



## **An Assessment of E-Resources and Information Utilisation in National Law Universities of East India: a study**

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### **Abstract**

In the twenty-first century, most legal academics preferred e-resources to e-journals, e-judgments, e-books, and legal databases because of their breadth, extensive indexing and analytical content, and rapid updates. To compete for and succeed in most law careers, law students must be proficient users of these databases. Scholars can benefit from print resources and less advanced internet technologies. Locating useful information in a timely manner is critical for both researchers and information professionals. The new and current trend in library services is to access library collections electronically for economic and user-friendly reasons. Library professionals believe that electronic information plays an important role in providing users with up-to-date information in a timely manner. The goal of this study is to learn about the use of electronic resources and information at India's National Law University. The research's primary goal is to learn about the availability and use of electronic resources, services, and facilities in national law university libraries. According to the study's findings, library staff should assist students in locating electronic resources and information on their own. It is proposed that law libraries embrace the practice of soliciting user input to improve their facilities and services, which will undoubtedly contribute to the strength of the library's services.

**Keywords:** Academic libraries, E-resources and information, Law Universities, Legal databases

### **1. Introduction**

Libraries especially academic libraries have extended their scope and coverage to sustain their status as the heart of the institution (Biswas, 2022). Academic libraries have amassed collections of print and electronic resources and made them available to their user communities, which primarily include faculty and students. A visit to a law library can benefit anyone interested

in the current state of the law, including law students, attorneys, judges, and their representatives. Due to the unique services, they provide and the specific demographics of their patrons, law libraries are classified as "special libraries" in the library world. There are several law libraries around the world, either as a section of a larger library or as a separate law library. In recent years, online legal research tools such as SCC Online, Westlaw, Lexis Nexis, Indian Kanoon, and



Manupatra have reduced the need for print books such as reports and legislative compilations. Because so much legal information is now available online, some law libraries have reduced their print holdings while expanding their internet access. The term "electronic tools" has been broadly defined as computer-accessible content that may be useful as bibliographic guides to potential sources, but it is uncommon for them to be cited as a reference in their own right (Graham, 2003). In addition, electronic resources are computerised position records made available to library users through a PC-based information recovery framework. Electronic resources have become a source of information due to their effective presentation using multimedia tools. Electronic tools appear on the Web in a variety of flavours and categories.

Some of the key issues that the librarian must address in order for its clients to make the best use of it are a periodic evaluation of online e-resources and careful evaluation of the e-journal standard before placing orders. Periodic research can also be used to build an efficient e-learning environment in order to cut costs and improve the efficiency of electronic information services. This will provide the impetus needed for information professionals to establish appropriate expectations and approaches for supporting e-learning in libraries. Rowley (2006) distinguishes two types of electronic journals: those that are also printed and distributed digitally, and those that do not require a publisher and are managed by an editor and the academic community. Both may have far-reaching implications for academic knowledge production and exchange processes. E-Journals are valuable resource for academic, research, and development purposes.

Electronic journals have several advantages, including their ease of use, "anywhere, anytime" accessibility, shareability, hyperlink capability to related texts, cost-effectiveness, and elimination of the storage problem encountered with print journals. Many Open-Source E-Journals can also be found on the Internet. However, no comprehensive study of the depth of such e-resources in university libraries has been undertaken until now. Nonetheless, on a limited scale, the use of e-resources in UP universities has recently emerged with some interesting findings and useful recommendations that will undoubtedly promote modified e-services in university libraries in the days ahead.

## **2. Literature review**

Coordinating instruction for academic library and e-resources pose many challenges when trying to project needs into the future (Biswas, Nausheen and Chakrabarti, 2011). Proper assessment and utilisation of e-resources in academic libraries explore the future trend of library resources and services. Using the resources available at the Madurai District Court Library, Padma and Ramasamy (2017) investigated the habits of the most inquisitive lawyers. It was found that the vast majority of attorneys, 46.09 percent (70) of those polled, focused on civil cases, while 40.79 percent (62) focused on criminal cases. Junior lawyers made up 41.45% of the total, while Senior lawyers made up 28.19%. There were 19 (12.50%) responses with 16 to 20 years of experience.

Nwabueze and Urhiewhu investigated access to and utilisation of modern information resources among Nigeria's tertiary-educated population in Delta and Edo states (2015). According to their research, digital information resources are primarily housed in the libraries of Delta and Edo State



Universities. In addition to an unstable power supply, insufficient computers, insufficient bandwidth, organisational challenges, and a lack of access to digital information resources, the investigation discovered that all university libraries lacked a formal online to use digital information resources. Alam (2014) emphasised the impact of ICT on the format of information products as well as the delivery method of legal information resources. The Montreal Declaration is the result of the open access movement's influence on the law. The Free Access to Law Movement (FALM) has helped to establish lawful information institutions (LIIs) around the world. The FALM's contribution from the Universities of National Law is the Indian Legal Information Institute.

Many open access materials are popular in India's legal community, according to Bhardwaj and Madhusudan (2013). The majority of respondents are aware of open access resources, according to the study's findings. The primary reason for using those resources is to research case law. The majority of respondents stated that the legal content available on open access sites is disorganised and thus difficult to use. Mandal (2012) investigated the challenges confronting special libraries, the importance of knowledge management, and the role of library information professionals, as well as the critical abilities and staff skills required for the profession to thrive in the digital age. The next generation of e-learning, is expected to aid similar future developments by utilising mobile technology and libraries. Parvez (2011) emphasised the importance of ICT in libraries and outlines the benefits of ICT-based library operations and services.

Law is a highly specialised and technical subject; it is a living discipline that changes on a daily basis. Law, by definition, is complicated and ever-expanding. Legal

knowledge is essential for everyone, including attorneys and non-lawyers. Ayua (2001) defined legitimate research as the formation or elaboration of lawful doctrine and the standardisation of objects of law through the use of resources such as rules, legislation, decisions, and instances. Legal literature, such as law books, law reports, laws and regulations, legal journals, government documents, reference materials, and other interrelated unpublished works of law, could thus be referred to as legal information services, as could non-legal books, such as conference papers, e-resources, law theses, and so on. The law library system is where all of humanity's documented knowledge in the form of legal materials (print and electronic) is preserved for posterity. Legal professionals, scholars, researchers, teachers, and students can all find useful resources at Deakin University Australia's law library (2014).

It is worth noting the current level of internet access to legal services. Lexis Nexis and Westlaw provide access to a wide range of legal resources, such as case law, statutes, and administrative agency decisions and filings. Many other commercial and public websites, on the other hand, provide access to legal materials (Todd 2007; Makri 2008). Legal libraries are transitioning from traditional manual assistance to an electronic conveyance framework via Internet connection to PC workstation systems, which provides more appealing and effective administration conveyance.

### **3. E-resources**

E-journals, E-books, CDs / DVDs, E-meeting protocols, E-Reports, E-Maps, E-Manuscripts, E-Pictures / Photographs, E-Newspaper, E-Theses, Newsgroups, Topic Gateways, Listservs, FAQs, USENET, and so on. "These can be disseminated on CD-ROM / DVD, through the Internet, and so on. Access



to e-resources is a service that assists library users in exploring e-Databases, e-Journals, e-Magazines, e-Books / e-Audio / e-Images, Data / GIS, Digital Library Projects, Electronic Exhibitions, e-Subject Guide, e-Newsletters, E-Meeting Procedures, and point-scale Web search tools". They do not need to emphasise information authorisation and use. Ibid, e-resource retrieval is easier than print resource retrieval. Anyone, from anywhere, may access each database. The application can assist users in retrieving the best information; nonetheless, it is only somewhat transitional.

#### **4. Objectives of the study**

The following are main objectives of this research:

- to learn about the use of electronic resources and information at the National Law Universities of East India
- to learn about how the availability and utilisation of e-resources in National Law Universities impact the overall legal education system
- to explore how users can be assisted in locating resources and information on their own.

#### **5. Methodology**

The goal of this study is to investigate initiative, electronic journal use, performance, and influence in various higher education institutions. Users of Law Universities of East India will provide primary data in the form of five-point scale comments. To study the utilisation of e-journals, a basic statistical analysis

employing a weighted mean was performed. The majority of the study relies on original data gathered from Law Universities via a well-designed questionnaire. For the data collection, 50 students (male and female) from each national law university in East India were recruited. Questionnaires were provided to PG students and research scientists, with 70% of them returned, resulting in a 70% response rate. This research is limited to the education college. Its geographic range is restricted to East India.

#### **6. Collection of resources**

Law University Libraries have a variety of resources in many formats such as online resources, open sources, online books, journals both online and print, magazines, newspapers, and open education, as well as being linked to INFLIBNET e-content.

Library services are: web OPAC, about web OPAC, subject ordering by bays, remote access, DELNET inter-library loan, DELNET document delivery services, digital knowledge centre, new arrival services, newspaper clippings services and reference services.

#### **7. National Law Universities (NLU) in East India**

The National Law School of India University, India's first independent law school, was founded in Bangalore to implement legal education reforms. Several national law schools were established in other states in response to the NLS concept. The institutes have been designated as "state universities" by the University Grants Commission and are affiliated with the Indian Bar Council.

**Table 1: National Law Universities (NLU) in East India**

Sl.	Name of the East NLU of India	Abbrev.	Estd.	City	State
1	Chanakya National Law University	CNLU	2006	Patna	Bihar
2	Hidayatullah National Law University	HNLU	2003	Raipur	Chhattisgarh
3	National Law University and Judicial Academy	NLUJA	2009	Assam	Guwahati
4	National Law University	NLUO	2009	Cuttack	Odisha
5	National University of Study and Research in Law	NUSRL	2010	Ranchi	Jharkhand
6	The WB National University of Juridical Sciences	WBNUJS	1999	Kolkata	West Bengal

Each of these law universities was established in accordance with a separate statute passed by the state legislature to establish a law school in the concerned states. The Bar Council of India has collaborated with various esteemed and gifted individuals with such law schools, for example, the Chief

Justice of India or the Chief Justice of the High Courts as 'guests' or 'chancellors' of the national law schools, to improve the quality of legitimate education and to ensure that the education provided in these institutions satisfies the guidelines required.

## 8. Findings

**Table 2: Respondents' profile**

Sl. No.	Category	No. of respondents	%
1.	PG Students	99	56.57
2.	Research Scholars	76	43.43
<b>Total</b>		<b>175</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows the profiles of the respondents. Most of the 175 people who answered are PG students. 56.57% of students

and 43.43% of students are Research Scholars.

**Table 3: Regularity of utilisation of electronic journals in library**

Sl.No	Frequency	No. of respondents	%
1.	Every day	65	37.14
2.	Once a week	35	20
3.	Once a fortnight	30	17.14
4.	Once a month	25	14.29
5.	Rarely	20	11.43
<b>Total</b>		<b>175</b>	<b>100</b>



Table 3 shows the frequency with which library patrons use electronic journals. According to the survey, 37.14% of participants use e-journals daily, 35.0% weekly, 17.14% bi-weekly, and 14.29% monthly. Only one respondent occasionally used e-journals; otherwise, she preferred print materials.

**Table 4: Utilisation of ICT products and services**

Sl. No	Most frequently used journals	No. of respondents	Percentage
1.	Open Access Journals	45	25.71
2.	Subscribed E-Journals	20	11.43
3.	N-List E-Journals	45	25.71
4.	Articles from Internet	65	37.14
<b>Total</b>		<b>175</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 depicts how users use ICT products and services. The respondents (25%) use open access journals such as SAGE E-Journals, with 25.75% using N-LISTe-journals, 20% using subscribed journals, and 37.14% using internet articles.

**Table 5: Persistence of utilisation of e-journals**

Sl. No.	Purpose	No. of respondents	Percentage
1.	For doing research	41	23.43
2.	For fulfilling academic works	44	25.14
3.	For writing articles	55	31.43
4.	For gathering knowledge	35	20.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>175</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 reveals the reason for using e-journals at the library. The respondents (31.43%) use e-journals for research, while 25.14% use them to complete academic assignments. Only 20% of respondents use it to expand their knowledge, while 23.43% use it to write articles.

**Table 6: Impediments in accessing the e-journals**

Sl. No	Limitation	No. of respondents	Percentage
1.	Information Overflow	51	29.14
2.	No Authoritative Information	34	19.43
3.	Password Access	49	28.00
4.	Lack of information retrieval skill	41	23.43
<b>Total</b>		<b>175</b>	<b>100.00</b>





Table 6 depicts the library's restrictions on e-journal access. 29.14% of those who responded said that there is too much information, 19.43% said there is no

authoritative information, 28% said password access is the main barrier to accessing e-Journals, and 23.43% said they lack information retrieval skills.

**Table 7: Appropriate approach to utilising e-journals**

Sl.No	Convenient mode	No. of respondents	Percentage
1.	Downloading to storage device	65	37.14
2.	Reading on computer screen	55	31.43
3.	Taking print out	55	31.43
<b>Total</b>		<b>175</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 7 depicts the most convenient method for library users to access e-journals. The majority of users (37.14%) preferred downloading the articles to personal storage devices such as pen drives, while 31.43% preferred reading the articles on a computer screen and 31.34% printed them.

## 9. Discussion

- 37.14% use e-journals every day, 35 percent use them once a week, 17.14 percent use them once a fortnight, and just 14.29% use them once a month.
- Subscribed e-journals (SAGE E-Journals), are followed by 25.75% using N-LIST e-journals, 20% using open access journals, and just 37.14% utilising internet articles.
- 29.14% of those who answered said that too much information is the main problem, followed by 19.43% who concluded that there is no authoritative information, 28% who stated that password access is the main barrier to accessing e-journals, and only 23.43% who agreed that they lack information retrieval skill.

- The users (37.14%) preferred downloading the articles to personal storage devices such as pen drives, while 31.43% preferred reading on a computer screen and just 31.34% printed the articles.

## 10. Conclusion

Students, scholars, and academic library personnel benefit from the use of e-journals (both open access and subscription) and online databases. Nowadays, electronic formats, particularly e-journals and online databases, are used to publish the vast majority of information. According to the study's findings, some users are unaware of e-resources. Librarians may offer orientation programmes on a regular basis to help users gather information more efficiently. This type of orientation session will help users become acquainted with e-resources and new library arrivals. According to the study's findings, library staff should assist students in locating electronic resources and information on their own. It is proposed that law libraries embrace the practice of soliciting user input to improve the facilities and services, which will undoubtedly contribute to the strength of the library's services.



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