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INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER-I

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Legal education market in India consists of academic institutions of varying types, sizes, and geographies. Some Institutions are offering 3 year LL.B some are 5 year LL. B and some are both types. There are post graduate courses like LL.M and doctoral degrees at university level. The present era in which we live information is the driving force behind most of our activities. Information is a key factor in the world’s economic markets, and is playing a very important role in the day to day life of an individual and the legal education sector is one of them. The quantity of information available will grow with the increasing number of research publications. The Law faculty members and students are facing some typical difficulties for the average person to find the information. They use many of the same tools the average person uses, including free resources found on the Internet. While identifying the information seeking strategies of Agricultural scientists, Singh K. P and Satija M.P (2008) stated in their study that “The real challenge of this time is not producing information or storing information, but getting people to use information appropriately. Information is a critical resource in the operation and management of organisations. TheTimely availability of relevant information is vital for effective performance of managerial functions such as planning, organising, leading, and controlling” (Singh & Satija, 2008).

There are a lot of similarities and differences can be found in the needs and requirements of different types of users in the field of law. An understanding of the information needs, applications and uses at each level is necessary. The librarian’s
professional knowledge enables him to diagnose the information needs, recommend information sources and services, implement those recommendations, and evaluate them.

Many studies have been conducted by the experts in the field of Library and Information Science to understand the information needs, the use of literature or the information seeking behaviour of members of academic field. The User studies are an area that combines some of the most used and the least precisely defined concepts of library and information science. These concepts such as information use or need, information seeking behavior gathering habits, channel of communication and its barriers exist in a system of complicated and interdependent relations. Wilson T. D (2000) opines that “Information seeking behaviour is the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal. In the course of seeking, the individual may interact with manual information systems (such as a newspaper or a library), or with computer based systems (such as the Web)” (Wilson. 2000).

The knowledge about the information-seeking behaviour and information use of individuals is crucial for effectively meeting their information needs. This knowledge may also lead to the discovery of novel information behaviour and user profiles that can be used to enhance the existing information models or even develop the new ones. Moreover, the librarians and other information professionals to be effective information providers require maximum understanding of the information-seeking behaviour, needs, and uses of individuals. Wilson noted that the study of information-seeking behaviour can stand on its own as an area of applied research where the motive for investing is pragmatically related to system design and
development. A different motivation is involved if we wish to understand why the information seeker behaves as he does. This is an area of basic research and although the resulting knowledge may have practical applications, there is no necessity that it should. Therefore, what, when, and how information is gathered and used is of critical importance to meet their information needs.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present research problem is conceived under the title “Information Gathering and use habits of Users of Law Libraries with Special reference to Law Colleges formerly and presently affiliated to the Karnatak University Dharwad: A study”.

1.3 NEED FOR THE STUDY

The information gathering, seeking behavior and skills of the Law library users are typical of many other information professionals, but most of the time, they deal with the crucial information, and the particular skills needed to work with and find this particular type of information, especially with regards to today’s information privacy concerns, make this group an ideal subject for study.

The National Knowledge Commission in its report by working group on legal education. Chairman Rao M. J (2007) stated that:-

“A number of law schools have been offering quality legal education. However, the most immediate challenge is to improve the quality of legal education in a vast
majority of law schools in the country. This task entails a range of measures including reforms in the existing regulatory structure, significant focus on curriculum development keeping in mind contemporary demands for legal services, recruitment of competent and committed faculty, establishing research and training centers, necessary financial support from the State, and creating necessary infrastructure, especially a well endowed library” (India. 2007). In order to meet the national policy on legal education and to fulfill the mission stated by the national knowledge commission it is necessary to critically examine the law libraries resources, services and functional efficiency, as they are the backbone of the legal profession/education.

The transition from print to electronic in the legal profession puts pressure on law schools and libraries in fulfilling their teaching mission and resource providing function. The instructors attempt to prepare the student for both the future practice of law, which will be largely electronic, and for the present state of the art, which is a widely varying blend of electronic, and print. In dealing with this change the law librarians, acting both as instructors and resource providers, need to create more effective means that gauge usage, performance and quality of library resources.

There is a necessity for process study looks for ways to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and user satisfaction within the academic law library system. It is necessary to conduct surveys to assess the following:

• Patterns, frequency, ease, and success of use

• User needs, expectations, perspectives, priorities, and preferences for library collections, services, and systems
• User satisfaction with vendor products, library collections, services, staff, and Websites

• Service quality

• Shifts in user attitude and opinion

• Relevance of collections or services to the curriculum.

"Though universities across the country started facilitating higher education in law, through their respective law departments, it was until the establishment of the National law departments, and the establishment of the National Law School of India University (NLSIU) at Bangalore in 1987, the importance of legal education started receiving serious and commendable attention from the community of students, legal fraternity, academics, intellectuals, think-tanks, socio-political institutions, etc. Following the same line, the national law schools were subsequently established at Hyderabad (Nalsar University of Law), Kolkata (West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences), Bhopal (National Law Institute University) and Jodhpur (National Law University). Their unique contributions towards promoting excellence in legal education and research particularly, by attracting some of the brightest students to consider law as a preferred career option was highly praised (The Hindu, June 27, 2002). The years that followed showed a great motivating change towards attracting serious students to the study of law. However, these top law schools faced a very important challenge, which remains even today, i.e. in attracting faculty members who are top researchers in the field of law and can combine sound teaching methods with established track records of research. The lack of researchers in law and absence of due emphasis on research and publications in the existing law schools have lead to the absence of an intellectually vibrant environment."
1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of this study are to explore information seeking behavior of the users of law library of law colleges formerly and presently affiliated to the Karnataka University, Dharwad.

Primary Objectives of this study are:

The primary objective of the study is to analyze the information access and use pattern by conducting a user opinion survey to ascertain the feedback of their information environment of the Legal professionals taking into account of the following issues to

(i) identify the purpose of seeking information, nature and types of information required by law library users;

(ii) examine the information seeking strategies of the law faculty members of law colleges and students coming under the scope of present study;

(iii) find out the effectiveness of the existing information systems and services in the field of legal profession and the extent to which they meet the information requirements of law library users;

(iv) identify, the information sources and types of publications used by the law library users with particular reference to secondary and tertiary sources and

(v) identify the problems faced by the legal faculty and students while gathering required information and to provide appropriate suggestions to overcome them.

In light of the above objectives following are the few secondary objectives are to be observed and to be identified to
1. know the Satisfaction of the Law library users with regard to the collection of documents in the library;

2. identify the strength and weakness of library resources;

3. know the information requirements of the Law library users access to information of their choice and problems faced thereby;

4. predict future information needs and requirements; and

5. suggest improvement measures based on the inferences drawn from the study.

1.5 HYPOTHESIS

Following are the hypotheses made while undertaking the study;

1. The information requirements of legal professionals are complex and fulfilled by combination of information sources and information services, only few of them are managed by the academic law libraries.

2. The nature and use of the scholarly legal information by professionals are varies by types and by categories of the users.

3. There is an increasing awareness, usage and usability of Internet based information resources and information services in the academic law libraries.

4. Academic Law Libraries need to promote themselves in a networked environment where they are no longer so obviously the sole provider of scholarly information.

5. IT / Internet enabled library enriches information resources and enhances library resource sharing.
1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is confined to the Academic Law Libraries that are established by the colleges, which are formerly and presently affiliated to the Karnataka University, Dharwad.

1.7 LIMITATIONS

The present study covers only the law college libraries affiliated to formerly and at present to the Karnataka University, Dharwad. It excludes all other law colleges not coming under the per view of the Karnataka University, Dharwad.

1.8.0 METHODOLOGY

The different methods are used for the collection of required data for the research but for the present study the questionnaire method is used to collect the data. A schedule of questionnaire was developed based on some earlier studies and in consultation with the experts in the field. Questionnaires were distributed to the selected users of Law libraries of Law colleges affiliated to Karnataka University, Dharwad comprising of Teaching faculties, and students who are using the Law library. The data received from the respondents was systematically processed and analyzed, and results obtained from the analysis discussed in the light of known facts in certain cases to arrive at the findings and the conclusions.

The focus of the study will be the User Perspectives and Requirements, Assessment of information resources and IT infrastructure facilities in the selected law libraries under study. The study also includes an analysis of the reference research data, gathered from users enquiring on specific subjects relevant to their job in terms
of research, enhancement of subject understanding, new regulatory framework or general information.

1.8.1 TARGET GROUP

The methods used for this research project included a combination of original survey research and secondary data available in the form of published literature. For the survey two types of population were identified: **Teaching faculty, and students.** The attempt has been made to identify the attitudes and trends affecting the feasibility and the viability of a library services. This survey helps to identify information needs and gathering habits of users of law libraries.

1.8.2 POPULATION SIZE

The sample was drawn from 18 colleges located in the north Karnataka region. Since the sample population is large. Every year each college admits up to 80 students for 1st year LL.B. course, hence the college offering 3-year LL.B. course will have strength of 240 students and the college offering 5-year LL.B. course will have 400 students apart from this some colleges offer both the courses. Hence 60 questionnaires were distributed for each college. The total number of questionnaires distributed is about 1080.

1.8.3 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

For the collection of the data for the present study, the ‘Random sampling method’ was adopted. The designed questionnaires were distributed personally as well as posted to the users of law college libraries. Personal visits to organizations, interviews with the librarians and the library staff were also undertaken where ever possible. Hence this survey has been undertaken with the help of a questionnaire
designed for the purpose. While designing the questionnaire, care was taken to cover both closed and open-ended, multiple choice questions. Multiple choice questions enhance the response rate as they are easy to fill up. Interviews with a few users to interpret the questions to them and to collect the required missing data were also held.

1.8.4 DISTRIBUTION OF QUESTIONNAIRES

The principals of respective colleges were given copies of the questionnaire and requested them to assign the work to their college librarian or senior teaching faculty to get them filled up by the respondents whenever it was convenient for the users. Thus the completed responses and those collected through the post personally have been used for the observation.

1.8.5 PILOT STUDY

The pilot study was undertaken a year before in the Karnataka University’s Sir Siddappa Kambali Law College, Dharwad which is a constituent college of the Karnataka University. The copies of the questionnaires were taken to the students and the faculty to collect the preliminary information as a pilot study. It was planned with the following objectives to

1. assess basically whether the respondents can understand the questions easily and answer them without any difficulty,
2. assess whether the questions are structured with the simple and self explanatory words; and
3. judge whether the questions are meaningful and relevant.
1.8.6 VALIDATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The filled up questionnaires were placed for discussion with the research guide and few professional experts to obtain their views regarding the content and coverage. Their views are considered and the required modifications were made wherever necessary in the questionnaires. The content validity was thus ensured and established.

The suggestions received through the pilot study helped in revising and restructuring certain questions in the questionnaire. After the pilot study, the questionnaire was refined and finalized. The refined questionnaire was administered to the sample population. A copy of the questionnaire is appended as ‘Appendix-C, and-D’.

1.8.7 ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data collected was analysed both manually and using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientists) Package. Each question in the questionnaire was analysed to find out against each of the following facets:

1. Extent of use of Library and its Services,
2. Information Gathering Behaviour characteristics
4. Law library user requirements and demands,
5. Existing law library human and information resources,
6. Information Infrastructure,
7. IT enabled Information Services,
8. Other parameters disclosed after the study.
1.8.9 STATISTICAL MEASURES EMPLOYED

The statistical tools help a researcher in studying the concentration and dispersion of user's opinion. The averages, namely Arithmetic Mean and Median are used to study the concentration of user's opinion. Standard Deviation (SD) and Coefficient of Variation are used to study the dispersion of observations.

The related responses were scaled. Frequency Tables, with valid and cumulative percentages were developed to draw the inferences. Simple statistical techniques such as percentages, Mean, Median and Mode, Chi-Square Tests were employed as and when required.

Mean of a set of \( n \) observations is calculated by using the formula;

\[
\bar{X} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} x_i
\]

Where \( n \) is the total count of all the observations.

For frequency distribution the value of mean is computed using the formula;

\[
\bar{X} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} f_i x_i}{N}
\]

Where \( N = \sum_{i=1}^{n} f_i \) is the total frequency It is the average value of a quantitative variable.

Median is the positional average which is used when the variable under study is measured at ordinal level (ordered data). It is usually the average for nonparametric statistical tests.

Mode is the most frequently observed value of the variable. It is most suitable for the categorical variable that is for the nominal level variable. It is usually presented through the highest percent categories in the percentage distributions.
The **Chi-square test** of independence of attributes (Qualitative variables):

Two attributes under the study are tested for their independence using the chi square test of independence of attributes. The two variables under study are categorical and are classified in 'r' rows and 'c' columns. This set up is usually called \( r \times c \) contingency table.

The value of chi-square is computed using the following formula:

\[
\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \left( \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i} \right)
\]

(1)

Where, \( i \) stand for the number of cells in a row/column

\( O \) is the observed frequency for the respective cell

\( E \) is the expected frequency for the respective cell

When there is no relationship between the two categories under study, the distribution of the statistic follows chi-square with \((r-1) \times (c-1)\) degrees of freedom. Difference between the observed and the expected count is highly significant for the large values of the test statistic given in (1) above. This test is used under the assumption that the total observed count is equal to the total expected count.

### 1.9 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

An outline of the study concerning the Information Gathering and use habits of Users of Law Libraries with Special Reference to Law Colleges Affiliated to the Karnataka University, Dharwad is as follows;
Chapter one contains the introduction to the study, Statement of the problem, need for the study, Objectives of the study, Hypothesis, Scope and coverage, Limitations of the study, Research Methodology employed.

Chapter two provides in detail a review of related literature pertinent to user studies, previous work on the user studies in other countries and in India.

Chapter Three presents the Legal education in India with special reference to Karnataka and its Geomorphology. It traces the brief historical development of legal education, and law colleges in India, and current state of libraries, profile of law colleges coming under this study.

Chapter Four discusses the concept of ‘User Studies’ existing theories of Information seeking behaviours, Existing various methods and models of assessing human information behaviours.

Chapter Five exhibits the role of Law Libraries and Librarians in Legal Education.

Chapter Six provides in detail the systematic data analysis and interpretation. This includes an analysis of the state of the law libraries, and constraints and prospects of user oriented library services, user demands and finally extent of user satisfaction.

Chapter Seven presents the brief summary of the findings suggestions and the conclusions of the study with recommendations for effective management of libraries in order to fulfill the user information needs and it identifies areas of user behavioural studies that need further investigation.
1.10 CONCLUSION:

How people in general find and use information in the course of their daily work has been a topic of great interest to library and information science (LIS) scholars and is an area of research that has been extensively developed for several decades. The need for, and use of, information in the course of a lawyer's professional practice is mentioned only in passing, if at all. Yet, the small number of studies that do exist that address the information-related needs of lawyers demonstrate that an access to a wide variety of information is crucial to their work. In the present study the students and the faculty members were identified. The present research study and the data have been collected and have been systematically analysed and presented in the form of tables, figures and charts. The same is presented in detail in chapter 6.
References

