

Resources in Law Library: An Overview of Print and Electronic Collection

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ABSTRACT

The paper is based on theoretical aspects about various collections in a law library. It focuses on the role played by the law library and librarians in disseminating legal information. The paper highlights different types of law libraries and its users. Various types of resources that should be available in a law library such as textbooks, law journals, law reports, legislation, digests, manuals, commission and committee reports, legal articles, reference tools, etc. are briefly discussed. The study also reveals about various e- resources that should be available in law library such as online legal databases both national and international, e- journals, legal websites and open access legal information e- resources.

KEYWORDS: law library, law librarians, legal database, e-resources, legal websites

INTRODUCTION

Law library is said to be different from other academic library. It is different in the sense that it serves different types of users such as teachers, students, research scholars, judges, advocates, lawyers, etc. The collection of law library mainly consists of law textbooks, journals, law reports, digests, statutes, index toperiodicals, legal dictionaries, legal encyclopedia and other law related publications.

“A law library is a collection of legal materials such as constitutions, case laws, legal articles, reporting journals, legislations, parliamentary proceedings, treaties, judicial and administrative decisions, monographs and other legal resources, related to international and national means in print as well as electronic form of media. These resources are meant for a specific class of users such as law students, researchers, legal scholars, legislators, judges, advocates, civil servants, etc.”(Singh, et al., 2010)

To defend the life, liberty and property of the citizen it is very necessary for every law institute to develop a capacity among students as how to use the resources of law libraries with full competence and skills and for this purpose the resources must be well organized and well maintained as well as there must a friendly professional guidance to students for using library resources

Law library is a specialized library for teachers, researchers, practicing lawyers, advocates, etc. It is necessary that it should have up to date collections with latest editions of text books, legal periodicals, journals, judicial decisions, administrative orders and notifications. It must also have records of every legislative changes made by the government. The importance of legal education in any democratic society cannot be over emphasized as it helps to increase one's knowledge of public affairs.

2. LITERATURE SEARCH

Jain (2006) in the article "Using a law library" discussed the significance of law library in the administration of justice. It represents ideas regarding the various collection of law library. The articles help the researchers to prepare him fully to handle the complicated legal literature.

Malik and Sen (2008) have carried out a study on information sources in academic law libraries in India. The study describes the role played by the libraries of Indian law institutes and availability of information sources for resource building. The study describes about that resources that are available at academic Law libraries in India. According to the study eight Indians top twenty academic legal institutions have well described their library on the web with a variety of online resources.

Bhardwaj and Madhusudan (2016) have carried out a study on online legal information resources in Indian environment. The study has illustrated the functionality of online legal information system. The study has develop an Online Legal Information System (OLIS) model through which numerous types of legal information resources in a single window would be made available to lawyers, research scholars, students and common masses in a very expeditious manners. A number of operations such as, online help FAQ, latest news, online discussion for help, query submission and video tutorials have been created under this model.

3. OBJECTIVE

- a. To identify different categories of users of law libraries
- b. To recognize the role played by law library and librarians in disseminating legal information.
- c. To know the basic legal resources that should be available in law libraries.
- d. To know what legal e- resources should be available in law libraries.

4. TYPES OF LAW LIBRARY

Law library can be of different types depending upon its users, collection size, services, and staff pattern.

- a. Academic law library: It serves mainly academicians like teachers, students, researchers.
- b. Bar Association library: It serves advocates who are the member of bar association.
- c. Judicial library: Judicial library is mean for Jurist, judges.
- d. Government department law library: Various government officials, civil servants, etc are the users of this library.
- e. Legislative library: The users of this type of library are legislators who are member of the parliament or state legislature.

f. Research Library: This type of library is mainly for researchers which are attached to research organizations.

5. Role of Law Library and Librarians

To strength the quality of legal education system in a country law library has played unique role by disseminating latest information on current developments by virtue of their available library collections. Law library provides legal information to their patrons by strengthening its resources and fulfilling the needs of users by providing different services. It is very important that the librarians of law institute must have up-to-date knowledge of everything related to legal area. They should always be ready to assist the users in using library resources both print and electronic and provide information services so that they find their materials without wasting much time in the library.

6. RESOURCES IN LAW LIBRARY

6.1 Print Resources

Textbooks, reference books, legal periodicals are said to be core collections of any law library. Besides these, constitutions, court judgments, legislations, enactments, treaties, administrative rules and regulations and ordinance also make a strong collection of a law library which needs some special skill to handle. Generally, the law library has the following print resources.

6.1.1 Textbooks

Textbooks is a common source of information in every law library which is very helpful for teachers, students, research scholars, legal practitioners and many other who are interested in knowing the law on a particular subject. It is very important for every law library to have up-to-date and latest edition of textbooks. Some of the important textbooks in a law library are books on the constitution, evidence, Indian penal code, contract law, criminal law, civil law, etc.

6.1.2 Law Journals

Journals provides important source of legal information to law library users. It is also called as periodicals which are published at regular intervals (weekly, monthly, bimonthly, quarterly, half yearly and annually). It contains articles, comments on recent cases, books review, and recent information on legal developments. There are various categories of law journal which are available in law library such as foreign journals which includes Modern Law Journal (UK), Australian Journal of Administrative Law (Australia), McGill Law Review (Canada), Yale Law Journal (U.S.), Harvard Law Review (U.S.) and Indian journals includes Crimes, Criminal Law Journal, Journal of Constitutional and Parliamentary studies, Banking Cases, Journal of Indian Law Institute, Seminar, Consumer Protection Judgments, Divorce and Matrimonial Cases.

6.1.3 Law Reports

Law reports provide primary information to the users of law library. It mainly contains the cases decided by Supreme Court of India or State High Courts. Some of the examples of law reports are Supreme Court Cases (SCC), All Indian Reporter (AIR), Indian Law Reports (ILR), ILR Bombay, and ILR Allahabad. Apart from this there are some law reports which contain the cases decided by each State High Court such as Bombay Law Reporter, Allahabad Law Journal, Madras Law Journal and Gauhati Law Reports. There are some foreign law

reports which are found to be available in Indian law libraries viz. All England Law Reporter, Canadian Supreme Court Reports, Federal Law Report, Weekly Law Report, U.S. Supreme Court Reports, Australian Law Reports.

6.1.4 Legislation

Legislation is an Acts passed by the parliament and the state legislatures, ordinances promulgated by the President of India and Governors of the state. It is also termed as statutory law. It is that law which is declared or expressed in writing by the competent or sovereign authority e.g. Gazette of India, Acts of Parliaments.

6.1.5 Bare Act

Bare Act provides a summary of every section of a particular Act passed by the parliament. It does not include case laws or other explanations to the sections except what the parliament or state legislature has made.

6.1.6 Manuals

Manuals contains latest rules and notifications published by few government departments such as Civil Service Manual, Income Tax Manual.

6.1.7 Digests

Digests provides information on reported cases with their abstract. It also provides the basic information of a particular reported case. Whether a particular case is overruled, followed, or considered in subsequent cases can be find in digests. Examples of digests are AIR Supreme Court Digest, Complete Supreme Court Criminal Digest, and Complete Digest of Supreme Court Cases.

6.1.8 Legal Articles

Generally, law libraries maintain abstracting and indexing system. It is an important area where a library maintains an indexing system which contains all the bibliographic details of articles published in journal available in library. It helps teachers, students and researchers to search their articles by title, author and through name of the journal.

6.1.9 Index to Legal Periodicals

Index to legal periodical is the most convenient source for tracing articles from law journals, for example Index to Indian Legal Periodical published by Indian Law Institute, New Delhi. All the important law journals published in India are found in this Index.

6.1.10 Commission and Committee Reports

There are various commission and committees that are found to operate in India such as the National Human Rights Commission, the Women Commission, Law Commission of India, and National Commission for SC/ST Reports, etc. The report of such commissions creates good collection for law library.

6.1.11 Parliamentary Debates

Parliamentary debates of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha create sound collection of law library. It is a recoding conversation of various discussions, agenda made by the members of the Parliament. These debates can be downloaded from the website of Parliament of India.

6.1.12 Dissertations, Thesis and Seminar Papers

Dissertations, thesis and seminar papers are important source of information for the users of law library. This type of institutional repositories is very helpful for legal researchers.

6.1.13 Reference Tools

Reference tools such as legal dictionaries, legal encyclopedias, legal bibliographies, etc build a good collection of law libraries. Apart from this a law library should also have subject based reference tools such as Supreme Court Case Citor, Corpus Juris Secundum, Criminal Law Digest, Supreme Court Case Comparative Tables, Supreme Court Yearly Digest, etc.

6.2 E- RESOURCES IN LAW LIBRARY

6.2.1 Legal databases

Law library subscribes various online legal databases for the greater benefit of their library users. These databases are freely available without any additional fees to the users of the library. Most of the databases are commercial, therefore, the access of these databases is given through passwords or sometimes it is linked to the homepage of the library. The widely access legal databases in the law library are: Hein Online, LexisNexis, Lexis Academic Universe, Westlaw International, JSTOR, E-Hart, Legal Trac, Kluwer Law Online, Investor- State Law Guide (ISGL), Global Arbitration Review (GAR), etc. (International legal databases). Manupatra, SCC Online, Indlaw, Corporate Law Advisor. All India Reporter, Taxmann Online, Legitquest, etc are the national legal databases.

6.2.2 CD- ROM Databases

Due to the availability of online resources, the popularity of CD-ROMs has decreased. However, some CD-ROMs may be kept in the large library like Statutes of India.

6.2.3 E-Journals

Electronic journals subscribed by the law library provide greater benefits to legal researchers. E-journals provide the researchers with the latest information on various legal developments. Some of the important e- journals in law libraries are International Journal of Constitutional Law, International Journal of Refugee Law, Internal Journal of Transitional Law, Journal of Environmental Law, Oxford Journal of Legal Studies, Journal of Information, Law and Technology, Journal of International Economic Law, etc.

6.2.4 Legal Websites

Legal websites over the internet provides links to various resources which helps the users of the law library to access current information in their specific area such as www.judis.nic.in, www.supremecourtindia.nic.in

6.2.5 Open Access Legal Information E- resources

There is some legal information E- Resources which are freely available to the users of law library such as Judgments Information System (JUDIS), National Portal of India, etc. JUDIS contains the judgments of Supreme Court of India and several State High Courts. National Portal of India provides access to all Indian Government websites relating to important documents and reports released by the Government of India at both State and Central level.

7. CONCLUSION

Law libraries play a unique role in disseminating legal information to legal fraternity. It provides legal information to its clientele and plays a role in the legal process and social justice. The resources of law libraries are of great mean for law library users. Therefore, the resources of law libraries must be unique with latest edition and amendments. The librarians of law libraries should remain active and ready to serve its clientele when approach before them for information services.

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