Academic Research Journal of Science and Technology (ARJST)
An Internationally Peer-Reviewed, Open Access Monthly Journal
eISSN: 3048-9644
Vol. 2 Issue: 05 November 2025

Information Seeking Behavior and ICT Utilization Skills among the Undergraduate Students of law colleges Affiliated to Karnataka State Law University Hubballi: A Study

Shilpa Lokapur*, Dr. C. Krishnamurthy,
**Research Scholar*
Dept. of Library and Information Science, Karnatak University, Dharwad – 580003
Email: shilpa.icssr@gmail.com
Professor, Dept. of Library and Information Science, Karnatak University, Dharwad – 580003
Email: jrfkrishna@gmail.com

Abstract:
In this study an effort has been made to identify some patterns of information seeking behavior and ICT utilization skills of undergraduate students of law colleges affiliated to Karnataka State Law University, Hubballi. The study highlights the methods adopted by law students for keeping informed about recent developments in their subject areas, law library resources allocated for information gathering, various ICT skills and utilization of ICT in information seeking behavior and the problems faced while seeking information in the ICT environment. Study also focuses on how law students overcome their difficulties in information seeking in the ICT environment. By studying these patterns, one can gain insights into the cultural norms and intellectual traditions related to information seeking in law libraries by the students. Ultimately, the study aims to provide actionable recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of digital and traditional library resources and services to meet the needs of undergraduate law students.

Keywords: *Information seeking behavior, Information needs, Information use pattern, Information searching, ICT Skills, Law libraries, Undergraduate Students, Law colleges*.

Introduction

Human beings are remarkable entities in this world they have evolved from Stone Age to knowledge based economy. The revolution of the knowledge society commenced towards the end of the 19th century when humans began to contemplate ways to obtain information; however, it is acknowledged that the knowledge society primarily relies on three fundamental resources: people, information, and systems. In terms of information needs, it is insightful to explore the connections among the originator, which includes authors or writers, the intermediary, such as librarians or information professionals, and the user, who is the seeker of information (Gudimani & Krishnamurthy, 2020). Information-seeking behavior encompasses the activities a person undertakes when recognizing their need for information, searching for it more effectively, and using or sharing that information. Students from various fields of social science and higher education, including those studying law, play a critical role in the country's social progress (Lokapur & Krishnamurthy, 2025). The primary goal of legal education is to establish a judicial system that is beneficial for a civilized society. Law students must actively engage with library information services and other information sources to fulfill their information needs. To ensure these students to do well, each provided information services must be fully utilized, they need strong search skills to find information as and when required (Angadi & Krishnamurthy, 2017; Krishnamurthy & Awari, 2015). The nature of information resources in law college libraries has been altered by the integration of ICT into traditional environments, as this era is characterized by explosion of information and potential overload; therefore, it is crucial to effectively meet the complex information needs of law students within these legal institutions (Mulimani & Naikar, 2022).

Thus, the necessity for understanding law library users and their information-seeking behaviors for planning library information collection, services, and facilities is recognized. Many law students do not take advantage of the available ICT resources in college libraries, primarily because accessing online information for their academic needs requires them to have ICT skills for retrieving and utilizing legal information (Krishnamurthy et al., 2011). The act of seeking information is a process undertaken by individuals to alter their knowledge state. It is a complex cognitive endeavor that forms a part of learning or problem-solving.

Review of Literature

Yushau and Nannim (2018) reviewed the studies conducted from 2004 to 2018 in Nigerian Universities which have appropriate ICT facilities, and how the facilities are being utilized for academic purposes. A thorough search in different online search engines resulted in sixty-four (64) relevant studies. This paper presents the results of the review with a view to getting better insight into the issues and way forward in the area. The findings of the study reveal that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is now part and parcel of daily life. In particular, education has been revolutionized due to the advent of this technology. With this, teaching, learning, assessment and even research are now done differently. As a result, Nigeria promulgated an IT Policy in the year 2001. However, not much is known about the ICT facilities that are available in our schools, and how these facilities are being utilized for educational purposes.

Akhtar (2020) explored the impact of digital media on information needs and seeking behavior of university teachers in Pakistan. The studies focused on how digital media had influenced the ways university faculty in Pakistan seek and use information. The study covered faculty members of thirteen federally chartered universities in Islamabad. It was found that Search engines, particularly Google, were the most common initial point of contact for faculty looking for information (48%). As far as the impact of digital media was concerned, the respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the Internet and digital information resources improved their capacity to conduct research, aid in teaching preparation, and improve their ability to search and obtain information. To better serve faculty needs, the study suggested that university libraries upgrade their information systems.

Alabi (2020) Investigated ICT skills and use of e-resources by undergraduates in selected private university libraries in South-west, Nigeria. Survey research was adopted. The population of the study was 4,913 undergraduates. Sample size was 370. A questionnaire tool was used to collect the data. The findings showed that the majority of undergraduates use e-resources for finding relevant information in their studies and assignment writing. The findings also showed that undergraduates possessed high ICT skills, although their formulation of search queries and searching and retrieval skills were low. The study recommended that undergraduates should upgrade their ICT skills.

Kori (2023) investigated the academic information seeking behavior and library use among 1,027 visually impaired students in Karnataka. The findings of the study revealed that the visually impaired students behaved similarly to other students when seeking information. However, they faced significant challenges due to a lack of modern facilities and support infrastructures in schools, which creates barriers that hinder their information-seeking process. This caused them to spend more time finding information, negatively impacting their academic progress. It was highlighted that the constraints and suggested ways to improve the information-seeking behavior and library use of visually impaired students.

Lone et. al., (2024) investigated the information seeking behavior of research scholars at the Faculty of Social Science, University of Kashmir. The study explored research scholars' information needs, search strategies, awareness and use of library services and the problems they encounter. It was noted that the majority, i.e., 88% of the respondents, opined that the internet had a significant impact on how they seek required information. 59.7% of the respondents used the OPAC of the library as a document searching tool. 64.1% of the respondents seek help from reference librarians. 62.6% make use of the library's Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) and Current Awareness Services (CAS). It was also found that the most popular sources of information are books (86.5%) and the internet (97%). Of the total respondents, 68.6% seek information at the central library, followed by 55.2% at the hostel, and 38.8% at the departmental library.

Mahadevagouda and Pavithrabai (2024) explored how newspaper journalists in Karnataka, India, seek and use information in the digital era. The study investigated how digitalization had affected the way journalists seek information by surveying 610 journalists from 39 national, state, and regional newspapers. The majority of journalists (more than 60% under the age of 35) primarily use digital resources like social media, news apps, and digital archives in addition to more conventional print sources like books, periodicals, newspapers, and

government publications. Significant challenges include inadequate library resources and services, lack of searching skills, insufficient time and inadequate modern communication technologies.

Objectives of the study

1. To identify the information needs of law students.
2. To identify the information seeking behavior of law students in the ICT environment.
3. To know the library use behavior of the law students.
4. To know the methods adopted by the law students in searching the information.
5. To understand the problems of the law students while seeking information sources.
6. To provide suggestions to improve the ICT skills and ISB of law students.

Scope and Limitations

The study is undertaken to explore information seeking behavior and ICT utilization skills of the undergraduate students of law colleges affiliated to Karnataka State Law University Hubballi. The study is limited to only NAAC accredited law colleges and also which are providing five-year LLB Courses and affiliated to Karnataka State Law University Hubballi. There are 30 NAAC accredited law colleges, out of which the authors have taken 13 law colleges for the study as the remaining 17 Law colleges are providing only three year LLB course. The Selected law colleges are listed and presented in the table 1.

Methodology

This study employed the survey method and questionnaire tool to collect the data. Target population for this study consists of undergraduate students of five-year LLB course from the law Colleges affiliated to Karnataka State Law University Hubballi. In the selected affiliated law colleges, there were 5948 undergraduate students, out of which 361 samples were drawn using the formula given by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) for the study. 361 structured questionnaires were distributed among the law students; out of which 325 were received back with the response rate of the questionnaire was 90%. The collected data was then fed into SPSS software for analysis. College wise distribution of questionnaires is shown under table 1.

Table-1: College wise Distribution of population and sample size

Sl. No	Name of the Law colleges	Population	Sample size	Reponses Received
1.	KSLU's Law School, Hubballi	757	45	41
2.	AL-AMEEN College of Law, Bangalore	300	20	18
3.	B.L.D.E. Association's Law College, Jamkhandi	247	17	15
4.	B.M.S. College of Law, Bangalore	907	54	52
5.	C.B.R. National Law College, Shivamoga	275	20	18
6.	J.S.S. Law College, Mysore	548	33	31
7.	K.L.E.'s B.V.Bellad Law College, Belagavi	242	17	15
8.	R.L. Law College, Davangere	300	20	17
9.	Raja Lakhamgouda Law College, Belgaum	548	28	26
10.	Saraswati College of Law, Chitradurga	196	13	11
11.	Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara Law College, Mangalore	848	47	42
12.	Vaikunta Baliga College of Law, Udupi	278	19	17
13.	Vidyodaya Law College, Tumkur	502	28	22

	Total	**5948**	**361**	**325**

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 2: Gender wise distribution of students

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	155	47.7
Female	170	52.3
Total	325	100

Table 2 shows the gender distribution of the students. Among the total 325 students surveyed, 155 (47.7%) are male and 170 (52.3%) are female. This reveals that female students constitute a slightly larger portion of the total sample than male students.

Table 3: Distribution of qualification of students

Qualification	Frequency	Percent
B.A LLB	256	78.8
B.B.A LLB	26	8.0
B.Com LLB	16	4.9
B.A LLB (Hon's)	14	4.3
B.B.A LLB (Hon's)	9	2.8
B.Com LLB (Hon's)	4	1.2
Total	325	100.0

Table 3 presents the qualification-wise distribution of the students. Out of the total 325 respondents, the majority, 256 students (78.8%), are from B.A. LLB, followed by 26 students (8.0%) are from B.B.A. LLB, and 16 students (4.9%) from B.Com. LL.B. Additionally, 14 students (4.3%) are from B.A. LLB (Hon's), 9 students (2.8%) are from B.B.A. LLB (Hon's), and only 4 students (1.2%) are from B.Com. LL.B (Hon's). This shows that the majority of respondents belong to the B.A. LLB program, because most of the law colleges are providing B.A. LLB course, while the number of students in the Honors programs is comparatively smaller due to non-availability of LLB (Honors) course in most of the colleges.

Table 4: Approach of library use by the respondents

Statements	Valid Responses	Invalid Responses	Mean Rank (N=325)
Through Library shelf guide	144(44.30)	181(55.69)	1083.50
Assistance of library staff	144(44.30)	181(55.69)	1083.50
Directly Searching the shelves	132(40.61)	193(59.38)	1047.50
By Consulting the library website	49(15.07)	276(84.92)	798.50
Guidance from Teacher	127(39.07)	198(60.92)	1032.50
By Consulting the library catalogue/OPAC	52(16)	273(84)	807.50

Table 4 illustrates the ways in which students approach the library. Out of 325 respondents, 144 students (44.3%) use the library shelf guide and an equal number seek assistance from library staff, followed by 132 students (40.6%) locate materials by searching the shelves, only 49 students (15.1%) reported frequent visits to the library website, and 52 students (16.0%) consult the library catalogue/OPAC, showing low engagement with digital resources. Additionally, 127 students (39.1%) rely on guidance from teachers. Overall, the data indicate

that students primarily depend on traditional, in-person methods to access library resources, with comparatively limited use of technological or online tools.

Table 5: Information needs of the respondents to fulfill various purposes

Information needs of the students to fulfill various purposes	Mean Rank (N= 325)
For study/Assignment writing	1556.50
For information gathering	1217.00
Keeping update in subject trends	1108.50
Career development	1164.50
Preparing for moot court practice/competition	1126.00
For project work completion	986.00
Any other	807.50

Table 5 presents the mean rank values with a clear picture of how respondents differ in their information needs. The highest mean rank (1556.50) was recorded for "For Study/Assignments writing", showing that academic study and assignment preparation are the most dominant purposes for which respondents seek information. This is followed by "For Information Gathering" (1217.00) and "Career Development" (1164.50), indicating that respondents also seek information to enhance their general knowledge and future career prospects. "Preparing for Moot Court Practice/Competition" (1126.00) and "Keeping updated in subject trends" (1108.50) received moderate mean ranks, suggesting these are moderately important purposes. Meanwhile, "For Project Work Completion" (986.00) and "Any other" (807.50) had the lowest mean ranks, indicating these are the least common reasons for seeking information.

Table 6: Information seeking behavior among the respondents

Information seeking behavior of respondents	Mean Rank (N=325)
By trial and error method	1332.00
With the guidance of library staff/librarian	1496.00
By the advice of friends	1456.00
By external courses/online videos	1252.00
Guidance from teacher	1568.00
Attending courses/training offered by the college	1164.00
Getting the personal guidance from experts	1108.00
To use E-information resources	1028.00

Table 6 presents the mean rank values reveal variations in the respondents' preferred methods of seeking information. The highest mean rank (1568.00) was observed for "Guidance from teacher", showing that most respondents rely heavily on their teachers while accessing required information. This is followed by "With the guidance of library staff/librarian" (1496.00) and "By the advice of friends" (1456.00), indicating that interpersonal guidance and collaboration play a major role in information-seeking behavior. Moderate mean ranks were found for "By trial and error method" (1332.00) and "By external courses/online videos" (1252.00), suggesting that some respondents prefer self-learning or exploratory approaches. In contrast, the lowest mean ranks were recorded for "Attending courses/training offered by the college" (1164.00), "Getting personal guidance

from experts" (1108.00), and "Using E-information resources" (1028.00), implying these are the least preferred methods.

Table 7: Frequency of use of electronic information services among the respondents

Electronic information services	Most frequently	Frequently	Uncertain	Less frequently	Don't use
Online Database Services	97(29.84)	89(27.38)	30(9.23)	29(8.92)	80(24.61)
Current Awareness Services	90(27.69)	89(27.38)	29(8.92)	28(8.61)	89(27.38)
Indexing and abstracting services	56(17.23)	74(22.76)	40(12.33)	47(14.46)	108(33.23)
E-question papers bank	108(33.23)	95(29.23)	21(6.46)	30(9.23)	71(21.84)
Inter-Library Loan	55(16.92)	61(18.76)	39(12)	34(10.46)	136(41.84)
Alerting Services	54(16.61)	66(20.30)	38(11.69)	38(11.69)	129(39.69)
Online Reference service	72(22.15)	91(28)	32(9.84)	33(10.15)	97(29.84)
Newspaper Clipping Service	70(21.53)	80(24.61)	45(13.84)	36(11.07)	94(28.92)
Document Delivery Service	49(15.07)	71(21.84)	43(13.23)	39(12)	123(37.84)
Web based Library Catalogue (OPAC)service	58(17.846)	83(25.53)	42(12.92)	37(11.38)	105(32.30)
Photocopying/Scanning /printing service	83(25.53)	81(24.92)	38(11.69)	29(8.92)	94(28.92)

Mean Rank (N= 325)	1570.02	1632.17	1905.24	1477.94	2018.11	1993.02	1743.92	1776.15	1985.99	1856.00	1698.38

Table 7 presents the frequency of use of electronic information services among the respondents. Among 325 students, e-question papers are the most used service, with 108 students (33.2%) using them most frequently and 95 (29.2%) frequently. Online Database Services are also popular, with 97 students (29.8%) using them most frequently and 89 (27.4%) frequently. Current Awareness Services is used most frequently by 90 students (27.7%) and frequently by 89 (27.4%), Services like Online Reference Service (72; 22.2% most frequent, 91; 28.0% frequent), Photocopying/Scanning/Printing (83; 25.5% most frequent, 81; 24.9% frequent), and Newspaper Clipping Service (70; 21.5% most frequent, 80; 24.6% frequent) show moderate usage. On the other hand, services such as Inter-Library Loan (136; 41.8% don't use), Alerting Services (129; 39.7% don't use), and Document Delivery Service (123; 37.8% don't use) have low engagement. Similarly, Indexing and Abstracting services (108; 33.2% don't use) and the Web-based Library Catalogue/OPAC (105; 32.3% don't use) are less frequently utilized. Overall, the data indicate that students tend to use e-resources related to academic tasks, like question papers and online databases, more often, whereas advanced or supplementary electronic services are underutilized.

Table 8: Use of ICT tools for information seeking among the respondents

Strategy	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	SD
I can define a search strategy by using appropriate keywords	102 (31.38)	145 (44.61)	31 (9.53)	12 (3.69)	35 (10.76)	2.17	2.015

I can adjust and improve the search if needed	91 (28)	143 (44)	46 (14.12)	10 (3.07)	35 (10.76)	2.24	2.06
I can use numerous field codes for more focused and accurate search with a single search query	64 (19.69)	127 (39.07)	69 (21.23)	20 (6.15)	45 (13.84)	2.55	2.35
I can search for information using less than(<),greater than(>),equal to(=), hyphen(-) and other techniques	64 (19.69)	93 (28.61)	77 (23.69)	40 (12.30)	51 (15.69)	2.753	2.57
I need training on search techniques to make use of e-resources	82 (25.23)	115 (35.38)	58 (17.84)	27 (8.30)	43 (13.23)	2.48	2.32

Statements	**Mean Rank (N=325)**
I can define a search strategy by using appropriate keywords	707.80
I can adjust and improve the search if needed	742.04
I can use numerous field codes for more focused and accurate search with a single search query	861.36
I can search for information using less than(<),greater than(>),equal to(=), hyphen(-) and other techniques	927.18
I need training on search techniques to make use of e-resources	826.62

Table 8 presents the responses of students on the use of ICT tools for seeking information. Out of 325 respondents, 102 students (31.4%) strongly agree and 145 (44.6%) agree that they can define a search strategy using appropriate keywords, indicating that a majority feel confident in basic search strategies. Similarly, 91 students (28.0%) strongly agree and 143 (44.0%) agree that they can adjust and improve their searches if needed, showing moderate adaptability in information searching. Fewer students reported proficiency in advanced search techniques: only 64 (19.7%) strongly agree and 127 (39.1%) agree that they can use numerous field codes for a more focused search, while 64 (19.7%) strongly agree and 93 (28.6%) agree that they can search using operators like <, >, =, and hyphens. Regarding the need for further training, 82 students (25.2%) strongly agree and 115

(35.4%) agree that they require training on search techniques to effectively use e-resources, indicating a significant portion of students recognize the need to enhance their ICT skills. Overall, the data suggest that while students are moderately confident in basic search strategies, there is a gap in advanced search skills and a clear demand for training.

Table 9: Problems in utilizing of Electronic Information Resources

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Yes	186	51.2
No	139	42.8
Total	325	100

Table 9 presents the students' responses regarding problems encountered while utilizing electronic information resources. Out of 325 respondents, 186 students (51.2%) reported that they face problem, while 139 students (42.8%) did not encounter any issues. This indicates that slightly more than half of the students experience difficulties in accessing or using electronic resources, highlighting a need for improved support and guidance in this area.

Table 10: Problems faced in accessing electronic information resources

Problems	Valid Responses	Invalid Responses	Mean Rank (N=325)
Low Internet Bandwidth	162(49.84)	163(50.15)	1368.75
Inadequate Wi-Fi range	130(40)	195(60)	1256.80
Inadequate journal subscription	93(28.61)	232(71.38)	1124.85
Lack of search Skills	126(38.76)	199(61.23)	1242.81
Restricted access by the college/Institution	75(23.07)	250(76.92)	1064.38
Hyper linking to Commercial Sites	86(26.46)	239(73.53)	1102.87
Any other	**0(0.0)**	325(100)	802.00

Table 10 presents the problems faced by students in accessing electronic information resources. Out of 325 respondents, 162 students (49.8%) reported issues with low internet bandwidth, and 130 (40.0%) faced problems due to inadequate Wi-Fi range. 126 students (38.8%) indicated a lack of search skills as a barrier, while 93 (28.6%) reported inadequate journal subscriptions. Additionally, 75 students (23.1%) experienced restricted access by the college/institution, and 86 (26.5%) were often directed to commercial sites. No other problems were reported. Overall, the data suggest that both technical issues, such as internet connectivity, and skill-related challenges hinder students' effective use of electronic information resources.

Table 11: Impact of ICT on Studies/Academics

Opinions	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	SD
Enhances the outcomes	102 (31.38)	154 (47.38)	32 (9.846)	12 (3.69)	25 (7.69)	2.089231	1.87
Aids in utilizing distinct approaches	81 (24.92)	143 (44)	51 (15.69)	14 (4.30)	36 (11.07)	2.326154	2.13
Assists in obtaining	88 (27.07)	149 (45.84)	46 (14.15)	15 (4.61)	27 (8.30)	2.212308	1.99

insightful information							
Helps to gain acquaintance of resources	93 (28.61)	142 (43.69)	44 (13.53)	18 (5.53)	28 (8.61)	2.218462	2.01
ICT Competencies improve results	89 (27.38)	138 (42.46)	43 (13.23)	15 (4.61)	40 (12.30)	2.32	2.15
Mean Rank (N=325)	756.84	851.00	812.71	808.67	835.78		

Table 11 reveals that most of the respondents strongly agreed that ICT-based resources aid in utilizing different approaches (Mean Rank = 851.00) and improve ICT competencies that enhance results (835.78). These are followed by assisting in obtaining insightful information (812.71) and helping to gain acquaintance of resources (808.67), while enhancing academic outcomes (756.84) received a comparatively lower rank. Overall, although there is no significant variation among groups, the findings suggest that respondents generally hold positive perceptions of ICT-based resources, recognizing their role in promoting innovative learning methods, improving competencies, and supporting academic growth. It is observed from the graph that the average median value for all the statement is scale-2 i.e. Agree. Which reveals that respondents' opinion about the impact of use of ICT based resources on their academic learning is positive and helpful.

Conclusion

The study indicates that most of the law students use the library resources. It is observed from the study that the majority of the law students prefer to use the library shelf guide and seek assistance from library staff; this indicates law students follow traditional methods of information seeking such as direct searching and personal assistance. Information needs have become a pivotal part of life. In relation to library usage for fulfilling information needs. It is observed from the study that most of the law students use the library to study and to refer books. The primary information needs of undergraduate law students revolve around academic learning and to browse internet sources. Interestingly law students also use the library to refer old question papers. The study presents the Purpose of information needs most of the law students seek information for assignment writing, and to keep updated on subject trends. Notably study indicates that information is also sought for career development.

The study also indicates that the responses of students on the use of ICT tools for seeking information. Majority of the students feel confident in basic search strategies. Study reveals that less number of students reported proficiency in advanced search techniques. Study indicates that law students require training on search techniques to effective use of e-resources, significant portion of students recognize the need to enhance their ICT skills. Law students face certain problems while accessing and utilizing e-resources, Such as low internet bandwidth, lack of search skills. These problems hinder the effective use of e-resources of the library. Most of the students reported ICT competencies improve results. Finally, the authors, found that ICT based resources have a positive impact on academic learning. However, the college authority and librarians must take appropriate measures to improve the search skills among the students and enhance the utilization of library resources.

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