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## **Paving Through the Corridors of National Law University Libraries of North India: An Anthology of Resources and Services**

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National Law Universities were established in various Indian States as an outcome of second-generation reforms of legal education by Bar Council of India during 1980s. The study is an attempt to provide analytical outcomes pertaining to physical and digital resources, services and facilities available with select five National Law Universities of North India viz. National Law University, Jodhpur (NLUJ), Ram Manohar Lohia National Law University (RMLNLU), Lucknow, Rajiv Gandhi National Law University (RGNUL), Patiala, National Law University, Delhi (NLUD), and Himachal Pradesh National Law University, Shimla. The study aims providing a comparative analysis about various resources, services and facilities available with respective law universities' libraries, burrowing through their websites with an attempt to create an anthology of all the information.

**Keywords:** *Legal Education, National Law Universities, Legal databases, Law Libraries, e-Books, Anti-Plagiarism Software, E-resources*

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

The legacy of contemporary legal education in India can be traced back to 19th century, when the first Law College was established in 1855 and subsequently brought under the umbrella of the University of Bombay in 1860. Post-independence, the Bar Council of India (BCI) is entrusted with the pedagogical development and control of the legal education system in India.

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According to Bar Council of India's 'Rule of Legal Education' (Part-IV) the "National Law Universities are constituted and established by statutes of the Union or States and mandated to start and run Law courses". As per the Bar Council of India website, there are twelve National Law Universities across the country.

In the pre-independence era, basis of legal education was thrust upon discerning rules and regulations envisaged in various legal documents. University legal education for the LL.B degree was started in the year 1855 with the establishment of Government Elphinstone College in 1855 at Bombay. Slowly legal education spread its wings across the length and breadth of India with the establishment of numerous institutions imparting legal education. National Law Universities were set up as an outcome of second generation reforms in legal education initiated by the Bar Council of India under different state legislature with an objective to impart legal education initially running into five year integrated LL.B programmes. Slowly and gradually LL.M and Ph.D. in law was also introduced in order to inculcate the legal research mindset among young legal professionals who were exploring various opportunities in legal profession apart from advocacy. In addition to the National Law Universities listed in the Bar Council of India website, 11 other National Law Universities have already been established. Currently, India has twenty three National Law Universities established almost in every state of India. However, few States have more than one Law University in its vicinity<sup>1</sup>.

## 2 GENESIS AND INSTITUTION OF LAW UNIVERSITIES IN INDIA

National Law Institute University (NLIU, Bangalore), Bangalore, in Karnataka State established in 1985 is the first law university instituted in India. Almost, after twelve years, Madhya Pradesh State Government Legislature under the "Rashtriya Vidhi Sansthan Vishwa Vidyalaya Adhiniyam, 1997" came up with second Law University named as National Law Institute University, Bhopal.

In the year 1998, National Academy of Legal Studies and Research University of Law, (NALSAR) at Hyderabad was established in 1998 as third Law University at Karnataka. In its series, fourth Law University was instituted by West Bengal Government popularly known as The West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata in 1999. In the same year, Rajasthan State Government passed National Law University Jodhpur Act, 1999 clearing path to establish National Law University Jodhpur in Rajasthan State.

Next decade witnessed boom for legal education introducing eleven law

universities in Gujrat (2003), Chhattisgarh (2003), Uttar Pradesh (2005), Kochi (2005), Punjab (2006), Bihar (2006), Delhi (2008), Orissa (2008), Andhra Pradesh (2008), Assam (2009 and functional in 2011) and Ranchi (2010).

The pace of legal education continued for next decade from 2011 to 2020 which evidenced for setting in motion of nine more law universities under State Legislature in Tamil Nadu (2012), Maharashtra (2014 & 2017, 3 Universities), Himachal Pradesh (2016), Madhya Pradesh at Jabalpur (2018) and Haryana (2019). The states like Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra set up more than one law universities in their vicinity. As of now, India has twenty three law universities. Still, few states are planning to set second law universities for expanding legal education research support mechanism to students and researchers<sup>1</sup>.

### 3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Enormous data resources are available in the contemporary age of information explosion. Educational institutions are catering to research fraternity with such galaxy of available resources. The purpose of this study is to analyse the plethora of resources, services and facilities offered by the select National Law Universities, viz. National Law University, Jodhpur, Ram Manohar Lohia National Law University, Lucknow, Rajeev Gandhi National University of Law, Patiala, National Law University, Delhi and Himachal Pradesh National Law University, Shimla and a comparison thereof. The comparative analysis of such assimilations also aims at informative references to know the gap of resources, services and facilities among such NLUs.

### 4 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Ambika and Ganesan<sup>2</sup> in their study evaluated thirteen library websites of central university in India by using some standard checklists. The study highlights certain variations in the websites during evaluation and further suggest to librarians to put extra efforts to maintain the standards as compared to international library websites.

Singh and Rai<sup>3</sup> elaborated important electronic resources useful for legal education and research. They propagated that a law library, with support of public domain information, might serve their clientele effectively. They also mentioned various sources of electronic resources, based on pillars of legal information.

Haneefa and Jiji<sup>4</sup> confined to the study of websites of National libraries across the globe. The study highlighted the analysis of interactivity and contents of 163 websites of National libraries around the web. The paper envisaged that national library websites provides general information, followed by library collections, library services, e-resources and contents and interactivity of applications.

Devi and Verma<sup>5</sup> carried their study on the library websites of the 29 NITs and 19 IITs in India. The study finds that IIT Kanpur occupies first place and NIT Agartala came at the last place amongst other Engineering institutions engaged in the research. It also suggests about regular assessment of library websites requires to be done in order to evaluate and analyse the available information at the respective websites.

Gadhavi<sup>6</sup> conducted a study to analyse about the websites of libraries Institute of National Importance in Gujarat through various parameters such as collection, services, technology used and online resources etc. The study analyses eight institute of national importance in Gujarat and reveals that the library websites of any institution is the mirror of the institutions and satisfy the need of the library users 24/7.

Madhusudhan and Prakash<sup>7</sup> in their study present a glimpse about 16 IIT websites through the characteristics of their linking analysis. The study finds that IIT Bombay is ranked first and IIT Madras has the second rank in the world and WIF (in-link). The study further reveals that the websites of respective IITs has done a remarkable progress considering the web presence in general through generating WIF 0.000055 and 0.005865 using Google and yahoo respectively as per the WISER rankings.

Bhardwaj and Madhusudhan<sup>8</sup> in their study presents a glimpse about the use and access of open access legal information resources among the legal scholars in India. The study finds that the majority of user population seems aware about the open access resources in the field of law. The study also reveals that mostly these open access resources are used for case law searching. The author propagates that the majority of users find difficulty in searching the open access resources as these are not properly organized.

Vijaykumar<sup>9</sup> led a study to investigate 19 university websites of Srilanka. The study ranks these universities through calculation of available web links and web pages of each and every website. The study finds that University of Colombo ranked one for having highest web pages in WISER ranking. The study further suggests to analyse web presence and links of respective universities in relation to their sub domains eg .ac/.edu and .res.

## 5 OBJECTIVES

The prime objective of the study is to examine the available resources, services and facilities of select National law universities. Some of the other interlinked objectives are:

- i. To explore about the availability of resources in the select national law universities of north India.
- ii. To know about the kind of services offered by the library of select national law universities under study.
- iii. To examine what resources e.g. legal databases, ebooks, are available with the select law libraries.
- iv. To visualise about various facilities available in such select law libraries.
- v. To assess what tools and software are available in the select law libraries to curb the plagiarism in research for the users.

## 6 SCOPE

Apart from 1500 odd Law Colleges under various universities spread throughout the country, additionally 23 National Law Universities (setup as State Universities) are imparting legal education and research in India. These law universities have been set up in almost every state to reach out to optimum number of students willing to pursue legal profession. Considering large number of law universities established all over India, it was decided to limit the study to the law universities set up in North region of India. As such, the scope of the study is limited to the resources, services and facilities provided by the libraries of National Law Universities of North India viz., National Law University, Jodhpur (NLUJ), Ram Manohar Lohia National Law University (RMLNLU), Lucknow and Rajiv Gandhi National Law University (RGNU), Patiala, National Law University, Delhi (NLU), and Himachal Pradesh National Law University (HPNLU), Shimla, as envisaged in their respective official websites.

## 7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology for any research work plays an important role as it serves as the blue print of that particular research work. The data collection for the present study has been done in two fold. Firstly, required information for the study was collected through Internet i.e. thorough investigation of the websites and library web pages of National Law Universities of north India

under study was done and required data is collected thereafter. The relevant information about various resources, services and facilities etc. extended by select national law universities have thoroughly been explored through their library web pages. At certain points where data or information was not readily available at respective websites, the gap of information was filled through telephonic communication with the head or responsible staff of the respective libraries.

Secondly, a detailed questionnaire was designed and distributed among heads of select Law libraries to obtain authentic and relevant information. The questionnaire was specifically designed keeping in view about having a conceptual clarity about various issues related to legal databases and its uses and also for supplementing the information obtained through websites for collecting the data. The collected data and results there in were presented in tables and then analysed in synchronised manner for understanding by researchers.

## 8 NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITIES IN NORTH INDIA

Table 1 provides summarised details such as name, year of establishment and web address of all the National Law Universities under the current study arranged in chronological order.

S.no.	Name of the University	Year of Establishment	Web Address
1.	National Law University (NLUJ), Jodhpur, Rajasthan <sup>10</sup>	1999	<a href="http://www.nlujodhpur.ac.in">http://www.nlujodhpur.ac.in</a>
2.	Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia National Law University (RMLNLU), Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh <sup>11</sup>	2005	<a href="http://www.rmlnlu.ac.in/">http://www.rmlnlu.ac.in/</a>
3.	Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law (RGNUL), Patiala, Punjab <sup>12</sup>	2006	<a href="http://www.rgnul.ac.in/">http://www.rgnul.ac.in/</a>
4.	National Law University (NLUD), Delhi <sup>13</sup>	2008	<a href="https://nludelhi.ac.in">https://nludelhi.ac.in</a>
5.	Himachal Pradesh National Law University (HPNLU), Shimla, Himachal Pradesh <sup>14</sup>	2016	<a href="https://hpnlu.ac.in/">https://hpnlu.ac.in/</a>

**Table 1 National Law Universities in North India**

## 9 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Data collection for any research work consist marathon task so as to gather authentic data in a study so that the interpretation and observations become reliable for mass researchers. For collecting the data for this study, websites of respective national law universities are thoroughly searched, telephonic conversations weremade where information was readily not available on website. A questionnaire was also designed and sent to respective head of select libraries for collecting real time data. The collected data is then compiled in tables and further analysed for better understanding of the results.

### 9.1 AVAILABILITY OF PRINT RESOURCES

Table 2 is an expression of number of print resources which includes books, back volumes of journals, print journals etc. available in respective libraries. It is evident from Table 3 that NLU Delhi has the maximum number of print resources(41877).

S.no.	Particulars	NLU, Delhi	NLU, Lucknow	HPNLU, Shimla	NLU, Jodhpur	RGNUL, Punjab
1	Books	35261	27755	8600	15000	39186
2	Back Volumes of Journals	6251	7257	1276	10000	--
3	Print Journals	134	120	25	45	60
4	Magazines	27	17	10	15	31
5	Newspapers	15	13	08	12	16
6	Thesis	17	17	01	25	30
7	Dissertations	172	217	50	450	873
	Total	<b>41877</b>	<b>35396</b>	<b>9970</b>	<b>25547</b>	<b>40196</b>

**Table 2 Comparative analysis of print resources**

Second position is occupied by RGNUL, Patiala with 40196 print resources, followed by RMLNLU, Lucknow and NLU, Jodhpur with 35396 and 25547 print resources respectively. However, HPNLU, Shimla has less number of print resources (9970) as compared to other law libraries, this is because that the university was established in 2016 only and developing its collection gradually.

### 9.2 AVAILABILITY OF E-RESOURCES

Table 3 presents comparative analysis about e-resources collection in respective libraries. It is evident from Table 4 that NLU, Jodhpur library has maximum number of e-books (18000) followed by NLU, Delhi (12675).It is also evident from the table that NLU, Delhi has maximum numbers of online databases (22), followed by RMNLU, Lucknow (14). The first place for maximum numbers of e-journals is occupied by NLU, Jodhpur (9000), followed by NLU Delhi (6572).

S.no	Particulars	NLU, Delhi	RMNLU, Lucknow	HPNLU, HP	NLU, Jodhpur	RGNUL, Punjab
1	Online Databases	22	14	08	13	13
2	E-Books	12675	900	500	18000	--
3	E-Journals	6572	--	3000	9000	--
4	Audio Video Materials/CDROMS/D VDs	281	255	20	50	445

**Table 3- Comparative analysis of E-resources**

The table also specifies that the place for maximum number of audio video materials/CD ROMs is occupied by RGNUL (445), Patilala followed by NLU, Delhi (281) and RMLNLU, Lucknow (255). NLU Jodhpur has 50 and HPNLU, Shimla has 20 CDROMs which indicates that being recently established the library is growing its collection at a good pace.

### 9.3 AVAILABILITY OF TOOLS AND SOFTWARE

Table 4 exhibits various tools and software provided by respective libraries to its users. It is clear from this table that all the libraries are providing Remote access facilities for their subscribed databases through RemoteX, only RMLNLU, Lucknow is providing this facility through Refread. LIBSYS is used as library management software by 03 libraries i.e. NLU, Delhi, RMLNLU, Lucknow and RGNUL, Punjab, while HPNLU, Shimla library uses Koha and NLU, Jodhpur library uses Soul 2.0. It seems good to know that in order to curb the plagiarism in academic writings and research; respective libraries have subscribed anti plagiarism software. Turnitin and Urkund are subscribed by these libraries as anti plagiarism software. As far as statistical software tools are concerned which are helpful for data compilations etc., only NLU, Delhi library is subscribing SPSS statistical software tool. All the NLUs under study have developed their Institutional repository except RGNUL, Punjab. The analysis also shows that NLU, Jodhpur seems ahead of other libraries as far as newspaper clipping software is concerned, as other libraries are not subscribing to this software.

S.No.	Particulars	NLU, Delhi	RMLNLU, Lucknow	HPNLU, Shimla	NLU, Jodhpur	RGNUL, Punjab
1.	Software used for Remote Access of Databases	RemoteX	Refread	RemoteX	RemoteX	RemoteX
2.	LMS	LIBSYS	LIBSYS	Koha	Soul 2.0	LIBSYS
3.	Anti Plagiarism Software	Turnitin & Ouriginal/ Urkund	Ouriginal/ Urkund	Ouriginal / Urkund	Turnitin	Kaspersky
4.	Statistical Software	SPSS	No	No	No	No
5.	Institutional Repository	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
6.	News Paper Clipping Software	No	No	No	Yes (ISID)	No
7.	Tools for Visually impaired	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
8.	Reference Management Tool	No	No	No	No	No

**Table 4-Comparative analysis of tools and softwares**

A library should cater to the requirements of deprived students such as physically disabled and visually impaired students. Certain tools and softwares help visually impaired students to avail the reading facilities in the library. It is good to notice that all the select libraries are providing these facilities to its readers except HPNLU, Shimla. Reference management tools eg Endnote, Mendeley etc are helpful for referencing of bibliographies etc. The table shows that no such tools are subscribed by the libraries under study.

#### 9.4 ANALYSIS OF LIBRARY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Table 5 examines about the various facilities and services provided by the respective libraries taken for analysis. WEBOPAC facility provides searching of library catalogue from remote locations. Table 6 shows that WEBOPAC facility is provided by all the libraries. Some of the prominent services such as Current awareness service, email alert service, newspaper clipping service, reprographic service are provided by all the libraries under study. The facilities such as question bank, lockers facilities are provided by all libraries except RGNUL, Punjab and NLU, Jodhpur respectively.

S.No.	Particulars	NLU, Delhi	RMLNLU, Lucknow	HPNLU, Shimla	NLU, Jodhpur	RGNUL, Punjab
1.	WebOPAC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2.	Question Bank	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
3.	Current Awareness Services	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4.	Article Indexing Services	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
5.	Email Alert Services	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6.	Newspaper Clipping Services	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
7.	Reprographic Services	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8.	Lockers Facility	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
9.	Separate Moot Court Room	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
10.	Legal Information Resource Centre	Yes	Yes	No	No	No

**Table 5-Comparative Analysis of library services and facilities****10 FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS**

The current study analyses about the availability of resources, services, various tools, softwares and facilities in the libraries of select five National Law Universities of North India viz. National Law University, Jodhpur (NLUJ), Ram Manohar Lohia National Law University (RMLNLU), Lucknow, Rajiv Gandhi National Law University (RGNUL), Patiala, National Law University, Delhi (NLUJ), and Himachal Pradesh National Law University, Shimla. The following are the outcomes of the research:

1. The respective national law universities are providing access of e-books, e-journals and subscribing almost all legal databases for its clientele. The libraries are providing various facilities to its users and helping them to get the optimum utilization of available resources.
2. All the national law universities under study are subscribing Anti Plagiarism software to prevent plagiarism in research in order to promote original research work in their universities.
3. The study finds that NLU, Delhi library has developed a good collection in terms of print as well as e-resources.
4. It is evident from the analysis that the requirements of visually impaired students are addressed by most of the libraries through subscribing tools such as JAWS talking software, etc.
5. Increasing price of e-resources and books creates problem for libraries to fulfil research requirements of its users as it becomes difficult for them to subscribe all the e-resources. Therefore, it is suggested as well as the need of the hour that the national law universities should come forward towards the establishment of a consortium of law/legal e-resources in line with leading Institutions of National Importance like IITs, IIMs, NITs, etc under the umbrella of Ministry of Education,

Govt. of India. This will not only benefit students but also help the universities to optimise the financial resources planning for modern library system with limited funds and also get scope to introspect in terms of future planning compared to other libraries.

6. Establishing institutional repositories are good sign of promoting open access of resources to expand the outreach of research output of an institution. Two libraries i.e. HPNLU, Shimla Delhi and RGNUL, Punjab have not developed their institutional repositories; however, the other three NLUs have developed the same with access limited to intranet only.
7. Reference management tools should be subscribed by respective national law universities in order to cater to the research requirements of their users.

## 11 CONCLUSION

Legal education in India can be traced in 19<sup>th</sup> century with the establishment of first Law College in 1855 which later shifted to University of Bombay in 1860. After independence, slowly and gradually law colleges, law departments in various universities were established where basic purpose was to earn law degree for aspiring career in advocacy. The scenario of present legal education changed with the establishment of National Law Universities all over India. The respective university libraries have established good collection in terms of print as well as electronic resource materials for the research requirements of its clientele. To face the challenges of accelerating prices of books as well as e-resources, national law universities should design certain policy by establishing a legal consortium of e-resources so as to optimise financial resources utilisation and enhance the outreach to their research community. To promote better and optimum reach of resources and facilities, user awareness programmes should be organised at regular intervals.

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