

# ONLINE LIBRARY SERVICES USED BY STUDENTS OF NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITIES (NLUS) OF DELHI AND JODHPUR: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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**Abstract:** A substantial influx of new material exists in the legal field. The information has been disseminated in both digital and print formats. The majority of law students favored online materials, e- judgments and digital legal databases. This study focuses on the frequency of access to online library services and legal databases by students of National Law Universities. A standardized questionnaire was used to collect data. Majority of Students from indicated extensive utilization of online legal databases and internet browsing. Nonetheless, NLUJ reported more substantial hurdles, specifically regarding library hours, internet connectivity, and access to online resources, whereas NLU D students had difficulties mostly related to database proficiency. To optimize online resource utilization, institutions must expand internet connectivity, provide database training, and elevate awareness of accessible resources.

**Keywords:** Online Library services; Search engines; legal databases; Law Library; National Law Universities.

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## 1.0 Introduction

There is a great flood of new information in law field. The information has been reproduced in both digital and paper form. Most of the law students preferred online resources, e- judgments and online legal databases. Law students need to know how to use legal databases properly to obtain the required legal information (**Prasad & Lal 2023**). Further, defined by Okello-Obura "legal information can be defined as the requirement or right established by law, which resides in all electronics and written records, Legal information consists of laws and rules, case law and legal literature." (Muzzammil & MohdShikoh, 2017). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the library professionals offer web-based services, they believe that online information plays significant role for users to up-to-date information and quick access. As mentioned by (Madhusudhan & Nagabhushanam, 2012) Web based Library Services means library services provided using the internet as medium and library website as a gateway with the help of integrated library management system. A law student needs to be updated on the most recent decisions made by the Indian Supreme Court, High Courts, and other international courts. Law libraries work hard to meet user needs by aggregating online content in one location. (Verma & Lalrokhawma, 2018).

## 2.0 Review of Literature

The review of literature examines existing research related to the title and the utilization of online library services and legal databases, forming the foundation for this study.

**Jamshed (2020)** study on systematic review of information seeking behavior and information needs in female lawyers. 93.6% of respondents access the law library at the workplace, 40% at home. The majority of the respondents 92.1% accessed the online law library at the workplace, while 7.9% at other places. **Kumar and Singh (2024)** found in their study that at MPUAT students rely on library staff and colleagues to learn about electronic resources, followed by (76.92%) and (40%), in SKRAU. The main reasons for adopting electronic resources are multiple access facility, round-the-clock availability and time-saving quality reported by the both university students. 79% students are satisfied with electronic books in MPUAT compare to SKRAU i.e. 82%.

**Kumar and Singh (2024)** in their study investigated that 67.5% respondents visited the library daily and have positive attitude toward e-resources at NDRI Library, Karnal. Majority of the respondent i.e. 76.62% were satisfied with books while 74.03% were electronic theses & dissertations and circulation services. **Prasad and Lal (2023)** investigated the use of electronic resources at NLUs in East India. The survey showed that 37.14% of respondents used e-journals on a daily basis, 35% weekly and 14.29% monthly. Most of the respondents used ICT products and services, with 25.75% N-List e-journals, 25% SAGE e-journals, 20% open access journals and 37.14% Internet articles. The majority of respondents used e-journals with 31.43% for research work, 25.14% for academic assignments and 20% for enhancing knowledge. **Singh and Kumar (2024)** carried out a study using electronic resources by faculty and research scholars of national law universities of North India. The 97.4% of respondents were aware of electronic resources and legal databases. 89.6% of research scholars preferred accessing resources off-campus, while 97% of faculty respondents prepared on campus. 63.4% of respondents access e-journal-based databases and 32.3% case law databases. All faculty respondents like the Manupatra database while research scholars 97%, Taxmann (88% and 75.6%), CLA (74% and 51.1%) and India Stat (68% and 28.9%) respectively.

### 3.0 Significance of Study

As the previous discussion suggest, the present study focuses on the online library services and legal databases used by students of NLUs at Delhi and Jodhpur. NLUs are the top legal education institutions in India. Due to the impact of Internet technology, they are transitioning from offline to online platforms. Library professionals must understand how to meet the online needs of law users with the materials and services offered by libraries. The study also assesses the effectiveness of current online library services and identifies challenges faced by students within the existing framework.

### 4.0 Scope of Study

At presently, there are 27 National Law Universities are working in India. The present study covers National Law University of Delhi (NLUD) and National Law University of Jodhpur (NLUJ) offering the B.A. LLB (five-year), LLM, and Ph.D. degree programs. This study is limited only two Law Universities of North India due to purposive sampling.

### 5.0 Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To know the awareness about online library services and online legal databases among the students of NLU Delhi and Jodhpur.
2. To find out the purpose of using online library services and online legal databases of the students.
3. To know the most frequently used online library services as well as online legal databases by the both NLU students.
4. To explore the satisfaction level of the students in terms of using the online library services and online legal databases.
5. While using the online library services faced by the students of NLU Delhi and Jodhpur while using the online library services

**6.0 Hypothesis:** The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- **Hypothesis 1 (H<sub>0</sub>):** There is no significant difference in terms of online library services used the students of NLU Delhi and Jodhpur.
- **Hypothesis 2 (H<sub>0</sub>):** There is no significant difference in terms of the legal databases used by the students of NLU Delhi and Jodhpur.

### 7.0 Research Methodology

The investigator employed the survey procedure to carry out this research study. A structured questionnaire was developed for the purpose of gathering primary data. Considering the objectives of the investigation, the questionnaire was developed. Out of the 220 questionnaires were distributed randomly, only 150 were returned with 68% response rate. The data was analyzed using the five-point Likert scale in SPSS software.

### 8.0 Results and Discussions

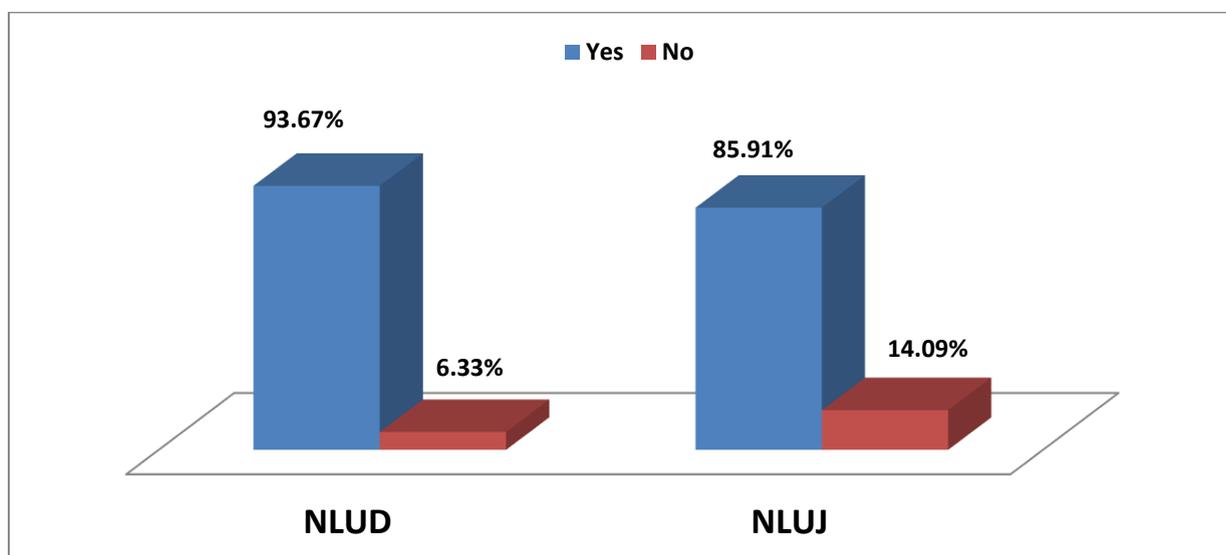
**Table-8.1 Demographic Information**

NLUD Delhi N=79 (%)	NLUJ Jodhpur N=71 (%)
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Gender							
Male		Female		Male		Female	
47(59.50%)		32(40.50%)		32(45.10%)		39(54.90%)	
Age Group							
>20	21-25	26-30	<30	>20	21-25	26-30	<30
15 (19.0%)	53 (67.10%)	11 (13.90%)	-	36 (50.70%)	27 (38.0%)	7 (9.90%)	1 (1.40%)
Academic Level							
LLB	LLM	Ph.D. Students		LLB	LLM	Ph.D. Students	
58 (73.40%)	17 (21.50%)	4 (5.10%)		53 (74.60%)	10 (14.10%)	8 (11.30%)	

Table 8.1 depicts the demographic background of the respondents. The table show that majority of respondents with 59.50% were male and 40.50% were female in NLUD in other hand Majority of respondents 54.90% were female and 45.10% were male in NLUJ. It was found that majority of the respondents (67.10%) were belong to within the age range of 21-25 years at NLUD, in the other hand 38% at NLUJ. 50.70% were below to 20 years age group at NLUJ while 19% at NLUD belong to same age group. 13.90% were belong to 26-30 age group at NLUD while 9.90% were belong to same category at NLUJ. The majority of the respondents were LLB students with 74.60% at NLUJ and 73.40% NLUD. 21.50% respondents were from LLM in NLUD while 14.10% in NLUJ. 5.10% respondents were Ph.D. students in NLUD and 11.30% were from NLUJ.

NLU Delhi has a higher proportion of male students while NLU Jodhpur has female students. The majority of the respondents belong to 21-25year age category made the highest contribution. Both NLUs have similar percentages of LLB students.



**Figure No. 8.1: Awareness of online library services and online legal databases**

Figure 8.1 shows the awareness of online library services and online legal databases the result shows that 93.67% users were where as 6.33% users were not aware at NLUD, while 85.91% were aware and 14.09% were not aware at NLUJ. Overall majority of respondents were aware about online library services and online legal databases.

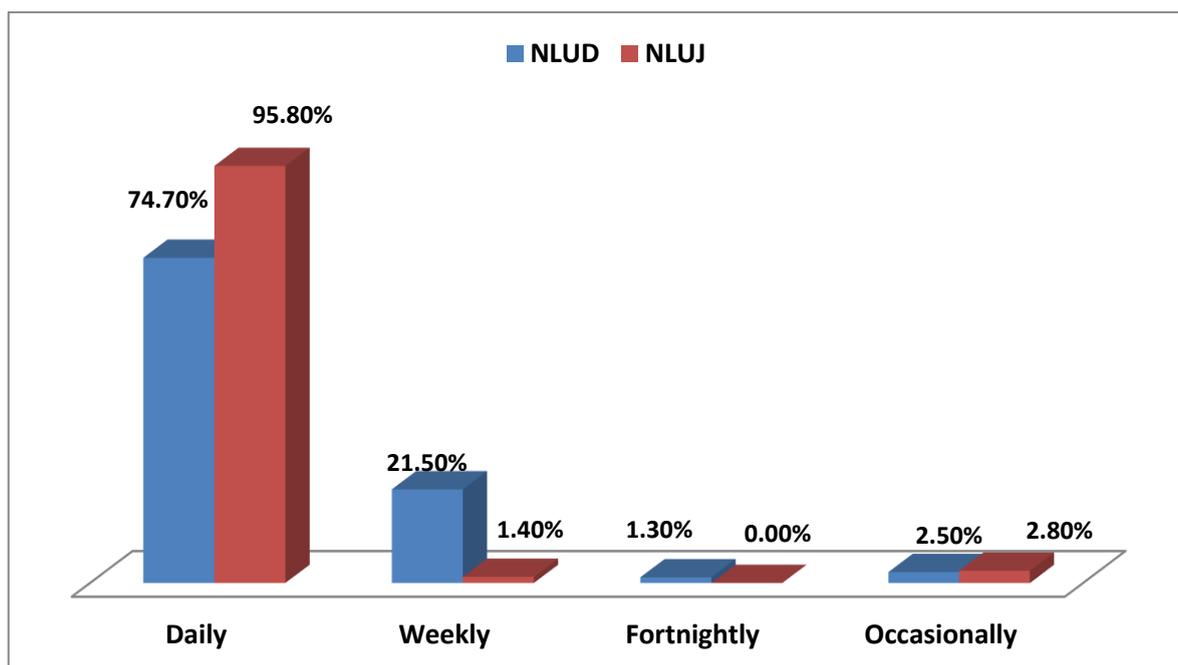
**Table No 8.2: Purpose of Seeking Information**

Purpose	N	Mean	SD
Preparation for assignment/ Class Notes	150	4.75	.521

Preparation for Examinations/ competitions	150	4.47	.939
Research Work /Case Preparation	150	3.76	1.283
Planning of New Projects	150	4.04	.962
Keeping yourself up- to-date	150	3.87	.914
For Career Development/ Job Search	150	3.55	1.034
Moot court Competitions	150	3.89	1.148

Table No. 8.2 depicts the purpose for seeking information. The data presented highlights the mean rating and standard deviations (SD) for different academic activities. Preparation for Assignment/Class Notes (mean=4.75, SD=0.521), Preparation for Examinations/ Competitions (mean = 4.47, SD = 0.939), For Career Development/Job Search (mean = 3.55, SD = 1.034) Research Work/Case Preparation (mean = 3.76, SD = 1.283), Planning of New Projects (mean = 4.04, SD = 0.962), and Keeping Yourself Up-to-Date (mean = 3.87, SD = 0.914) Moot Court Competitions (mean = 3.89, SD = 1.148)

Overall, the finding related to academic preparation (particularly for assignments and exams) was highly valued, while career development and job search were less prioritized, as reflected in their lower mean scores. Research work and project planning show moderate importance. The result showed diversity of opinions among participants regarding the importance of these various activities.



**Figure No. 8.2: Frequency of Library Visit**

Figure- 8.2 shows the frequency of visitors to the library. 74.70% of the respondents visit the library every day, 21.50% visit weekly, 1.30% fortnightly and 2.50% occasionally in NLUD while 95.80% visit the library daily, 1.40% weekly and 2.80% occasionally in NLUJ. It may be concluded from the above figure that most respondents visit the library every day.

**Table No. 8.3: Use of Online Library Services**

Online library services	N	Mean	SD	T-Value	Level of Significant
Online Law Databases	150	4.70	.610	.050	Significant
Browsing the Internet	150	4.73	.527	.043	Significant
E-books	150	4.31	.770	.063	Not Significant
E-Journals	150	3.71	1.053	.086	Not Significant
E-Theses	150	2.16	1.484	.121	Not Significant

Remote Access Database	150	4.35	.723	.059	Not Significant
E- Judgments	150	4.31	.732	.060	Not Significant
Accessing current affairs	150	4.19	.839	.068	Not Significant

Scale: 1= Most Frequently, 2= Frequently, 3= Sometimes, 4= Occasionally, 5= Never

Table No. 8.3 highlights the use of web-based services and evaluates the perceived significance of various online resources. Online law databases and browsing the internet received high mean scores of 4.70 and 4.73, respectively, both achieving statistical significance with p-values of 0.050 and 0.043. This indicates that these resources are highly valued for legal research and information gathering. In contrast, e-books, with a mean score of 4.31, not significance (p = 0.063), suggesting a moderate but less prioritized importance among users. Similarly, e-journals (mean = 3.71), e-theses (mean = 2.16), remote access databases (mean = 4.35), e-judgments (mean = 4.31), and accessing current affairs (mean = 4.19) all failed to reach significance, with p-values ranging from 0.059 to 0.121.

The result highlights a clear distinction between the perceived utility of online law databases and general internet browsing, which are seen as essential, compared to other resources that, while still valuable, are not prioritized to the same extent by users.

**Hypothesis 1 (H<sub>0</sub>): H<sub>0</sub> is rejected for Online Law Databases and Browsing the Internet**, indicating significant differences in their usage between the students of NLUD and ND LJ. The (H<sub>0</sub>) is **accepted for E-books, E-Journals, E-Theses, Remote Access Database, E-Judgments and Accessing Current Affairs**, there is no significant difference in usage between the two universities for these services.

**Table No. 8.4: Use of Online Legal Database**

Legal Databases	N	Mean	SD	t-Value	Level of Significant
HEIN Online	150	4.39	.775	.063	Not Significant
Lexis Nexis	150	4.13	.880	.072	Not Significant
WestLaw	150	3.73	1.146	.094	Not Significant
JSTOR	150	4.49	.653	.053	Not Significant
SCC Online	150	4.83	.445	.036	Significant
Manupatra	150	4.62	.672	.055	Significant
AIR InfoTech	150	2.19	1.314	.107	Not Significant
CLA Online	150	2.10	1.191	.097	Not Significant
Live Law	150	4.10	.995	.081	Not Significant
Kluwer Arbitration	150	2.92	1.114	.091	Not Significant
Taxmann Online	150	2.59	1.243	.102	Not Significant
Any Others Specify	150	1.22	.674	.055	Significant

Scale: 1= Most Frequently, 2= Frequently, 3= Sometimes, 4= Occasionally, 5= Never

Table No. 8.4 shows the results obtained from the evaluation of various legal databases. It indicates varied levels of perceived significance among participants. SCC Online emerged as the highest-rated resource with a mean score of 4.83, achieving statistical significance (p = 0.036), indicating its strong value in legal research. Similarly, Manupatra also received a high mean score of 4.62 and was deemed significant (p = 0.055), highlighting its importance to users. In contrast, other databases such as HEIN Online (mean = 4.39), Lexis Nexis (mean = 4.13), and WestLaw (mean = 3.73) did not reach significance, with p-values of 0.063, 0.072, and

0.094, respectively. This suggests that while these resources are recognized as useful, they are not prioritized to the same extent as SCC Online and Manupatra. Additionally, databases like AIR InfoTech (mean = 2.19), CLA Online (mean = 2.10), Live Law (mean = 4.10), Kluwer Arbitration (mean = 2.92), and Taxmann Online (mean = 2.59) all showed no significance, indicating lower perceived value among users. The category "Any Others Specify" scored a mean of 1.22, which was significant ( $p = 0.055$ ), suggesting that there is a recognition of additional resources not explicitly listed, indicating a demand for alternatives in legal research.

It conclude that the findings underscore a clear preference for SCC Online and Manupatra within the realm of legal databases, while other resources, although useful, do not hold the same level of significance among participants.

**Hypothesis 2 (H<sub>0</sub>):** The (H<sub>0</sub>) is **rejected** for **SCC Online, Manupatra, and Any Others (Specify)**, as there are significant differences in their usage between the students of NLUD and NDLJ. All other databases (**HEIN Online, Lexis Nexis, WestLaw, JSTOR, AIR InfoTech, CLA Online, Live Law, Kluwer Arbitration, and Taxmann Online**), (H<sub>0</sub>) is **accepted**, there is no significant difference in usage between the two universities.

**Table No 8.5: Challenges Faced in Using Online Information Services**

Challenges	NLUD, Delhi N=79 (%)	NLUJ, Jodhpur N=71 (%)
Lack of available computers/Laptop in library	69 (51.9%)	60 (84.5%)
Poor Connectivity of Internet and speed	50 (63.3%)	41 (57.7%)
Too much Time consuming/ Slow downloading from database	20 (25.3%)	23 (32.4%)
Difficult to retrieving relevant information	54 (68.4%)	50 (70.74%)
Lack of knowledge of legal Databases	60 (75.9%)	56 (78.9%)
Lack of information searching skill on Internet	14 (17.7%)	14 (19.7%)
Lack of awareness of online sources and services of the library	64 (81.0%)	50 (74.4%)

Table- 8.5 reveals the challenges faced by students at NLUD and NLUJ in accessing online legal resources, with notable differences in severity between the two universities. Lack of computers or laptops was major problems faced more than 84% at NLUD and NLUJ. Internet connectivity problems faced more than half the students at both universities. Majority of the respondents faced difficulty in retrieving relevant information with 68.4% at NLUD and 70.74% at NLUJ. Additionally, 75.9% of NLUD and 78.9% of NLUJ students faced problems due to lack of knowledge about legal databases. Awareness of online library resources was also faced as major problems, with 81.0% of NLUD and 74.4% of NLUJ students unaware of available resources. Thus, the discussion brings out that both NLUD and NLUJ students encounter challenges with including lack of devices, poor connectivity, and limited database knowledge.

**9.0 Conclusion**

This study was aimed to examine the utilization of online resources, access to internet legal databases for legal information and library services by students at NLUs at Delhi and Jodhpur. Most respondents were LLB students; primarily aged between 21 and 25, frequently visited the library every day at both NLUs. Furthermore, respondents from both NLUD and NLUJ indicated that primarily relied on online law databases and internet browsing for information. Commonly used resources included SCC Online, Manupatra, JSTOR, and Hein Online. Online law databases and internet browsing were the main sources of legal information. Common challenges included poor connectivity, slow downloads, and difficulty accessing relevant resources. Both

universities would benefit from better infrastructure and training in digital resource use and information retrieval.

### 10.0 Suggestions

The respondents recommended following suggestions.

- i. Invest in upgrading network infrastructure to ensure stable, high-speed internet access, particularly in libraries and study areas, to support seamless use of online databases.
- ii. Introduce training programs and workshops to improve students' proficiency in using legal research databases, helping them navigate and retrieve information more efficiently.
- iii. Implement strategies like newsletters and library orientations to better inform students about available online resources and services.
- iv. Simplify and streamline the user interface of library databases and search tools to reduce the time spent on retrieving relevant information.
- v. Explore solutions such as remote access to databases and optimizing data management to address issues with slow downloads and limited access.
- vi. Establish continuous feedback mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of improvements and make adjustments based on student needs.

### 11.0 Implementations

- i. The differences in library access and online resource usage between the two universities highlight a need for improvements in infrastructure, especially at NLUJ, including extended library hours, better internet connectivity, and enhanced training on using online databases
- ii. Through orientation programme addressing the challenges of database knowledge could improve students' ability to efficiently use online resources for legal research at both universities.

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