study's goals. Two descriptive variables were included in the study: first, the students' social media usage patterns and the issues they encountered when using social media, and second, an independent variable that focused on the students' profile characteristics.

After the schedule was prepared on September 9, 2024, the data collection process began and lasted until September 25, 2024. A method of in-person interviews was used. With the aid of a planned schedule, the interview was conducted using the personal interview method. The appropriate statistical tools and techniques were used to code, analyze, and interpret the collected data. The study's data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0.0.0 edition 64-bit.

### Finding

that 65.00 percent of the students were between the ages of 21 and 23, followed by 25.83 percent who were under 20 and 9.17 percent who were over 23. The respondents' average age was 21.63, with a standard deviation of 1.60. This suggests that all of the students are in the developmental stage where social media, when used appropriately, can be very helpful for both their professional and personal development. All of the students are in the productive age range.

The bulk of students (59.17%) had a medium CGPA between 7.07 and 8.29, indicating a concentration of performance in this range. The next group of students (21.66%) had high CGPAs (above 8.29), which may indicate that some students performed well academically. There are fewer students performing poorly, as evidenced by the lower percentage of students (19.17%) with low CGPAs (below 7.06). According to the distribution of overall academic performance, the majority of students are in the middle range, with a smaller percentage at the lower end of the spectrum and a considerable number reaching high academic standards.

The respondents' average CGPA was 7.68, with a standard deviation of 0.615.

that 67.50% of students rely on Data Pack, making it the most popular way for them to access social media. Following this were those who used the data pack in addition to wifi (16.67%), data pack plus wi



fi plus hotspot (10.83%), and data pack plus hot spot (5.00%), in that order.