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Use of whatsapp as a social media towards the learning of geography by the undergraduate students in Kolkata

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ABSTRACT

At present, social media is playing a vital role in teaching learning process in worldwide situation. WhatsApp is not only an important social media but also a facilitating agent to both teachers and students for quick communication regarding their teaching and learning issues. Education world is now taking whatsApp as highly secure social media to exchange academic information. This paper aimed at to find out the effects of utilization of whatsApp as a social media on learning geography by students in general degree colleges. The Survey method has been followed for this study and a questionnaire with five point scale prepared by the authors has been used as research tool. The simple random sampling technique has been applied for this study. The students who are studying Geography Honours at first year level in the general degree colleges in Kolkata have been selected as samples. Fifty students under three general degree girls' colleges in Kolkata were surveyed. Percentage analysis through graphical presentations has been done through MS Excel for the analysis of results. The result shows that WhatsApp group on behalf of department of geography of the selected undergraduate college in between teachers and students is not popularized. Traditional attitudes of teachers as well as the maturity level of the students (the respondents are belonged to mainly first year undergraduate students), the necessity of academic matters (the students are first year) are the probable causes behind it. Thus, the students personally make contact or share matters with their teachers in whatsApp according to their necessity and vice-versa. There are significant level of differences in activities performed by the teachers and students in whatsApp. The students actively make contact with their friends at the time of publication of result. Teachers become also very much active at that time.

Key Words : Whatsapp, Social media, Geography, Undergraduate student

INTRODUCTION

WhatsApp Messenger is a freeware and cross-platform messaging and Voice over IP (VoIP) service owned by Facebook. The application allows the sending of text messages and voice calls, as well as video calls, images and other media, documents, and user location. The application runs from a mobile device though it is also accessible from desktop computers; the service requires consumer users to provide a standard cellular mobile number. (Wikipedia) WhatsApp is a free to download messenger app for smart phones. WhatsApp uses the internet to send messages, images, audio or video. The service is very similar to text messaging services; however, because it uses the

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internet to send messages, the cost of using WhatsApp is significantly less than texting. It can also be used on desktop. It is popular with teenagers because of features like group chatting, voice messages and location sharing**.** WhatsApp has changed its terms of service and it has risen the minimum age at which you can use the service from 13 to 16 years of age across Europe. If you are under 16, you must have consent of a parent or guardian. (www.webwise.ie/parents/explainer-whatsapp).

Using WhatsApp:

For the use of WhatsApp you need a compatible Smartphone or tablet with a sim card, an internet connection, and a phone number. The app uses user's phone number as its username, and the account is locked to the phone, although the user can transfer his contacts over to new devices. WhatsApp is free to use in Ireland.

Growth of WhatsApp:

WhatsApp, owned by Facebook, now has 1 billion users worldwide and is the biggest online messenger app on the market. It has been founded in 2009 by ex-Yahoo employees it started as a small startup and swelled to 250,000 users in just a few months, growing so fast that they had to add a charge for using the service per year to slow the subscription rate down. In 2014, WhatsApp was acquired by Facebook and has seen continued growth, reaching the 1 billion mark in July 2017.

The review of related literature:

The findings made by Ms. Rasmita Kalasi indicated that new technologies are used extensively by the young people featured in the study for personal use, participation in peer discussion and expressing opinions. Much of the use of tools takes place in informal or peer supported context. Therefore, a good proportion of the development of e-skills takes place outside schools, colleges and youth groups. Teachers can collect ideas from other sources. Students can ask questions and facilitate deeper discussion after reading something on one of the thousands Social Media Sites. Students can locate an expert in a field they are interested in. As to student's new roles they have to engage in online task based learning or discussion. In paper made by Dr.Varang Acharya, Mr.Adarsh Patel and Mrs.Sweta Jethava would like to give idea about the current available tools and the tools that can be added into social platform to enhance the learning process of teacher and student. Based on survey result, it is shown that people are interested in the learning using social networking; most of the current users are already a member of the social networking and uses for the learning or teaching purpose. One teacher has commented that professional websites are better to use instead of the facebook, here author want to highlights that most of the students are very much active on the social networking website so author suggest social networking is great platform.. The article contributed by James A. Griesemer focuses on continuing efforts using social media to enhance undergraduate business students' learning experiences. According to Ashraf Jalal Yousef Zaidieh Privacy, real friendship, taking up time and miscommunication are the most important challenges facing education through the social networking. On the other hand, flexibility, repeatable and convenience and accessibility have a vital influence in the use of social networking in education. In addition, this paper addressed some of previous studies about the relationship between the social networking and education. The results concluded by Winner Dominic Chawinga suggest that if appropriately deployed, Twitter and blogs are catalysts for the much hyped learner-centred approach to teaching because using these technologies, it emerged that students shared and discussed course

materials, posted their course reflections and interacted amongst themselves and with their lecturer 24/7. Challenges faced include cost of internet data bundles, inaccessible Wi-Fi, poor bandwidths and insufficient computers. The college - wide survey done by Lee Andrew Dunn indicated that 68% students thought social media could enhance their learning experience. 22% indicated that it would not add any value or would cause distraction, whilst 10% were unsure. The paper prepared by Ilaria Liccardi, Asma Ounnas et. al. demonstrates the social dimensions of a collaborative learning network, its formation, its presence and its influence on different social networks in education. Also mentioned are the effects of a new generation of web-based software development, known as Web 2.0, in learning and social networks. The main contribution of the paper is to analyze current learning practices and find the connection between the learning practices and social networks. According to Sana Khan and Sheikh Tahir Bakhsh Facebook can play its role to facilitate e-learning as more than a social networking website. It is analyzed that participation and engagement of students on Facebook page and group is quite optimistic to use it as a supportive tool in future. Results can also help learners and teachers to understand the importance and effects of using social networking website for e-learning. According to Jyothi Thalluri and Joy Penman Facebook is used in learning and teaching clinical problem solving in Pathology and a Clinical Sciences course delivered at a South Australian university. It involved first- and second-year Medical Radiation students and second-year Nursing students. Student cohorts found the use of Facebook beneficial for them in terms of providing an innovative way of learning; fostering greater interaction amongst co-students and staff; and effectively engaging them with the content of courses. In their paper, Hordemann and Chao reported on their experience with the new social media based learning environment *Quizbox*. This system allows students in the classroom to use, for example, a touchpad or laptop to directly follow the lecture, to ask questions in an anonymous way, to chat, or to take notes on the slides. The paper by Gafni and Deri assesses the advantages and disadvantages of Facebook for undergraduate students in technology-oriented subjects. It suggests that first year students use Facebook not only for socializing but also for academic purposes, whereas senior students use it almost exclusively for leisure or social activities. Only a small portion of the students significantly and successfully used Face-book to get assistance for their studies or to save time in finding learning resources. Department-run Facebook pages tended to be rather inactive, whereas the analyzed student-run page was very active. The results concluded by Buzzetto-More show that the students actively used course-specific Facebook walls to post questions about course-related topics, and that the fraction of original posts made by students (as opposed to posts initiated by the supervisor) increased over the duration of the courses. Most students spent significant time on Facebook. More than half of them agreed that it enhances the sense of community within the learning environment, the learning process, and class discussions, makes the classes more interesting, and – as a learning tool – engages students. Halil Ibrahim Gurcan opined that it's free, it cuts down on isolation, building tolerance and understanding of cultural diversity, and it can amplify passion regarding the impacts on social media on education.

Objectives of the study:

– To identify the teaching-learning activities performed in whatsApp in between teachers and students of geography at first year level.

– To identify the role of various services available in WhatsApp for teaching-learning purposes.

– To analyze the teaching-learning activities done in whatsApp in between teachers and students of geography at first year level.

– To assess the effectiveness of whatsApp use for learning process by the students at first year level.

METHODOLOGY

The survey method was followed for the study. The Simple random sampling technique has been applied for the collection of samples from the target population belonged to only first year geography honours under graduate female students. Fifty samples were collected from three Girls Colleges in Kolkata. The average age of the samples is 19 year. They are mainly Bengali medium based students. They are belonged to middle class family. The data was collected from them after their term end 1st year university examination. The tool used for the study is five points rating scale prepared by the investigators and verified by academic experts. So, the face validity of the tool was maintained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Use of whatsapp for learning:

57% students responded that they use it for learning to a small extent whereas only 7% and 9% respondents agreed that whatsApp is used for learning purposes to a very great extent and to great extent respectively. Actually the respondents belong to first year under graduate level as well as they are from Bengali medium school background so that they are habituated with traditional mode of learning. They would develop smart mode of learning in near future (Fig. 1).

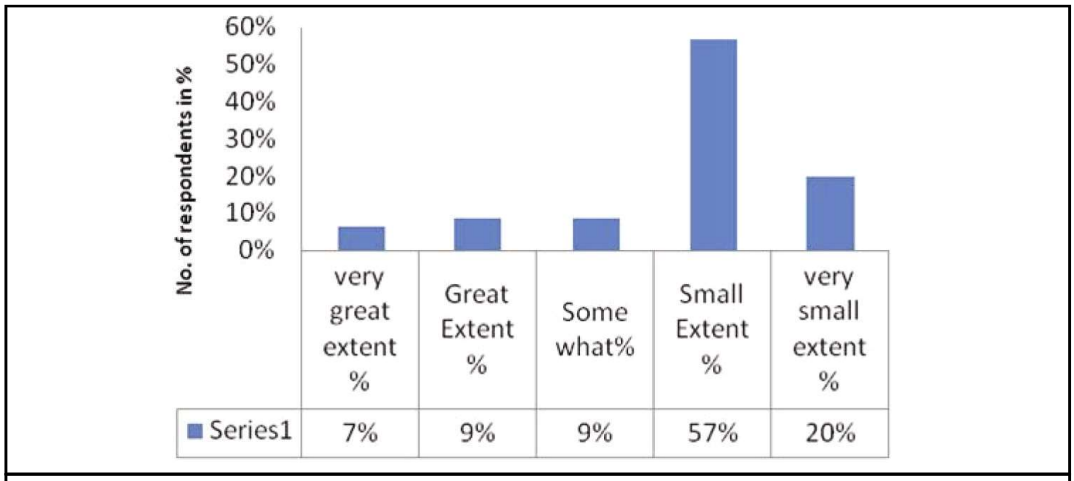

Fig. 1 : Use of whatsapp for learning purpose

Contacts with teachers outside the classrooms via WhatsApp:

Out of the class room there has been started a trend to make contact with class teachers through whatsApp for academic purposes. The 52% students replied that they do it to a small extent as well as 33% told that this is done by them to very small extent whereas only 4 % students make it to a great extent. It may reflect a rigidity between teachers and students or in other words since the respondents are first year under graduate level so that it may take time to make a bonding between teachers and students followed by frequent whatsApp contacts outside the classrooms (Fig. 2).

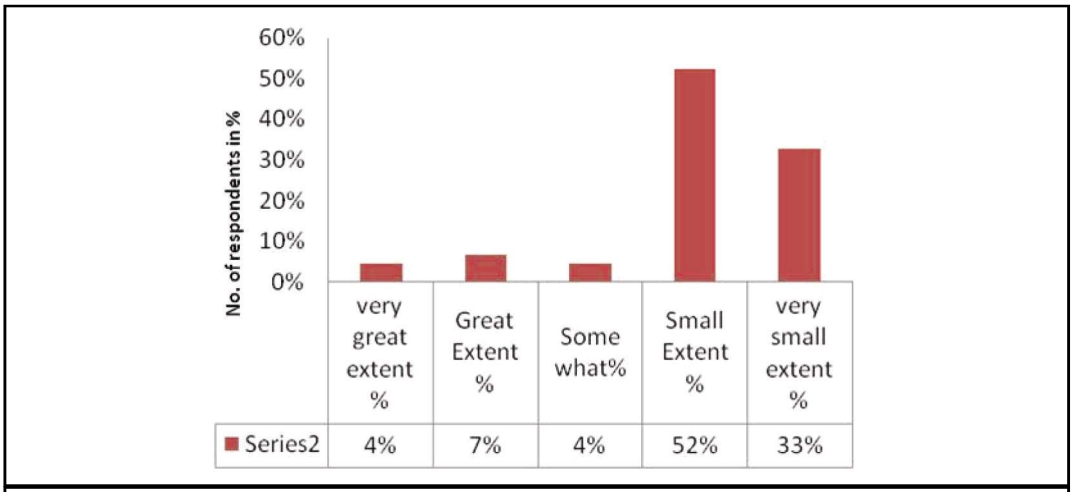

Fig. 2 : Contacts with teachers outside the classrooms via WhatsApp

Influence of class teachers to use whatsApp for academic purposes:

In our present technology and internet friendly world, teachers also inspire their students to use whatsApp due to so many academic purposes like handout giving, diagram or the like transferring, asking or reply something, clarifying something, disbursing urgent notification and so on. Besides, teachers are those who can show right way to their students how to use some new things like whatsApp in a logical and fruitful way. But here 39 % students responded that their college teachers do it to a small extent and 37% showed that it is towards very small extent. 15 % answered that this is done by their teachers to somewhat but only 4 % students replied that they are inspired by their teachers to a very great extent to use whatsapp for teaching learning purposes (Fig. 3).

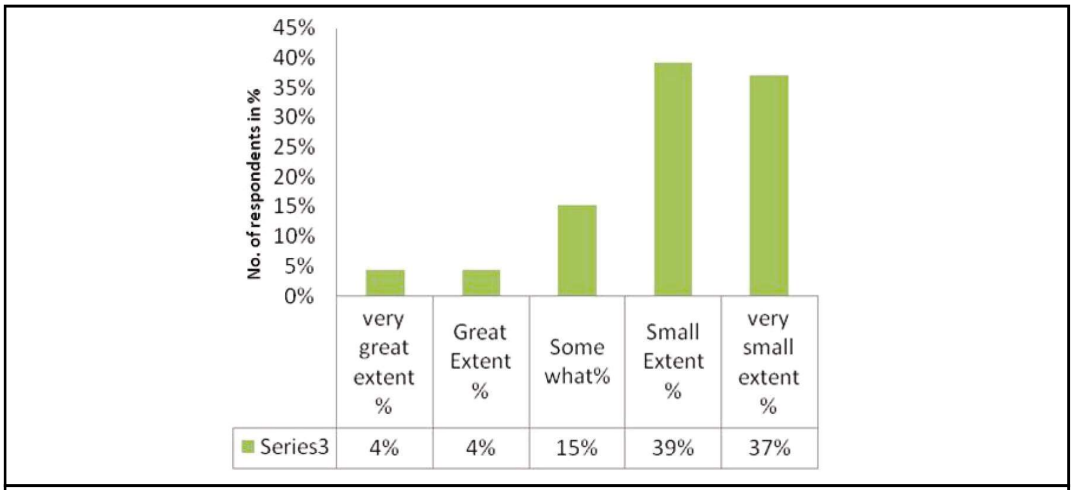

Fig. 3 : Influence of teacher for use of whatsApp in academic purposes

WhatsApp group with college Teachers:

Sometimes, whatsApp group is created in between college teachers and students on behalf of academic department to share day to day academic as well as departmental issues. 52 % students replied that there is no such group but only 4% strongly agreed that there is such group (Fig. 4).

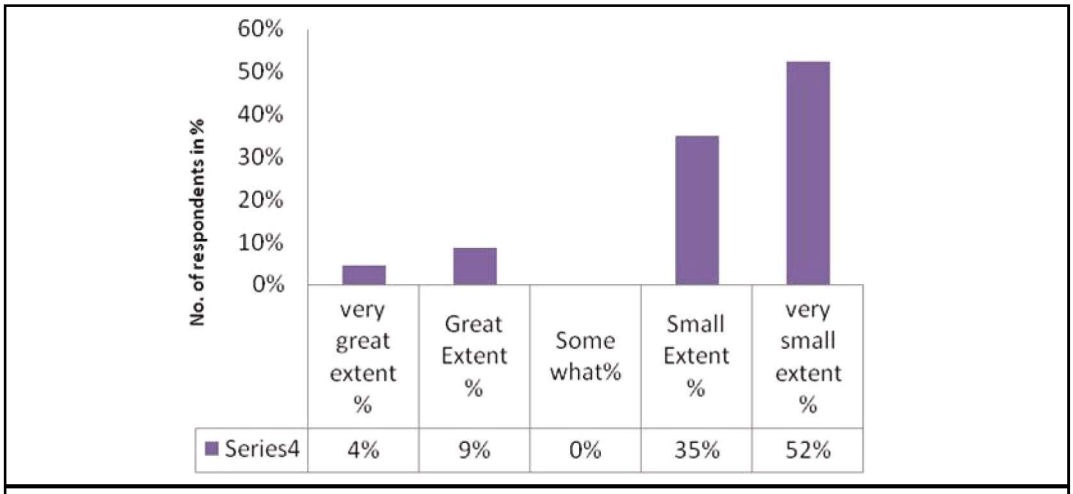

Fig. 4 : WhatsApp group with college teachers

Nature of communication:

Regularity:

Only 9% students strongly agreed that the whatsApp communication is made regularly between the teachers and the students to a very great extent whereas 30% students informed that this regularity is maintained between them to somewhat. Again, 13 % students responded that they maintain it to a great extent. So, it is cleared that total 22% students take place at the higher position of the scale and 30% students are fixed in the middle of the scale. On the other hand 30% students replied that it is done to a small extent and 17% students told that they communicate their teachers in whatsApp to a very small extent (Fig. 5).

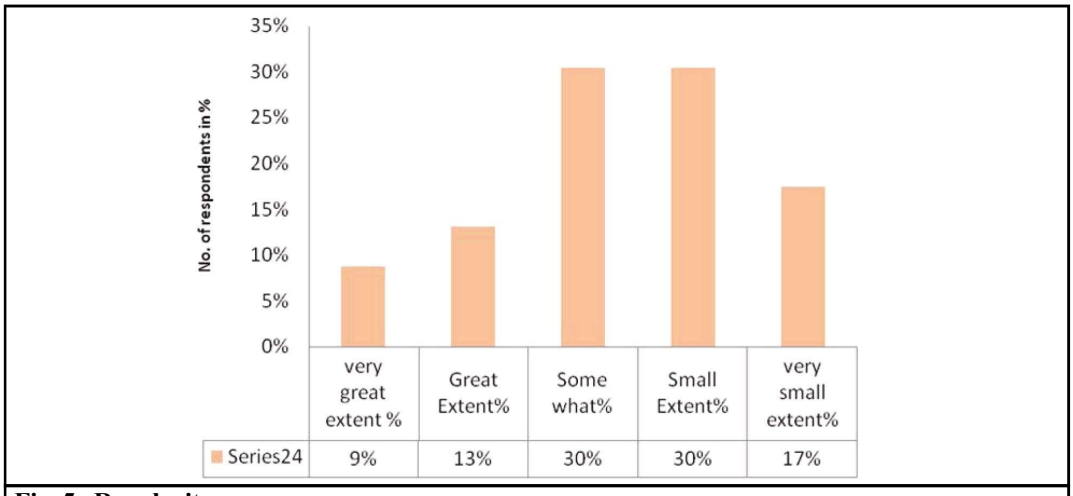

Fig. 5 : Regularity

Teaching issues:

College related notice:

65% students told that college related notice is shared by their teachers to a very small extent in whatsApp. Only 7% students agreed that they get it to a great extent (Fig. 6).

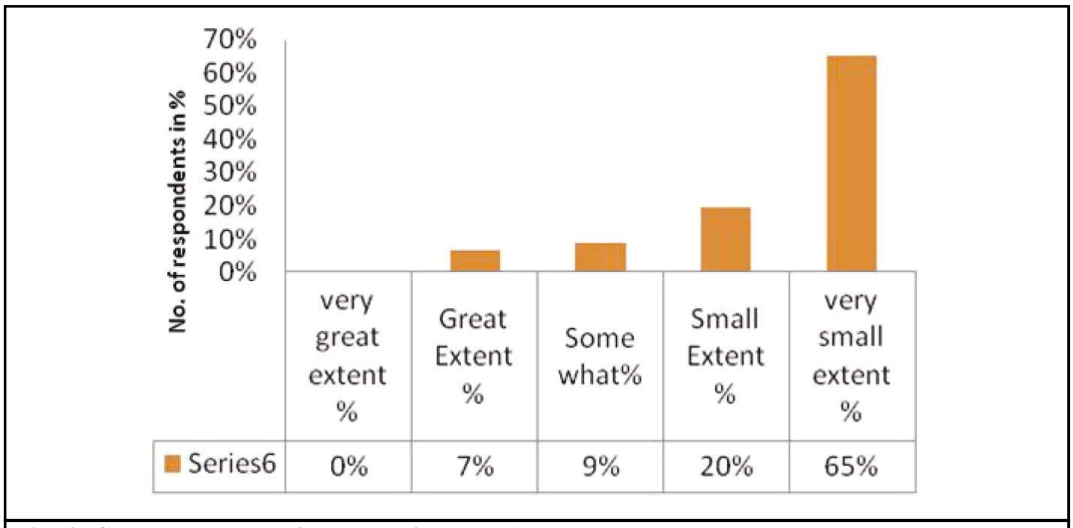

Fig. 6 : College related notice update in WhatsApp

Urgent notice:

The students were asked whether they get any urgent notice like class-off and change news, surprised test and so on in whatsApp by their college teachers. 17 % students informed that they get it to somewhat and 37% students responded that it is informed to them to a very small extent. Only 7 % students replied that they receive it to a very great extent (Fig. 7).

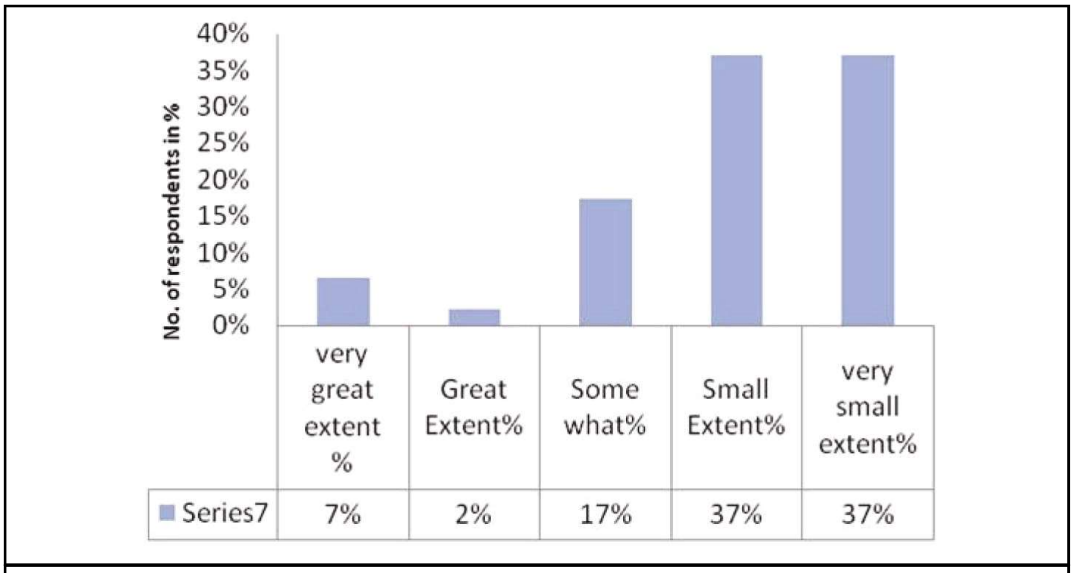

Fig. 7 : Urgent notice update in WhatsApp

College-exam routine:

52% students replied that they are updated to a very small extent about the updates of college exam routine. Only 4% students strongly agreed that they get it to a very great extent (Fig. 8).

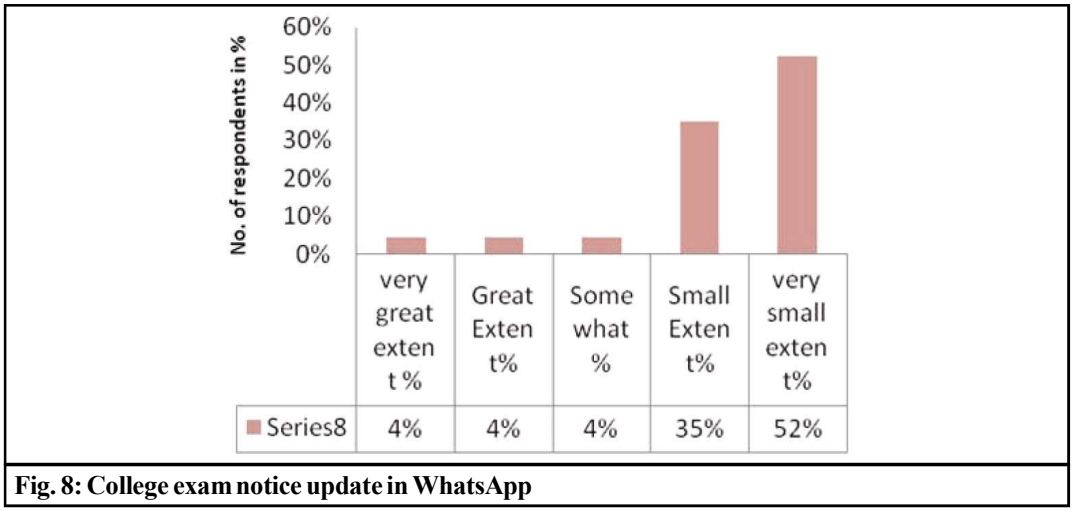

Fig. 8: College exam notice update in WhatsApp

University -exam routine:

If teachers get earlier updates about university examination notice and schedule, they try to share the information to their students as soon as possible. At present whatsApp is such effective means for dissemination of any information in no time. The students were asked whether they get it. 43% and 30% students answered that it is done to a very small extent and to a small extent respectively whereas 15 % responded that they are updated to somewhat. Only 7% students strongly agreed that they get it to a very great extent (Fig. 9).

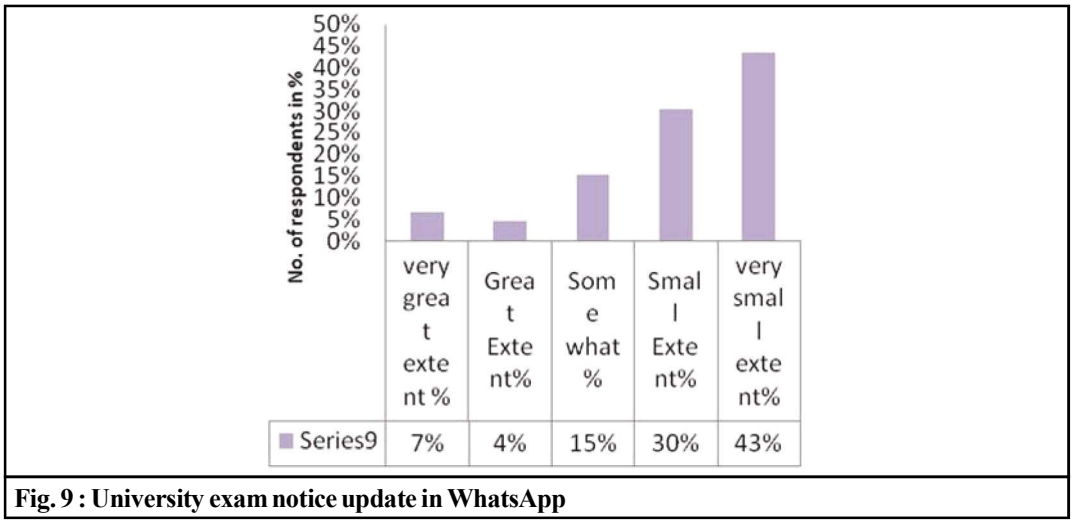

Fig. 9 : University exam notice update in WhatsApp

College-exam result:

Students are always worried about their result. They disseminate the updates of result among them in no time. 17% students strongly agreed that they are informed to a very great extent about college exam result in whatsApp by their teachers. 13% students are got it to a great extent and 28% students responded that it is done by their teachers to somewhat. But 22 % students informed that they get it to a very great extent (Fig. 10).

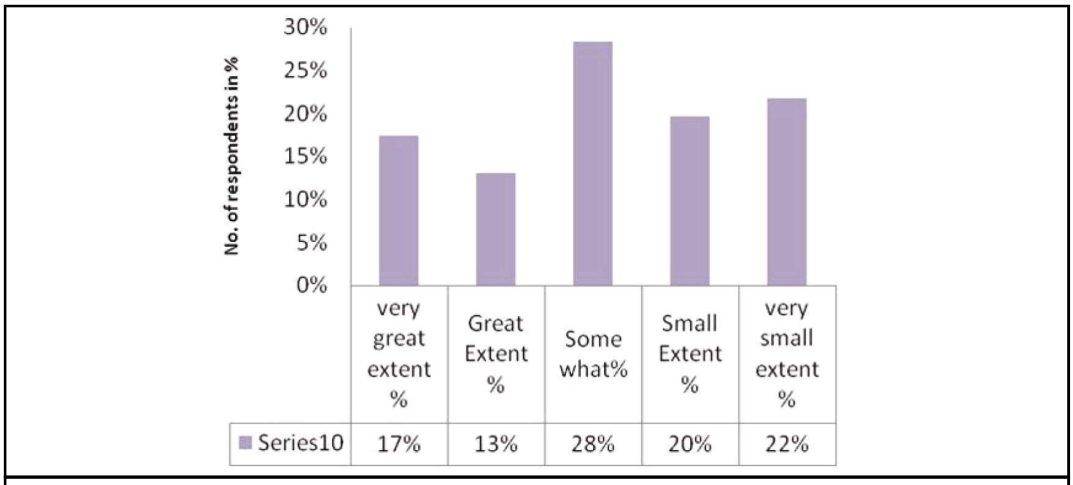

Fig. 10 : College-examination results update in WhatsApp

University result update:

In the case of university result updates, teachers and students both act in similar way. Both are worried about the updates. If the teachers get any quick updates, they try to disseminate the information as earlier as possible. Let see whether the whatsApp is effective for passing the information from the teachers towards students. 28% students strongly agreed that they are informed to a very great extent about the updates of university results whereas 33% replied that they get it to a small extent and 22% agreed that it is done to very small extent (Fig. 11).

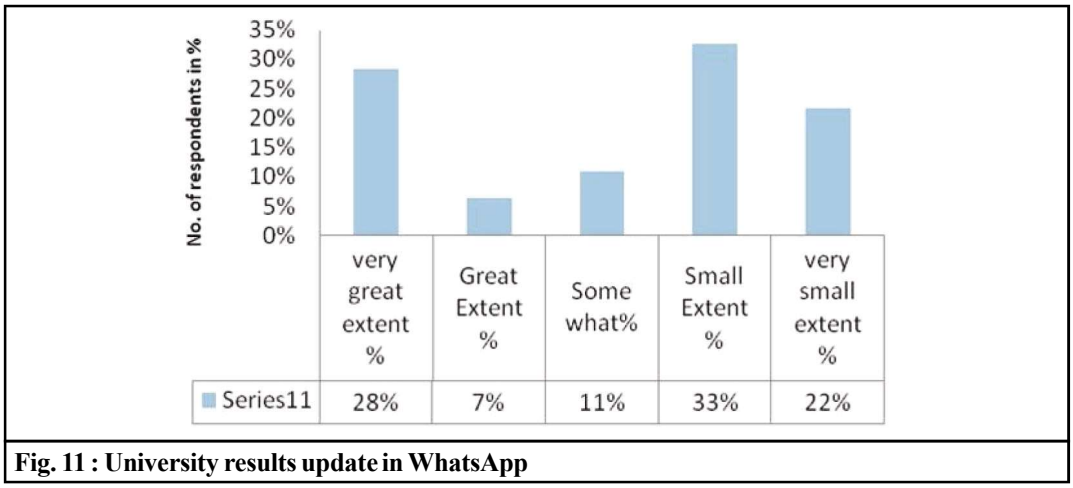

Fig. 11 : University results update in WhatsApp

Updating of supplementary learning-materials:

Sometimes after classroom teaching, teachers feel to deliver supporting learning contents like diagrams, short notes, figure, data etc to their students. WhatsApp is the easiest mean to distribute these things among students.37 % students replied that they get these things from their teachers to a very small extent via whatsApp. 30% students informed that they are given these things via whatsApp to somewhat. Only 7% and 4% students told that they are updated by these things to a very great extent and to a great extent, respectively (Fig. 12).

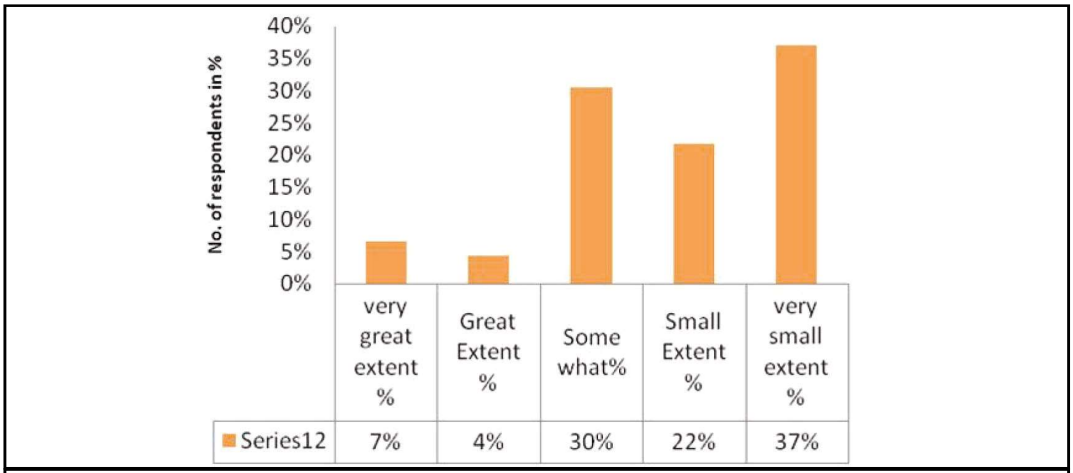

Fig. 12 : Learning materials update in WhatsApp

Latest Geography related posts updating:

Teachers always try to make update their students on latest geographical events. Now-a-days various latest geographical posts are exchanged in whatsApp among users. 35 % students replied that their teachers send these types of posts to a very small extent. 30% students told that it is done by their teachers to a small extent whereas 13 % students responded that this is performed by their teachers to a great extent. Again, 13% students agreed that they get it from their teachers to somewhat (Fig. 13).

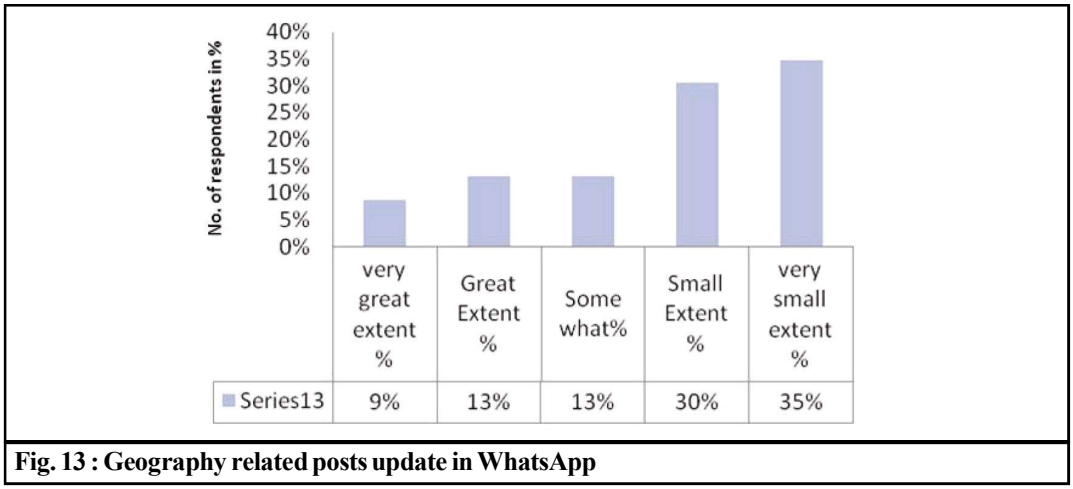

Fig. 13 : Geography related posts update in WhatsApp

Latest Geographical events oriented photograph/picture/image updating:

WhatsApp users always keep on updating images among them. Sometimes it is found that geographical events oriented images are exchanged in social media. Students were asked whether their teachers do it for enhancing geographical knowledge in favour of their students. 48% students replied that it is done to a very small extent whereas only 7% and 9% students responded that they get it from their teachers to a very great extent and to a great extent respectively. Again, 13 % students told that it is done by their teachers to somewhat (Fig. 14).

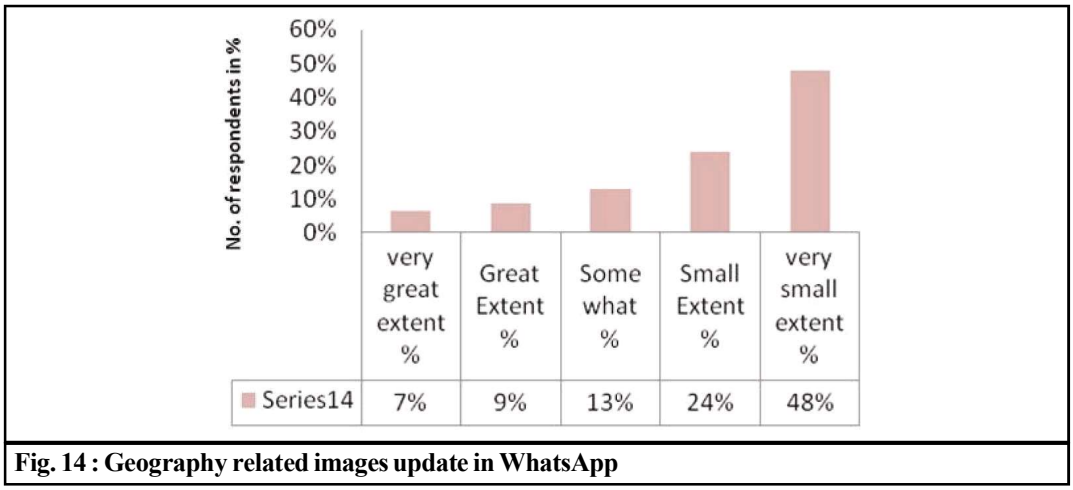

Fig. 14 : Geography related images update in WhatsApp

Latest Geographical events oriented video updating:

WhatsApp short type videos are very interesting. These are of various types including geographical type also. 30% students responded that their teachers share this type of video with them to a very small extent.28 % students also replied that they get it from their teachers to a small extent. 22% (11% + 11%) students informed that it is performed by their college teachers to a very great extent to great extent (Fig. 15).

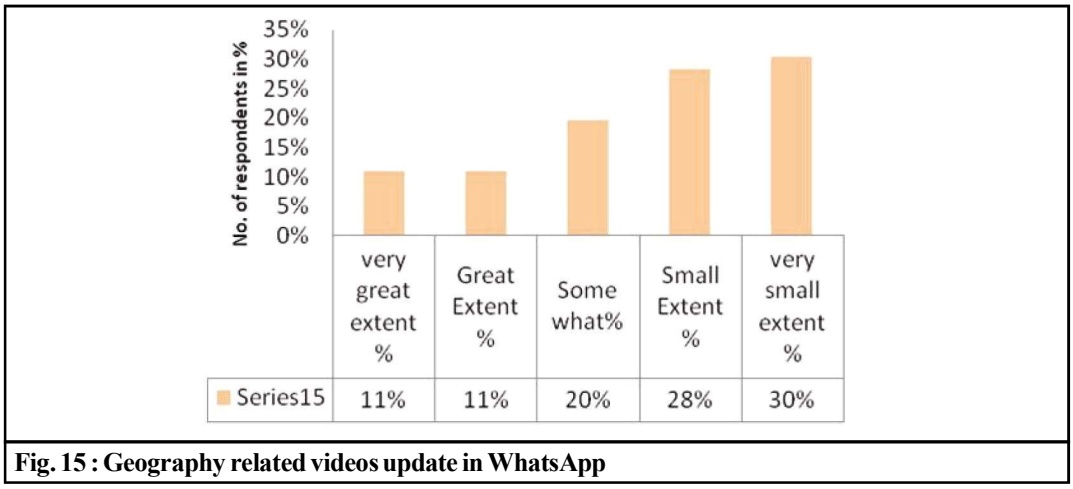

Fig. 15 : Geography related videos update in WhatsApp

Moral value oriented contents updating:

One of the important works of teachers is to enhance the moral values among their students. This type of video is frequently exchanged among whatsApp users. So this may be a useful means towards teachers to share with their students. That is why students were asked about it. 24% strongly agreed that their teachers share this type of video with them to a very great extent. 13% students replied that they get it to a great extent. But, 28% answered that it is done by their teachers to a very small extent whereas 22 % students told that it is done between them to somewhat (Fig. 16).

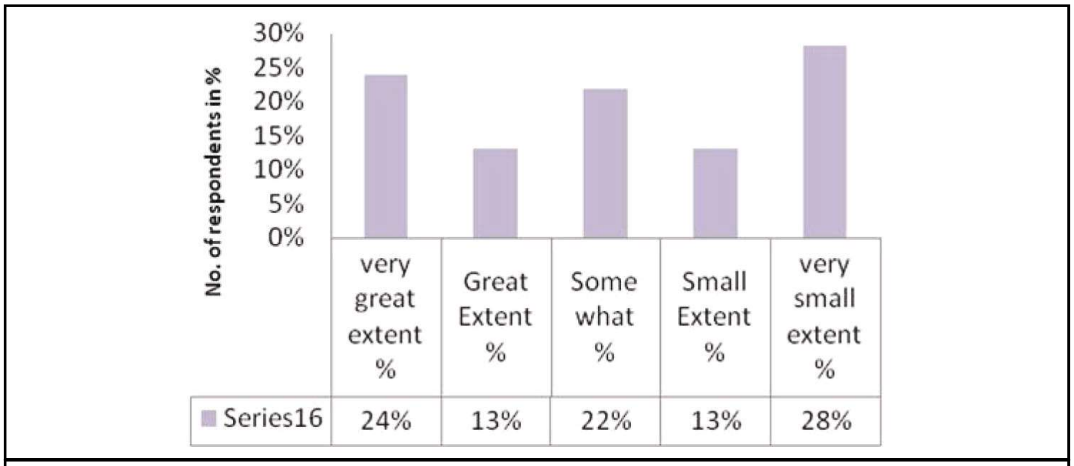

Fig. 16 : Moral value oriented continents update in WhatsApp

Students' Activity:

Asking: After classroom interaction, asking about something is quite natural to some students. WhatsApp gives them opportunity to ask about something to their teachers when they need at anywhere. 4% students replied that it is done by them to a great extent whereas 52% students do it to a small extent. 26% students answered that they do it to a very small extent. Only 2% students perform it to a very great extent (Fig. 17).

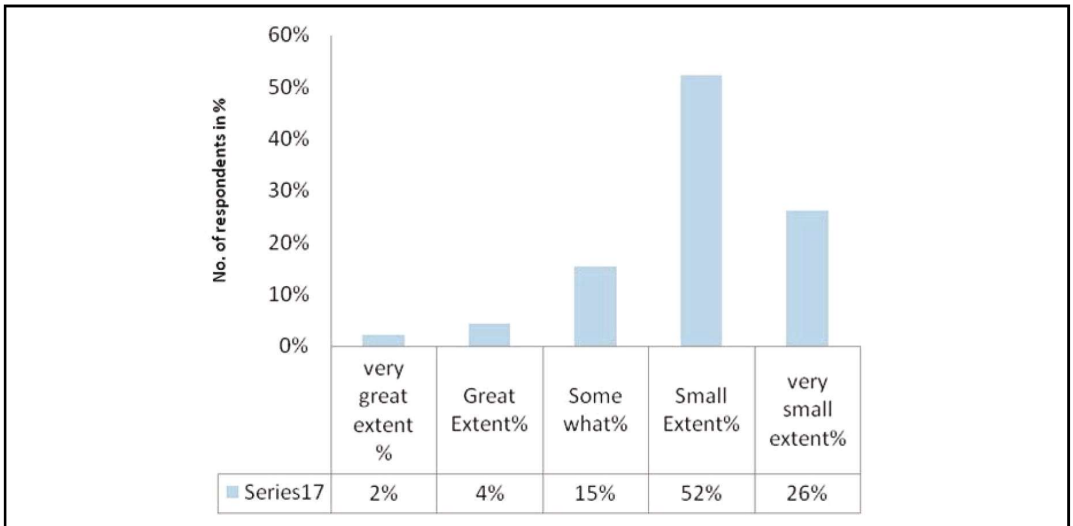

Fig. 17 : Asking something to teachers in whatsApp

Discussing:

Sometimes students feel for an academic discussion with their teachers outside their classrooms. This type of discussion can be made easily in whatsApp. Only 11% students do it to a very great extent whereas 43% students do this type of activity with their teachers in whatsApp to a small extent. But 20% students responded that they perform it to somewhat (Fig. 18).

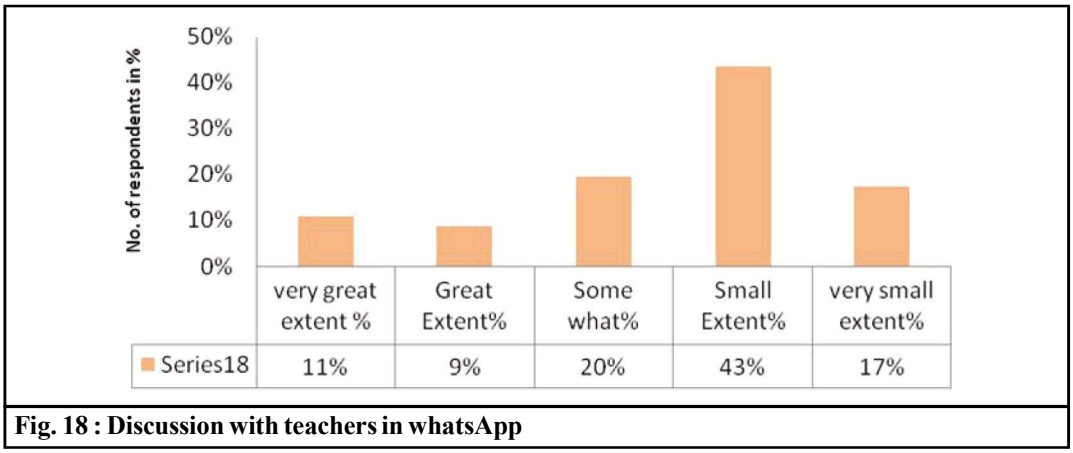

Fig. 18 : Discussion with teachers in whatsApp

Practical Sheet Correction:

The geography students require the preparation of practical note book so that they have to take immense load to draw a no. of practical sheets. Teachers demand rough copy for checking before doing the final one. To make an image for a real copy of something and to send this to someone are very easy in a smart phone via whatsApp in no time. The students were asked whether they do it for correction of their practical sheets. 13% students responded that it is done by them to a very great extent whereas 43% students do it to a very small extent. 20% students do it to somewhat (Fig. 19).

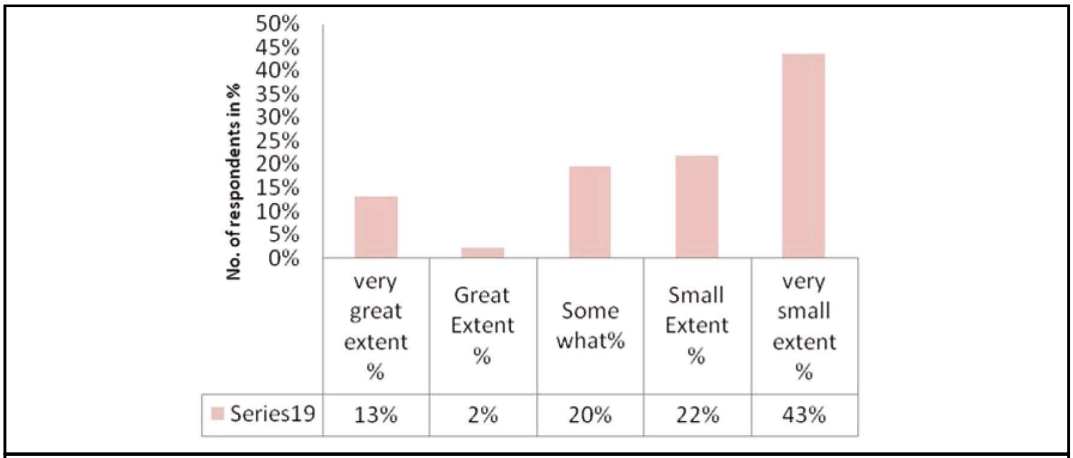

Fig. 19 : Correction of practical sheets in whatsApp

Learning materials transaction:

Class notes are very important to college students. WhatsApp makes this transaction easier between teachers and students in virtual platform. 17% students replied that they do it to a very great extent whereas 52% students do it to a small extent. This result is quite natural because one to one notes collection from teachers may not be possible. Either a few pupils take the responsibility to collect learning materials from the teachers and circulate these among them or each and every student may not always eager to collect class notes from their teachers because they may have other sources for the collection of learning materials (Fig. 20).

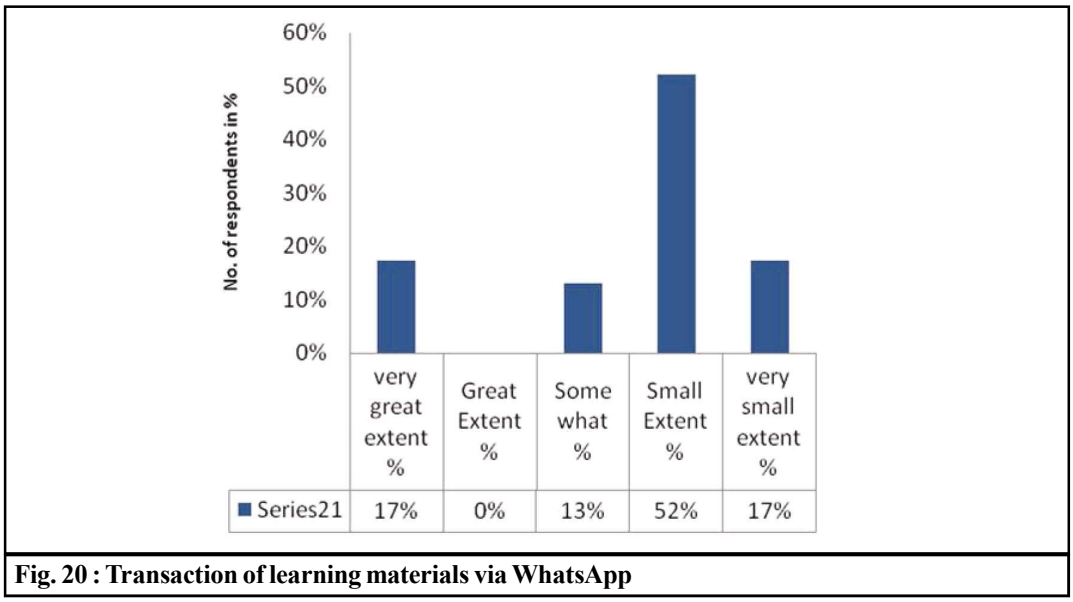

Fig. 20 : Transaction of learning materials via WhatsApp

Effectiveness:

In the perspective of Communication:

WhatsApp is a tool of communication. Various verbal as well as non verbal communications can be made through whatsApp. Again, various types of communication are required in between teachers and students at the time of pursuing any academic programme. WhatsApp is one of significant mode of communication out of various modes. That is why the students were asked whether they feel total communication via whatsApp with their geography department in their respective colleges. 37% students reported that they feel it to a very small extent and another 46 % students realize it to a small extent. But 11% students suppose that they feel total communication with their department to a great extent and this is felt to a very great extent only by 4 % students. Again, only 2% students responded that they feel it to somewhat (Fig. 21).

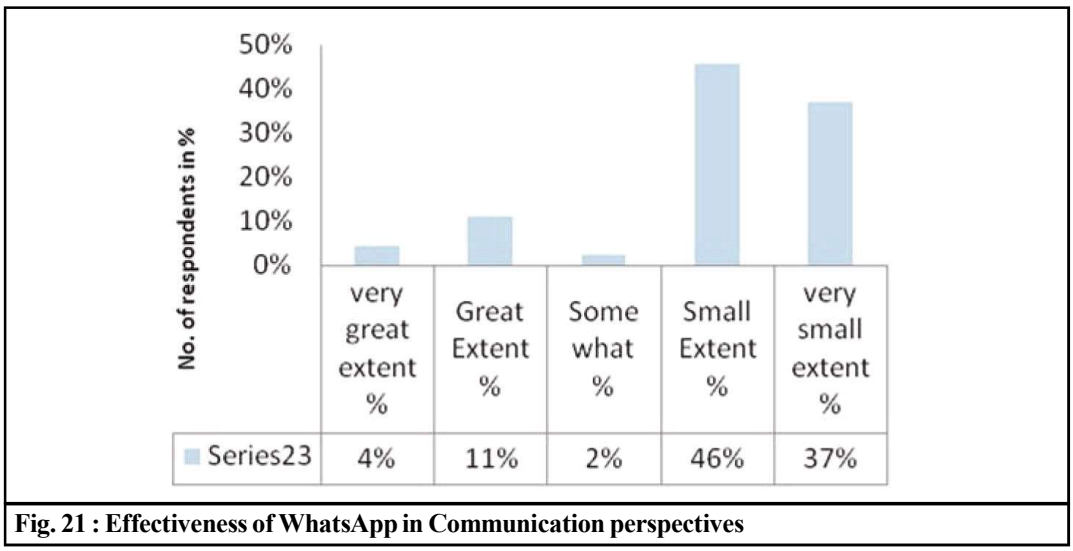

Fig. 21 : Effectiveness of WhatsApp in Communication perspectives

In the perspective of academic matters:

It is needed to find out whether the whatsApp communication has any effect in student's academic and related matters. Only 2% students responded that it is effective for their learning to a very great extent and another 2% students supposed its effectiveness to a great extent. Thus only 4% students strongly agreed that the whatsApp is helpful in their academic and related matters. Again, 15 % students agreed that it has an effect in their academic matter to somewhat whereas 46% students reported that whatsApp helps them to a very small extent in their academic matters and 35% replied that to a small extent whatsApp affects their study (Fig. 22).

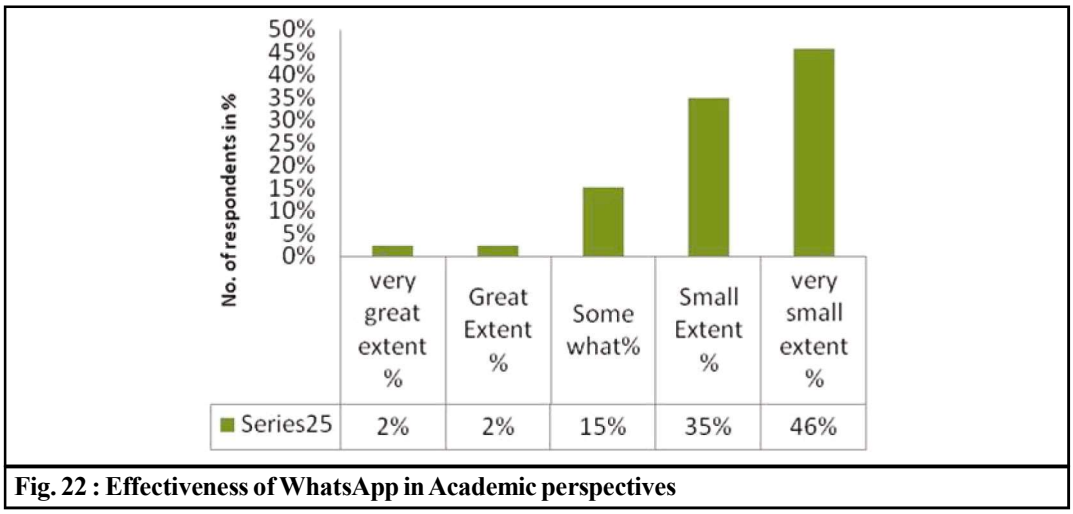

Fig. 22 : Effectiveness of WhatsApp in Academic perspectives

Conclusion:

From the analysis it is cleared that more or less WhatsApp has been using for academic purposes by the students but it varies learner to learner, situation to situation and so on. WhatsApp group on behalf of the department of geography of the selected undergraduate college in between teachers and students is not popularized. It is a rising trend or in other words it can be said that it is now in nutshell level. A few geography departments use it. In near future it would be used frequently. Traditional attitudes of teachers as well as the maturity level of the students (the respondents are belonged to mainly first year undergraduate students), the necessity of academic matters (the students are first year) are the probable causes behind it. Thus, the students personally make contact or share matters with their teachers in whatsApp according to their necessity and vice-versa. It should also be mentioned that all students in same level of frequency do not contact or share matters personally with their teachers in whatsApp. A few students collect information or news from their teachers in whatsApp and disburse it among them. This is very much true to our educational scenario because generally teachers choose a few students for transaction of academic issues and those students diffuse the matters among their friends. That is why this picture is also cleared in WhatsApp communication. The WhatsApp communication between teachers and students is not regular in nature as well as the activities, performed by the teachers and students in whatsApp are also not similar level of frequency. There are significant level of differences in activities performed by the teachers and students in whatsApp. The students actively make contact with their friends at the time of publication of result. Teachers become also very much active at that time. The communication in between students and teachers is strongly stimulated at that time. Thus WhatsApp

communication plays a significant role regarding this issue. Teachers and students frequently communicate with themselves in WhatsApp at that time.

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