

**NEED FOR USER CENTRIC SERVICES IN LAW LIBRARIES:
A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO SCHOOL OF INDIAN LEGAL THOUGHT,
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Abstract

The law Libraries plays a vital role in the higher education process to promote the legal studies and research. The need for legal education has been realized to enrich the national and international legal perspectives and rebuilding legal status of the country. The University Libraries and Law Libraries in the country engaged in the process of developing the legal education concept by using the resource and provide the services to the scholars and students in the right way by paving way for best access of the information resources. The user based services, User centric services, other information services, web based information services etc are analyzed to generate process and disseminate the information effectively. The sharing of resources and other service points with the University libraries will enrich the use of resources. This paper attempts to describe the various services of the law libraries and new areas of services to be undertaken in the law libraries are emphasized.

Keywords : *Law libraries, User based services, User Centric Services;
Web based information services, Best use of resources.*

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INTRODUCTION

The legal library infrastructure has been developed according to the directions of the Bar Council of India, UGC and the NAAC with specific collection and related services. The library serves the teaching faculty, students, scholars and advocates including the new generation of teachers who will work in an automated environment in both regular and virtual classroom situation such as :

- E-teacher: to collaborate, build and interact and discover the new learning communities by exploring newer resources.
- E-education: involves incorporating and supporting the e-teaching and e-learning in an on-line environment.
- E-learning: consists of technology and the content it carries which build the learning culture, leadership, acquisition and use of knowledge through electronic means by faster and less cost.

Role of legal Libraries:

Formal Education: It is a structured system of learning provided through class room teaching or sharing of knowledge and experience by specific academic legal curriculum. The education and library are two inseparable and indivisible concepts which are fundamentally and sync-chronically related to and co-exist with each other. The education dies as soon as the library perishes. The library play vital role in imparting knowledge by providing resources to demist the ambiguity of irrelevant ideas where the education is base for further analysis and research. A library can alone interact directly with the user group in creating user centered services. It interacts with the following services so as to develop formal education in the legal environment, such as

- a) Helps in searching or locating
- b) Helps in overcoming the cost barrier
- c) Transforms students into scholars
- d) Helps to find out actual field of Interest
- e) Trains to handle library tools and gadgets
- f) Helps in group discussion
- g) Provides inter-library loan
- h) User education

Related studies:

It is argued that there is considerable scope for improving the design of electronic resources to better support information-seeking as far as lawyers are concerned. The use of information-seeking models as theoretical lenses to analyze

users' behavior with existing systems is a way for providing better user centric services from law libraries (Makri, Blandford, & Cox, 2008). Many lawyers are in need of the latest decisions of superior courts as their greatest professional information need. The library has been identified as the most heavily consulted information source for job-related information. However, libraries do not fulfill their role in meeting the information needs of lawyers (Haruna & Mabawonku, 2001). Cho (2006) examines the effect of the four constructs - trust in on-line media, trust in online services, perceived risk with on-line media, and perceived risk with on-line services - on the use of information-oriented on-line legal services. Some researchers focused on designing effective search aids for legal researchers interested in law-related information on the World Wide Web. A group of researchers reported on the design and evaluation of two software systems developed to explore models for browsing and searching across a user-selected set of WWW sites (Dempsey, Vreeland, Sumner, & Yang, 2000). It was found that lawyers' information needs are greatly influenced by the nature of the work they do (Otike, 1999). The information-seeking behavior of lawyers has not been fully investigated empirically. Prior work has tended to focus on legal research as the central task performed by lawyers in their information-seeking activities (Wilkinson, 2001).

User Centric Services, (UCS):

The user centric service is the need based service model to satisfy the needs of the users. The information seeking behavior, proper library collection, providing information services, use of new tools of information retrieval, understand the future needs of the users, searching on-line databases, electronic services, periodical review of selection and collection policies, resource sharing programs etc are centrally focusing the user needs so as to satisfy the needs of current environment. The information explosion, rising cost of resources and lack of availability of back issues etc create an increasing expectations from the library. So the cost effective, information overload and delivery of resources etc need the better platform to transform the needs of users in an economically viable manner by effective use of the resources available. It has been creating and developing new learning environment. The legal libraries play vital role in the learning process as the learning can occur outside the formal institution like a workplace, family, museum, libraries, clubs or even media. It provides the learning process of particular study program with the study aims parallel to the advocacy. So the necessity of collection development became inevitable with back volume collections of legal journals on the Courts verdict and to form a richness of information. The Collection development of the library should have a legal academic nature and the instructional programs of the academic institutions are the basic role. The teaching- learning Process in which

the legal library provides a platform to make up thinkers, communicators, collaborators and creators to use the tools and techniques to identify, organize, synthesize and share information. The students, resources, services, activities and class room are the elements in an authentic teaching-learning environment. The primary role of a library is to effectively arranging the information and resources with in the system environment. The content supply through Internet or Intranet and on line problem solving techniques and soft connectivity etc helps the teaching-learning process. The Need- based Services to the users emphasize the quality of services, improving the library's performance and constructive change, implementation of infrastructure of Information retrieval technologies, update of reference collection and on-line reference access, soft books like e-books, e-journal etc will readily satisfy the user's need. The reprographic services, document delivery services, inter-library loan services, OPAC service, etc are also coming under the need-based services which must be enriched in the legal library effectively.

School of Indian Legal Thought

The number of law colleges in the state of Kerala is comparatively less as to compare with other States in India. There are three government colleges and one management college under a Trust. The Universities in the state conduct only the P G programs of law other than the Mahatma Gandhi University where the integrated five year and three year UG courses, PG courses and Ph.D programmes etc have been conducting in the School of Indian Legal Thought. The legal library in the department has been its own remark to supplement the teaching and research. The department was initially started in 1989 with the basic collection and materials for the library. After occupied its own building, the library infrastructure was systematically framed to accommodate both inherent and modern services. The services and resources of this department are highly rich to compare with other legal libraries in the state.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to undertake to analyze the user based services provided in the school so as to enrich in the near future.

- To know the background of the collection of the Law School library
- To know and access the strength and weakness of the collection.
- To know the use of library resources by the user group and its velocity to find whether the collection and resources are useful or not.
- To study the purpose of visiting the library by the population.
- To evaluate the on-line services and user based services in the open access resources
- To evaluate the types of services provided at present and the proposals for the value added services

- To know and validate the web based services like ETD's and e-journals in the School
- To evaluate the time and working hours of the library
- To know and evaluate the updation of the collection both hard copies and soft copies
- The most frequently referring types of collection and its feedback are to be studied.
- To identify the problems faced by the user community in using the library.

Methodology:

The study used a questionnaire-based survey design for data collection. Keeping in view the objectives of the study, the sample questionnaire was prepared and distributed to the faculty both regular and part-time, UG students of LL.B, PG and M. Phil, and the scholars of the school. The asked questions were simple to reply as the user population has been incorporated with the system. The questionnaire framed was based on the objectives and necessary discussion was made with the Librarian of the school regarding its collection and other service models.

Data Analysis

The data which has been collected through the questionnaire and the observations analyzed and presented in the form of tables. The opinion survey has been limited to the students and faculties only as they form the core group of the library users.

Table 1
Details of Qu
teachers, Under
Ph. D Scholars,

Item
Questionnaire Supplied
Received
Not received
Percentage

The Table 1 shows that the students of under graduate and the PG students are so responsive to the study ie 70% and 76% than the teaching faculty of the department.

The Ph D scholars are so responsive by 60% than the non-teaching staff. In the following study, the user groups like teachers and students are given top most priority for the study and the advocates and non-teaching staff are given least importance as they do not come under the core area of interest.

The Collection Development of the School:

The school library has its own remarkable quantity of collection and ensuring the quality of collection by the proper policy and recommendations of the teaching faculty and the librarian. If the collection development is sound in nature, the use of the library resources on the other hand, will be best used.

Table 2

Items	Single items	Multiple copies	Others	Total
Books	8000	1250	1500	10750
Journals	5000	-	1140	6140
Newspaper	5	-	-	5
Periodicals	10	-	-	10
CD	1240	-	-	1240
E-resource	2600+	-	1100+	3700+

The table 2 shows that the collection development of the School library is so sound both books and journals. The other collections like newspaper and popular periodicals, CD and E-resources are also good. The E-resources in which the e-journals subscribed by the M G University is shared with the school to enable to access 2600 journals which includes law, international law, and intellectual property rights. The budgetary provision to the school is found sound so that the collection development is also found positive.

Use of law library resources by the Users

The use of the law library resources by the user groups is based on its collection development; if the visit velocity of the user is high the collection and other user based services are admirable.

Table 3

Sl.No	Frequency	Students (N= 126)	Teachers	Total
1	Everyday	60 (48%)	11 (39%)	71 (46%)
2	Once in two days	49(39%)	10 (36%)	59 (38%)
3	Once in a week	9(7%)	05 (18%)	14 (9%)
4	Thrice in a week	5 (4%)	02 (7%)	07 (5%)
5	Rarely	3 (2%)	nil	03 (2%)
	Total	126 (100%)	28 (100%)	154 (100%)

The table 3 in which the students group comes around 48% out of 126 in number and the 39% of the teachers are visiting the library every day. No teacher is found visiting to the law library which means that the user group depend the library resources for their teaching and learning purpose.

Satisfaction of Accessing hard copies and Electronic Information Resources

The user based services are focusing the on the e-resources and the books and journals which should bring out the maximum use satisfaction and access facility too. The library system must ensure to provide the best platform to use both print and non-print materials effectively.

Table 4

	Students (N=126)	Teachers (N=28)	Others (N=22)
Books and journals	120 (95%)	25 (89%)	20(91%)
e-resources	65 (52%)	17 (61%)	9(41%)
Other Items	85 (67%)	23(82%)	5(23%)
Found very Useful	110 (87%)	20 (71%)	22 (100%)
not found useful	10 (13%)	8 (29%)	Nil

The 95% students and 89% of the teachers are effectively using the collection of the school both print and non-print materials. The e-resources amount to 65% and 61% respectively. It is found that the e-resources used by the teacher is less in nature due to many factors such as of less information literacy which should be promoted to ensure the best use of the e-resources.

Purpose of visiting Library

The purpose of the visit to the law library is based on many reasons. The generally found items are to prepare for the class notes, assignment, examinations, research and employment. But in the most cases, the users utilize the library resources for referring earlier court's verdict and cross references. This must be enriched by providing the back volume collection of the law reports and proceedings.

Table 5

	Preparing Class notes	Assignment	Examination	Research	Employment
UG Students	65 (72%)	10 (11%)	15 (17%)	Nil	Nil
PG Students	Nil	11 (34%)	15 (47%)	Nil	6 (19%)
Ph.D	NIL	NIL	NIL	3 (75%)	1 (25%)
Teachers	25 (89%)	Nil	3 (11%)	Nil	Nil

The table 5 shows that the UG Students use the library resources more for preparing class notes and assignments which come around 72% and 11% respectively. The teachers use the library for preparing teaching aids to the students which come around 89%. The employment purpose is just 19% by the P G Students.

Working Hours

The user centric service mainly aimed to provide the extend hour of working of the library so as to ensure the best user service of the law library. The all library system in the education sector reiterates the extended hours of working for the best use of resources and services.

Table 6

	9.30 – 4 pm	9.00- 4.30pm	9.00- 5.30pm	9.00 -7pm
Teachers	28 (100%)	Nil	Nil	Nil
Students	65 (72%)	15 (17%)	10 (11%)	Nil
PG Students	Nil	20 (63%)	5 (16%)	7 (21%)
Scholars	Nil	Nil	Nil	4 (100%)

Normally the library system works between 9.30 - 4 pm which has been supported by teachers and students by 100% and 72% respectively. But the research scholars in the school require the extended time from 9.00 - 7pm than the PG Students.

Type of on-line resources regularly used by the user groups

The user centric services through the on-line resources have become necessary and the subscription to these resources is enormously funded by the UGC and other funding agencies. It is therefore necessary to build up the user awareness and access support by using Internet and computer.

Table- 7

On-line resources	Teachers	UG Students	PG Students	Ph.D
Conference Proceedings	25 (89%)	80 (89%)	30 (94%)	4 (100%)
Legal Databases	15 (54%)	75 (83%)	25 (78%)	3 (75%)
INFONET/JCCC	15 (54%)	75 (83%)	27 (84%)	4 (100%)
Open Access web source	10 (36%)	65 (72%)	24 (75%)	3 (75%)
E-book	9 (32%)	77 (86%)	20 (63%)	4 (100%)
E-Theses	5 (18%)	59 (66%)	20 (63%)	4 (100%)

The table 7 Shows that the high use of the conference proceedings by the teachers, UG and PG students by 89%,89% and 94% respectively. The Ph.D Scholars use cent percent as to compare the database, INFONET, and open access web resources are found less in percentage. The availability of resources are abundant in nature but the access to these resources are found decreasing.

Benefits of on-line resources over conventional documents

The user centric services should be concentrated on the following aspects like time saving, easy to use, the available information should be reliable and updated data regularly, so that the user will be best served on his needs.

Table 8

User Opinion	Teachers	UG Students	PG Students	Ph.D
Saves time	20 (71%)	85(94%)	27 (84%)	4 (100%)
Easy to Use	21(75%)	87 (97%)	27 (84%)	4 (100%)
More reliable information	19 (68%)	87 (97%)	26 (81%)	4 (100%)
New updated data possible	19 (68%)	87 (97%)	27 (84%)	4 (100%)

The 71% of the teachers and 94% of the students are agreed with the time saving aspects. The Ph D scholars are supported with 100% of the time saving and other

aspects. The teachers are comparatively having less opinion on these aspects as they do not give much importance on these aspects.

Problems faced by the users in the library system

Table 9

Problems felt using Internet	Teachers	UG Students	PG Students	Ph D Scholars	Others
Speed of the connectivity	23(82%)	62 (69%)	21(66%)	2(50%)	11(50%)
Less number of computers	20(71%)	50 (56%)	14 (44%)	2 (50%)	12 (55%)
Privacy problems	24 (86%)	49 (54%)	17 (53%)	3 (75%)	11 (50%)
Bad Connectivity	19 (68%)	48 (53%)	17 (53%)	3 (75%)	14 (63%)
Less Infrastructure	21 (75%)	53 (59%)	19 59%)	3 (75%)	12 (55%)

The speed of the computer, number of system allotted, privacy and infrastructure etc are the other aspects of the user based services which should be analyzed in the right way. The above table shows that the speed of Internet is comparatively less by 82%, 69%, 66%, 50% and 50% respectively for the above user groups. The privacy, infrastructure and the less number of computer system provided are the other defects found in the user centric services.

Findings and Proposals:

- Number of computers should be enhanced with proper infrastructure.
- Internet connection with high bandwidth should be established.
- Proper information literacy and, training and orientation programs on access to various on-line resources should be ensured.
- Proper OPAC search and location of books and journals should be inculcated to the users in the right way.
- The collection development should be enriched on the ground that the adoption of new areas of subjects in the same discipline.
- More reading room facility and photocopying facilities should be ensured.
- Advertising services, welcoming atmosphere, electronic contextual information services, mobile Information services like working hours, holidays, reservation, overdue, new arrivals, etc may be added as user based services
- Introducing the best practices, Integrated basic education and skill training, developing college research centers, sharing knowledge of scholars with the students, On-line education, Prominence of open content etc should be introduced as value added services for the law students and teachers.

- Audio visual resource services, Social networking of legal educational community service, Marketing services through mass media, Exhibitions, Summer school for law students on resources, Broacher and News letter services, Laptop permission to take inside the library, WIFI services through laptops and the On-line inter library resource sharing etc are also introduced effectively to the best use of legal resources.

Conclusion:

Whatever the types of services introduced in the legal library system due to the advent of ICT, the main aim should be to satisfy the needs of the users in the right way as the users legal libraries mostly based on the reference services over various verdicts of the high court's and the supreme court. The effective service providers in the system should acclaim and acquaint with all new areas of technology oriented services and to take necessary steps to initiate the same in the library so that the users can be served better by right resources at right time in a right manner.

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