



“AWARENESS AND USE OF E-RESOURCES BY THE LEGAL PROFESSIONALS, FACULTY AND STUDENTS IN DAVANAGERE DISTRICT OF KARNATAKA: A PILOT SURVEY”

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ABSTRACT

This study describes about the awareness and use of various e-resources by the legal professionals, faculty and students of law. The purpose of this study is to examine the awareness and use pattern of the e-resources by the respondents and to know the problems in accessing e-resources. A questionnaire was distributed to 115 respondents and 95 filled questionnaires were returned, an overall response rate is 82.60%. 72.63% of the respondents using internet and student respondents are occupying first position in using various legal databases with the secured mean score of 2.27 on a point rating scale.



KEYWORDS- E-resources, Legal professionals, library, Internet and Databases.

INTRODUCTION :

India has an organic law as consequence of common law system. Through judicial pronouncements and legislative action, this has been fine-tuned for Indian conditions. The Indian legal system's move towards a social justice paradigm, though undertook independently, can be seen to mirror the changes in other territories with common law system. Thousands of lawyers graduate every year from almost 900 law colleges spread across the country. The present law has to meet the requirement of the society, which is entering into the electronic age. India has the second largest legal professionals and the law institutes having more responsibility to make competent lawyers in the country. The emergence of electronic resources has rapidly revamped status of all the libraries and information centers all over the world during last decade. Now a day's Law libraries are offering several kinds of e-resources to their users. The information technology has revolutionized the way and lot of information is disseminated by governments in the form of Legislations, Regulations, orders and the quantity of legal information accessible through online and the delivery of legal information have also increased tremendously. In advent of technology and increased e-resources in law, the legal education and profession get drastic changes in terms of learning, adopting skills and in advocacy.

2. DEFINITIONS:

Library of congress defined an "electronic resource" is any work encoded and made available for access through the use of a computer. It includes electronic data available by remote access and direct access (fixed media). In other words: Remote access (electronic resources) refers to the use of electronic resources via computer networks. (AACR2, 2002 edition; glossary). Direct Access (electronic resources) refers to the use of electronic resources via carriers (e.g., discs/disks, cassettes, cartridges) designed to be inserted into a computerized device or its auxiliary equipment.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The libraries have transformed from traditional to digital and virtual system, where they have providing electronic sources and services. Such as e-books, e-journals, e-magazines, e-news papers and e-databases etc,. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has enormously increased the capabilities of library services, creating options for networking to provide access to vast stores of electronic information, for more sophisticated library housekeeping systems, and for greater bibliographic access through services such as IndCat (<http://indcat.inflibnet.ac.in/>). However, technology can also create further pressures and drains on a library's resources simultaneous for delivering a vastly advanced service. (Midda et.al, 2009)

Clink et al (2004) study reports on the use of electronic information services by staff at GCU. It is part of a wider study which reports on usage by both staff and students. It builds on previous work at Leeds Metropolitan University, and as the user population at GCU is well understood the outcomes contain useful baseline data for comparison. It reports on the views of 97 respondents out of an academic staff of about 700. The freely available Internet was the most widely used source, which some respondents viewed as a more appropriate source of vocationally orientated information than pass worded databases. Less than a third used the catalogue to find EIS, which raises questions about the future of the catalogue as a free-standing comprehensive resource. Non-use of EIS was rarely due to difficulty of access or use. Staffs were pessimistic about their student's skill levels in using EIS.

Lohar and Roopashree (2006) evaluate the use of library at the Bapuji Institute of Engineering and Technology (BIET) in Davanagere (Karnataka). A survey of 60 faculty members was conducted through a questionnaire. The analysis of the collected data covers the use of electronic resources and how the electronic resources are improving the academic carrier of the faculty and also what are the problems that are faced in using the electronic resources. Finally concludes that the main intention of the use of electronic resources has been the academic interest of the users.

Maan (2012) says the electronic information resources are gaining more and more attention of library users and becoming an integral part of every library collection. Among other characteristics of electronic information resources, full text and online access; make them able to hold a pertinent place in the library collection. They are playing a vital role in enhancing the modern research and development activities. Most of the content providers are now actively participating in this digital information resource revolution. It is important to know to what extent these electronic resources are used by the end users. The present study is an effort to know the various purposes of use of electronic information resources. The users were also asked to answer the question; whether use of electronic information resources have impacted on the performance of their academic work or not?

Legal profession in India is today far too crowded; there is hardly any division of labor or specialization. All lawyers handle cases belonging to diverse fields. Partnerships and firms are few and far between. This overcrowding in the profession has, on the one hand, led to certain evils like touting which is fairly rampant and which adversely affects the due administration of justice. On the other hand, this overcrowding, absence of partnerships and firms, lack of specialization, and an almost cut-throat competition scare the new entrants who must be prepared to face an initial starvation period for a number of years with an uncertain hope of eventually establishing themselves in the profession. This represents a painful contrast to the position in a country like the United States where young and bright law graduates can be absorbed by the law firms. Lawyers as a class by and large remain almost unconcerned with development problems of society. The image of the lawyers and the

profession in the popular mind is not far removed from what Shakespeare depicted in King Henry VI wherein Dick, the butcher, says "The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers." Very often lawyers remain associated in the popular mind with personal ambition and self-interest. In the words of von Mehren, "India to-day presents the paradox...of a society that makes extensive use of laws but lacks a legal profession that understands law as instrument of economic and social architecture."

The Indian legal profession is one of the largest in the world, with over 1.4 million enrolled advocates nationwide. The estimated total value of the Indian legal market as of 2010 was approximately USD 1.25 billion. The legal profession, evolving as it has done from colonial India, has undergone a huge transformation since its independence. The efforts of the members of the bar to achieve excellence in all spheres of their practice through stiff competition is not only apparent in their every dealing with newer challenges due to technological and other developments, but also in the recognition earned by them in a globalized world. Historically, the members of the bar have provided leadership at a national as well as international level. The current potential is much higher.

S. Thanuskodi (2010) in "Effective use of e-resource materials among practicing lawyers of Madras high court" have examined that Adequate knowledge about the information seeking behavior of users is vital for developing library collections, services and facilities to meet their information needs effectively. The purpose of this study is to identify the information channels used by the junior lawyers of Madras high court. A questionnaire was distributed to 1000 advocates of Madras high court and 710 filled in questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 71%. It was found that majority of the junior advocate respondents (40.57%) make library visit thrice a week. The junior advocate respondents occupy the fifth position in their overall satisfaction on all legal information networks and fee based e-resources. The junior advocate respondents top the position with respect to their overall problems in accessing e-resources as their secured mean score is 3.94 on a 5 point rating scale(9).

4. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- 1.To study the background profile of the study population.
- 2.To know the frequency of their library visit.
- 3.To know the computer literacy rate among Law professionals, Faculty and students.
- 4.To examine awareness and use of internet among the legal professionals and students.
- 5.To study the extent of use of various e-resources in the legal field.
- 6.To know the various problems encountered while accessing e-resources in the field of law.

5. METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a fieldwork in order to examine the availability and usage of the electronic resources in the field of Legal profession. In this context a survey of methodology is adopted in this study supplemented by some field work in the manner of personally interviewing the some Legal professionals. A structured questionnaire shall be designed to collect the basic facts required for the gathering the data collection, repeated visits shall be made to the selected professionals to make on the spot observation. Also, series of discussions shall be held with the professionals, experts and faculties to get the clear picture of the concept. Therefore this research work shall use multi methods to collect analyze and consolidate the data. In this study researcher using MS Excel and SPSS to analyze the collected data.

6.SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

This study is confined to Legal professionals of Davanagere district. This study includes professional's viz., Practicing advocates, Senior lawyers, students and Faculty members of the Law colleges and limited to few Taluks in Davanagere district.

7.INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA:

7.1 Distribution of respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	73	76.8%	76.8%	76.8%
Female	22	23.2%	23.2%	100%
Total	95	100%	100%	

Table No.1 Respondents by Gender

Table 1 explains the gender wise distribution of respondents. Total number of respondents in the study is 97. Out of this 76.8% of the respondents are to the Male, and 23.2% of the respondents are female group. So majority of the respondents are Males.

7.2 Respondents status wise distribution:

Status of the respondents	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Independent Advocates	80	84.2%	84.2%	84.2%
Faculty	5	5.3%	5.3%	89.5%
Students	10	10.5%	10.5%	100.0%
Total	95	100.0%	100.0%	

Table No.2 Status of the respondents

Here in this study the researcher mentioned different types of respondents' status according to their present profession. Data in table no.2 indicates Status wise distribution of respondents. Majority of the respondents are Independent Lawyers, out of the 97 respondent's 84.2% are Independent Lawyers, 10.5% respondents are students and 5.3% are faculty members.

7.3 Age wise distribution

Age	No. of respondents	Percentage
Below-30	15	15.78947368
31-40	30	31.57894737
41-50	39	41.05263158
51-60	7	7.368421053
61-70	4	4.210526316
Total	95	100%

Table No. 3 Age group of the respondents

Table No. 3 data indicates that age wise distribution of respondents. Out of 97 respondents 41.05% of the respondents belongs to 41 to 50 years age group, 31.57% respondents 31 to 40 in between age group, 15.78% of the respondents below 30 age group, 7.36% of the respondents belongs to 51 to 60 years age group and 4.21% of the respondents belongs to 61 to 70 years age group. And the majority of the respondents belongs to 41 to 50 years of age group.

7.4 Distribution of respondents by income:

Age	No. of respondents	Percentage
Below 10000	34	35.78947
10000-20000	33	34.73684
20000-30000	22	23.15789
30000-40000	1	1.052632
40000-50000	3	3.157895
50000-60000	1	1.052632
60000-70000	1	1.052632
Total	95	100%

Table No.4 Income group

Table No. 4 data indicates that Majority of the respondents (35.78%) are belongs to below 10,000 rupees income group, 34.73% are 10 to 20 thousand income group, 23.15% are 20 to 30 thousand income group, 3.15% are belongs to 40 to 50 thousand rupees income group. And rest of them are 30 to 40 (1.05%), 50-60(1.05%) and 60 to 70(1.05%) rupees income group.

7.5 Area of Specialization

Specialization	Status			Total
	Independent	Faculty	Student	
Civil/Criminal	47(49.50%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	47(49.50%)
Property Law	1(1.10%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	1(1.10%)
Company Law, Property Law and Intellectual Property Law	1(1.10%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	1(1.10%)
Civil/Criminal and Family	14(14.70%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	14(14.70%)
Civil/Criminal, Consumer, Property and Constitutional	1(1.10%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	1(1.10%)
Civil/Criminal, Family, Labor and Consumer	2(2.10%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	2(2.10%)
Civil/Criminal, Family and Labor	2(2.10%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	2(2.10%)
Civil/Criminal, Property and Constitutional Law	2(2.10%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	2(2.10%)
Civil/Criminal and Labor	3(3.20%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	3(3.20%)
Civil/Criminal, Family, Consumer and property	2(2.10%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	2(2.10%)
Civil and family	1(1.10%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	1(1.10%)
Civil/Criminal, Labor and consumer	1(1.10%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	1(1.10%)
Civil/Criminal, Family, Company, Property, Intellectual Property and Constitutional Law	1(1.10%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	1(1.10%)
Civil/Criminal, Property and Family law	2(2.10%)	0(0.00)	0(0.00%)	2(2.10%)
Civil/Criminal, Family, labor, Consumer, Company and Property	0(0.10%)	0(0.00%)	3(3.20%)	3(3.20%)
Civil/Criminal, Family, labor, Taxation, Company and Property	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	1(1.10%)	1(1.10%)
Civil/Criminal, Family, Consumer Taxation, Company and Property	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	1(1.10%)	1(1.10%)
Civil/criminal, family, Company and property	0(0.00%)	5(5.30%)	5(5.30%)	10(10.50%)
Total	80(84.20%)	5(5.30%)	10(10.50%)	95(100.00%)

Table No. 5 Area of specialization

Table no.5 data shows that majority of the respondents 49.50% chosen the specialized area as Civil and Criminal Law, 14.70% of the respondents are interested in civil, criminal and Family Law, 10.50% of the respondents specialized area is civil, criminal, Family, company and Property Law and 3.20% of respondents are interested in civil, criminal and Labor Law.

7.6 Frequency of Library visit:

Frequency of Library Visit	Cases					
	Valid		Time spent			
	N	Percent	½ Hour	1 Hour	More than 1 Hour	Percent
Daily	42	44.20%	19%	31%	50%	100.00%
Twice in a week	19	20.00%	31.60%	36.80%	31.60%	100.00%
Weekly	18	18.90%	38.90%	27.80%	33.30%	100.00%
Occasionally	10	10.50%	60%	30%	10%	100.00%

Table No.6 Frequency of Library visit

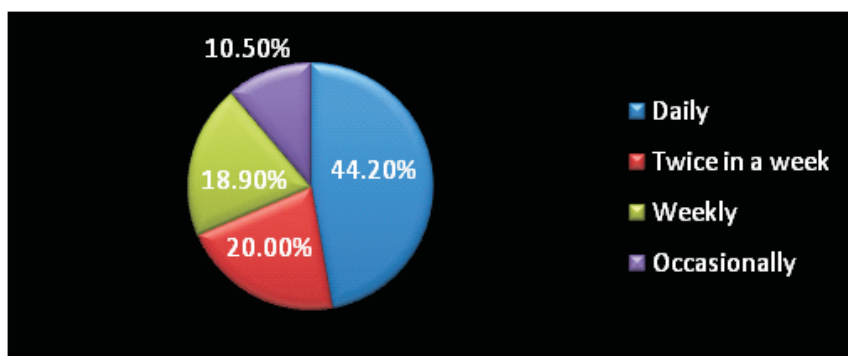


Table no. 6 explains that 42% of the respondents visited Library, in that 50% spent more than one hour, 31% spent 1hour and 19% spent half an hour in the Library. 20% of the respondents visited the Library ‘twice in a week’, in that 36.8% spent one hour, 36.6% spent more than one hour, 20% are spent half an hour. 18.9% of the respondents have been accessed Library ‘weekly once’, among them 38.9% spent half an hour, 33.3% spent more than one hour, 27.8% spent one hour in the Library. 10.5% of the respondents visited Library ‘occasionally’ among them 60% of the respondents spent half an hour, 30% spent one hour and only 10% of the respondents spent more than one hour in the Library.

7.7 Status wise computer literacy:

Status of the respondents	Yes	No	Total
Independent Lawyers	61(64.21%)	19(20.00%)	80(80.21%)
Faculty	5(5.26%)	0(0.00%)	5(5.26%)
Students	10(10.52%)	0(0.00%)	10(10.52%)
Total	76(80.00%)	19(20.00%)	95(100.00%)

Table No. 7 Computer Literacy

In the Table no. 7 data shows that out of 95 respondents, 64.21% Independent lawyers are computer literates, 10.52% of the students and 5.26% of the faculty members are computer literates. If we analyze the data status wise 100% of the students and faculty members are having computer knowledge.

7.8 Status wise knowledge of internet

Access of Internet	Status			
	Independent Lawyers	faculty	Students	Total
Yes	54(56.84%)	5(5.26%)	10(10.52%)	69(72.63%)
No	26(27.36%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	26(27.36%)
Total	80(84.21%)	5(5.26%)	10(10.52%)	95(100.00%)

Table No. 8 Internet usage

This table shows that knowledge of internet among the respondents. 72.63% of the respondents are using internet, among them 56.84% Independent lawyers, 10.52% students and 5.26% are faculty members. If we analyze status wise 100% of the faculty members and students are using internet. Hence we could conclude that majority of the respondents using internet are faculty members and students respondents.

7.9 Status wise respondents spent time using internet

Status	Time spent for using Internet			
	Less than a Hour	1-4 Hrs	5-10Hrs	Total
Independent Lawyers	35(50.70%)	17(24.60%)	2(2.90%)	54(78.30%)
Faculty	4(5.80%)	1(1.40%)	0(0.00%)	5(7.20%)
Students	5(7.20%)	5(7.20%)	0(0.00%)	10(14.50%)
Total	44(63.80%)	23(33.30%)	2(2.90%)	69(100.00%)

Table No.9 spending the time for using Internet

Table no 9 reveals that how much time spent to use internet by the respondents. Here the data shows that 63.8% of the respondents are using internet 'less than an hour', 33.3% of the respondents spent 1 to 4 hours and 2.9% of the respondents spent their time 5 to 10 hours to browse internet.

7.10 Obstacles and extent of problems to use internet:

Problems encountered	Mentioned	
	N	Percent
Lack of Internet Facility	9	23.68%
Lack of training regarding internet use	16	42.10%
Lack of knowledge about the availability of information	7	18.42%
Difficulty in finding relevant information	1	2.63%
Lack of time	1	2.63%
Lack of interest	4	10.52%
Total	38	99.98%

Table No. 10 Problems to not use of internet

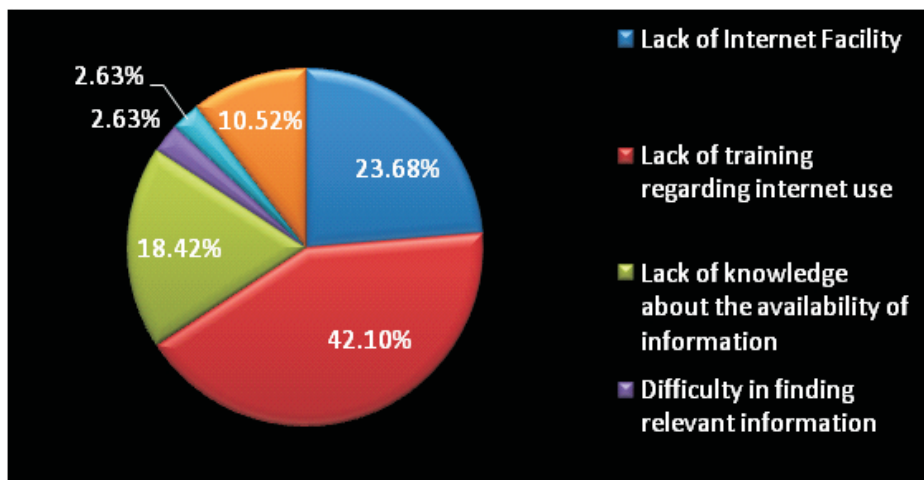
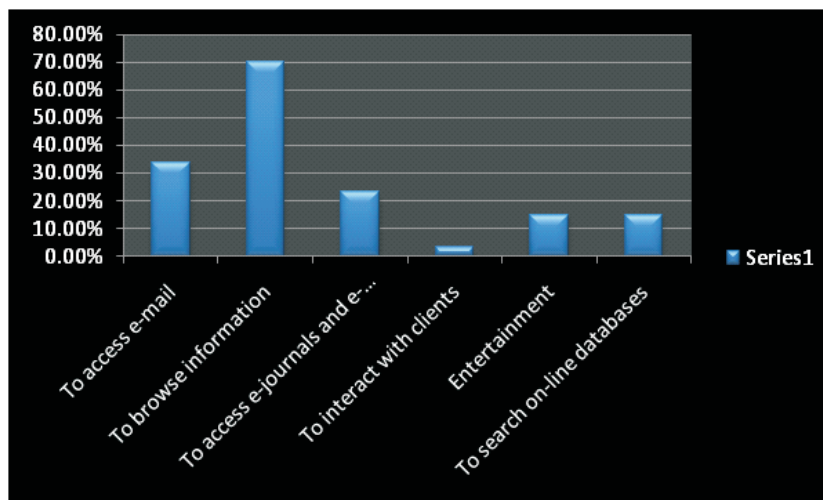


Table no. 10 explains that out of 95 respondents 38(40.10%) respondents express their feelings regarding problems while accessing internet. Majority of the respondents 42.10% mentioned that 'lack of training regarding internet usage', 23.68% suffered 'lack of internet facility', 18.42% mentioned that 'lack of knowledge about the availability of information'. 10.52% of the respondents mentioned that 'lack of interest', 2.63% of the respondents facing problem in finding relevant information and they have no time to access the internet.

7.11 Purpose of using internet:

Purpose of using internet	Status			
	Independent Lawyers	Faculty	Students	Total
To access e-mail	19(20.00%)	3(3.20%)	10(10.50%)	32(34.00%)
To browse information	52(54.70%)	5(5.30%)	10(10.50%)	67(70.50%)
To access e-journals and e-books	19(20.00%)	1(1.10%)	2(2.10%)	22(23.20%)
To interact with clients	3(3.20%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	3(3.20%)
Entertainment	7(7.40%)	1(1.10%)	6(6.30%)	14(14.80%)
To search on-line databases	6(6.30%)	3(3.20%)	5(5.30%)	14(14.80%)

Table No.11 purpose of using internet



Now a days internet is playing a major role to access various kinds of information and various kinds of

activities. Here the table 11 shows that the purpose of using internet by the respondents. 70.50% of the respondents are using the internet for browsing information. 34% of the respondents are telling that they are using internet for accessing e-mail, 23.20% are using for accessing e-journals and e-books, 14.80% of the respondents are using internet for entertainment and for searching databases and only 3% of the respondents are using internet to interact with clients. So majority of the respondents are using internet for browsing information.

7.12 Frequency of access to legal information databases:

Legal Databases	Status		
	Independent lawyers	Faculty	Students
www.judis.nic.in	1.4125	1.6	1.2
http://supremecourtfindia.nic.in	1.8625	3	2.6
http://www.airwebworld.com/	1.075	1	1
http://www.courtnc.nic.in/	1.175	2.8	1.8
http://karnatakajudiciary.kar.nic.in/	2.3375	4	4
http://ecourts.gov.in/karnataka	2.2	4	4
https://indiankanoon.org/	2.0125	2.2	2.6
https://www.kaanoon.com/	1.2	1	1
Total	1.659375	2.45	2.275

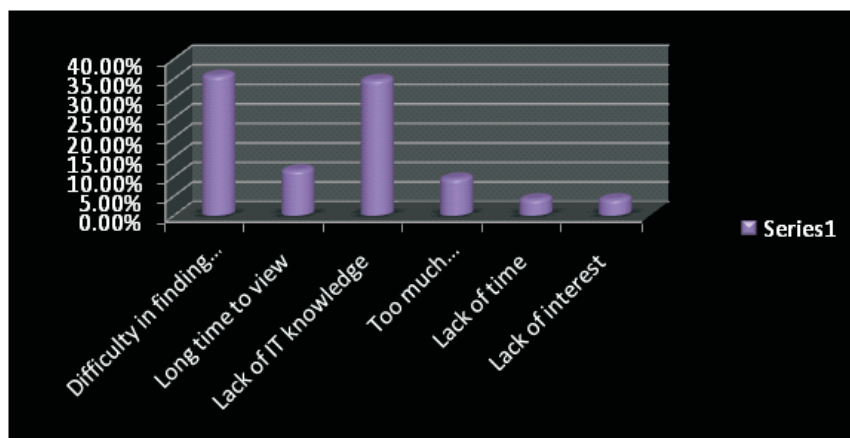
Table No.12 Level of satisfaction on major Legal databases

Data in table 9 indicates the status wise respondents’ frequency of access on various legal databases. Here the student respondents occupying the first position with respect to their access of various legal databases as their secured mean score is 2.27 on a 5 point rating scale. Faculty members are in the second position where their mean score is 2.45 and the third and the last position occupied by the Independent lawyers and their secured mean score is 1.65 on a 5 point rating scale.

7.13 Problems encountered while accessing e-resources:

Problems encountered	Status			
	Independent Lawyers	Faculty	Students	Total
Difficulty in finding relevant information	28(29.47%)	2(2.10%)	4(4.21%)	34(35.80%)
Long time to view	10(10.52%)	0(0.00%)	1(1.05%)	11(11.60%)
Lack of IT knowledge	28(29.47%)	1(1.05%)	4(4.21%)	33(34.70%)
Too much information retrieved	8(8.42%)	0(0.00%)	1(1.05%)	9(9.50%)
Lack of time	4(4.20%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	4(4.20%)
Lack of interest	2(2.10%)	2(2.10%)	0(0.00%)	4(4.20%)
Total	80(82.00%)	5(5.26%)	10(10.20%)	95(100.00%)

Table No. 13 Problems encountered while accessing e-resources



Data in table 14 explains that the problems encountered while accessing e-resources. 35.80% of the respondents are facing problem in finding the relevant information. 34.70% of the respondents are mentioned as 'lack of IT knowledge', 11.60% of the respondents telling that 'long time to view', and 9.50% of the respondents felt as 'too much information retrieved', 4.24% of respondents saying that 'lack of time' and 4.20% of the respondents shows their lack of interest about e-resources.

8. FINDINGS:

- + Most of the respondents in this study belongs to 41 to 50 years of age group.
- + The respondents chosen the specialized area as civil and criminal law, only few respondents are interested in multiple specializations.
- + Almost all the respondents are visiting the library to access information for various purposes.
- + There is a low level of knowledge in computer literacy and usage of internet among practicing advocates than the faculty members and students.
- + Most of the respondents are spending less than an hour to access internet and only few respondents are spending more than five hours.
- + Many respondents mentioned that they required the training to use internet effectively.
- + Respondents are using internet for fulfilling different needs, in that majority of the respondents access the internet for browsing the information.
- + There are several databases are available to provide the legal information, but Most of the respondents are accessing the Karnataka judiciary and e-courts databases to retrieve the information.
- + The major problem in accessing the e-resources as pointed out by the respondents is the difficulty in finding the relevant information.

9. SUGGESTIONS:

The following suggestions are recommended to improve the use of e-resources among legal professionals, faculty members and students in Davanagere district of Karnataka:

- i. Incorporate the 'Information literacy subject' in the legal education curriculum to increase the computer literacy rate.
- ii. ICT based trainings are essential for the practicing advocates to learn and develop their computer literacy.
- iii. Law College Library should be upgraded to the new technological environment, subscribe major legal databases and made provision to utilize them to their patrons.
- iv. College Library should take the initiative to provide e-information services to their patrons.
- v. Qualified staff required for BAR libraries to provide effective services to the lawyer community.
- vi. Awareness programs should be conducted for the advocates in regular intervals to know the e-journals and e-books databases in the legal field.
- vii. In Taluk BAR libraries they should provide computer terminals and networked environment to the advocates.
- viii. More number of computer terminals should be added in District BAR library and Law College library.

- ix. Independent websites are needed to the District court and the Law college library to develop the content on legal information and it should be regularly updated. For that, well qualified and experienced staff should be appointed for maintaining technical stuffs.
- x. User orientation programs should be conducted regularly.

10. CONCLUSION

The Government of India initiated many digitization projects under the concept of 'Digital India'. Now a day's most of the transactions, communications, administration, Library housekeeping activities and services are transformed into digital way. Hence today's legal practitioners need to upgrade their skills of using e-resources. This study recommends that the concerned authority and the administrators should provide technological and digital environment to the law community.

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