

REVOLUTIONARY ROLE OF ICT IN INDIAN SUPREME COURT JUDGES LIBRARY SERVICES

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Indian Judiciary has played a major role for Nation building and also contributed in mobilizing the society to deliver its best to the Nation. Today, litigations have risen in large numbers, thereby making it extremely difficult to manage the records and information manually. It has therefore become essential to improve productivity of the judicial information and library services with various Courts in India. To provide ICT based Judicial Information Services to the Judges, Advocates/Lawyers and Citizen has become the crucial need of the hour. Use of new technology may cater the justice delivery via information system more accessible, accountable, time consuming.

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1. Introduction

Judicial librarianship is very important, vital and authentic service than traditional librarianship. Judicial library services are measured and accountable on the basis of urgency and accuracy in the court for case argument. Judicial librarian has to provide the required information instantly without fail and without any excuse. Hence, Law librarian has to be very alert and smart enough to render the expertise services using his / her knowledge, Ideas and own tools.

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Prof. Iger I. Kavaas has differentiated the importance of the judicial library to other library as “the reason for law libraries being different from other types of libraries is that they serve a profession which is literally unable to exercise and execute its work without the use of book”

2. Types of Law Libraries

Generally, users of law libraries are law students, teachers, scholars, judges, legislators, government officers and public etc. Taking into consideration the users requirement in context to purpose of use, library collection must be available at instance. Typically different types of Law libraries are categorized as under,

- Academic law libraries
- Government law libraries
- Court / Judicial libraries
- Bar association libraries
- Legislative Libraries

Whereas the users may be categorized like students and teachers for Academic law libraries, civil servicemen and Government officials for Government law libraries, Judges and Lawyers for court libraries, legal practitioners for Bar Association libraries and Legislators for Legislative Libraries.

3. Types of Legal Documents

Legal document - (law) a document that states some contractual relationship or grants some right [1]

Judicial users mostly depend on the statutory reports of Law for certain decisions and judgments of cases. Being a special library, judicial libraries contains authentic and specialized reports. Such collection requires expertise skills to collect, organize and disseminate to the end user. Different types of Legal documents / literature are as follows,

- Law Books
- Law Journals
- E-journals
- Law Reports
- Committee / commission Reports
- Bare Acts
- Central and State Gazettes
- Parliamentary Debates
- Parliamentary Bills
- State Legislative Bills
- Manual of Central and State Acts

Besides, acquiring Legal documents of varied types Law librarian has to develop many in-house tools to meet the information requirements of the users such as, indexing to all Acts and gazettes, topical Indexing to Landmark cases, maintaining bibliographies on legal aspects, union catalogue of books and journals and databases of all legal literature.

4. Supreme Court Judges Library

It was established in 1937, and then known as Federal Court Library. Supreme Court Judges Library is a “Reference and Research” wing of the Apex Court in India functions as throbbing heart of the Supreme Court. It has fabulous collection of legal documents to support the needs and requirements of the Honorable Judges and the Court functionaries. It maintains collection of 15 Bench Libraries and 13 Residential Libraries of Hon’ble Judges with a separate Reference Library– cum-Reading Room.

4.1. Library opens for all the days in a year except, three national holidays and day of holi and diwali. Library staff is deputed in each court during court proceedings to provide the cited books and necessary documents to Hon’ble Judges at the time of hearing in the court. Library holds more than

2,80,000 Documents includes Books, Bound volumes of the Journals, Committee and Commission Reports, Bare acts, central and State Gazettes, Parliamentary Debates, Manual of Central and State Acts, Reference Books. It subscribes to more than 200 printed Journals and magazines, 14 English Newspaper and 8 Hindi Newspapers.

5. Commercial and Free accessible Databases

Besides printed legal documents for main library and for residential libraries Supreme Court Judges Library subscribes to e-documents and commercial databases. Development in the field of information and communication technology and its usefulness in information storage, processing and retrieval have resulted in development of products like,

- **SCC ON-LINE (CD-ROM)** Database of Supreme Court Cases since 1950
- **Manupatra** (On-Line Legal Portal, Database of Supreme Court & all High Court Cases)
- **Westlaw International** (Database of Foreign Case Laws and other materials)
- **AIR INFOTECH** (Database of Case Laws of Supreme Court and all High Courts)
- **ITR** (Database of Income Tax Cases)
- **EX-CUS** (Database of Excise and Custom Cases) Tax India online
- **Taxman's** Direct Tax Law, Company Law, Service Tax.

In addition to the Commercial Legal databases Supreme Court Judges Library's home page (www.supremecourtfindia.nic.in) has a club link to In-house free accessible databases like,

- **SUPLIS:** A Database of Supreme Court Case Laws since 1950 along with parallel citations and retrieval through famous / popular names.

- **SUPLIB:** A Database of Legal articles published in Law Journals subscribed in the library.
 - **Legislation:** A Database of Central Legislations along with delegated legislations and complete legislative history.
 - **OPAC:** An online public access catalogue (OPAC) of the Supreme Court Judges Library
 - Reportable Judgments' from 2011 onwards
 - Law commission and committee Reports
 - Joint Committee Reports
 - References Published in the Supreme Court Report
 - Newspapers Article
6. **Retrieval tools** developed by the Supreme Court Judges Library to find out information documents which is required by the Hon'ble Judges and Court fraternity are as follows,
- ✓ Citation table
 - ✓ Union catalogue of current periodicals subscribed
 - ✓ Index to Central Acts
 - ✓ Index to State Acts for each State
 - ✓ Journal Holdings

7. Library and Information Services of Supreme Court Judges Library

It is prestigious to note that library uses computers and ICT to cater authentic information to the Hon'ble Judges and also to the end users via, CD-Rom databases, e-journals, e-books etc. and also providing variety of quality services using Internet.

Services rendered as,

- ✓ Lending Services
- ✓ Legal Research and Literature Search Services

- ✓ Inter-Library Loan Services
- ✓ Current Awareness Services
- ✓ Newspaper Articles Indexing Services
- ✓ Newspaper Clippings Services
- ✓ Information Retrieval through Internet
- ✓ Selective Dissemination of Information Services
- ✓ Reference Services

8. NIC-NET Project of Computerisation

In 1991, Conference of Chief Justices took a decision to request National Informatics Center (NIC) for the project of Computerisation and inter connecting of Supreme Court and High Courts of India. Since then Nationwide Satellite based computer communicating Network is looking after the computerisation of various activities in the Supreme Court and the High Courts of India. COURTNIC (Renamed now as Case Status) and JUDIS are ultimate output of the same project.

The law Commission of India in the year 1998 felt the necessity of “Computerisation of Library and information centers in the various courts at priority level” due to the explosion of legal literature. Now, JUDIS (Judgment Information System) comprises of the Judgments of the Supreme Court of India and several High Courts. Supreme Court of India started providing free text base retrieval system of the decided cases from 1950 onwards. Various retrieval fields like Title, Judge, Time, Acts and free text.

8.1 Another important legal and single point access website developed by the NIC is “Indian Courts” (www.indiancourts.nic.in) is a bouquet of websites of Supreme Court and all 21 High Courts and their benches in India. These websites provide centric dynamic information like Judgments, cause list, Case status, etc. as

well as static Information such as, History, Rules, and Jurisdiction, etc. Supreme Court of India and all the 21 High courts with their 10 benches are fully computerized.

9. Phases of Judicial System

- Judicial or Court Libraries are fully funded by government and established to cater the services to Judges and Judicial Fraternity.
- Bar Association Libraries are managed by the funding with the respective Bar Association and serves for practitioners in the court.

10. Role of Judicial Librarianship

Although digitalisation has made the flow of information across national borders faster and easier, it has increased the equality of access. The law librarianship appropriate for the information age represents an Ideal. An Ideal judicial librarian is in harmony with the values at the heart of the legal profession and librarianship, is completely knowledgeable about everything relevant to legal information, and has all the necessary character traits, attitudes, and skills to be a superbly effective legal information specialist. [2]

11. Conclusion

Since the late twentieth century, law librarians in all parts of the world and in all areas of specialization were forced to consider the impacts of information technologies on their libraries and their profession, and to think harder about what they had in common with other information professionals. The paper has tried to cover every aspects of Library services taking in to consideration of digitization and interlinking of the library services to the legal fraternity in total.

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