

Organization and Management of Law College Libraries Affiliated to Gauhati University and Dibrugarh University: An Ict-Based Study

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Abstract:

Law college libraries play a crucial role in supporting legal education, research, and professional training. With the growing dependence on digital legal information, the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become essential for effective library organization and management. This study examines the present status, organizational structure, management practices, and ICT infrastructure of law college libraries affiliated with Gauhati University and Dibrugarh University in Assam. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to librarians/library in-charges of law colleges. Out of 23 law colleges approached, 14 responded and were included in the analysis. The findings reveal that while all libraries provide basic traditional services and internet access, ICT adoption remains limited. Only a few libraries are partially automated, subscriptions to online legal databases are minimal, and digital resource availability is uneven. Major challenges include inadequate funding, lack of standardized library policy, insufficient staff training, infrastructural limitations, and poor internet connectivity. The study highlights the need for strengthening ICT infrastructure, expanding digital subscriptions, and adopting standardized library policies to enhance the effectiveness of law college libraries.

Keywords: Law college libraries, ICT tools, Library automation, Digital legal resources, online legal databases; Assam

1. Introduction

Law is regarded as the foundation of society and an essential medium of social change. Knowledge of law enhances understanding of public affairs, improves clarity of expression, and promotes awareness of social values (Nouri, Abdinezhad&Shekarbeigi, 2024). In this context, academic law libraries function as the intellectual backbone of legal institutions by supporting teaching, learning, and research activities. In modern legal education, emphasis has shifted from classroom-based instruction to independent learning supported by authoritative information resources (Niedwiecki, 2006).

The Encyclopaedia Dictionary of Library and Information Science(2010) defines law libraries as special libraries that collect and organise primary, secondary and tertiary legal information sources, including statutes, case laws, law reports, journals, reference works, and electronic research tools (Dina Y. (2015). .Collection development remains the cornerstone of law library services, encompassing primary sources (Acts, judgments, law reports), secondary sources (textbooks, journals, commentaries), and

tertiary sources (digests, encyclopaedias, indexes), (MB Weber -2025) With the rapid expansion of electronic publishing and online legal databases, ICT tools have become indispensable for library automation, digital resource access, and efficient service delivery. However, the extent of ICT adoption in law college libraries in Assam has not been adequately documented (Pal,Barman2021). This study therefore investigates the organization and management of law college libraries affiliated with Gauhati University (G.U.) and Dibrugarh University (D.U.), with particular reference to ICT tools and techniques.

2. Objectives of the Study

The study seeks to:

1. Examine the present status of law college libraries affiliated with G.U. and D.U.
2. Analyse the organizational structure and human resources of these libraries.
3. Assess management practices related to collection development, funding, and services.
4. Evaluate the availability and use of ICT infrastructure, digital resources, and automation.

3. Methodology

A descriptive survey method was adopted. A structured questionnaire was administered to librarians/library in-charges of law colleges affiliated with Gauhati University and Dibrugarh University. Out of 23 law colleges approached, 14 responded and constituted the sample for the study. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentages and are presented through objective-linked tables

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Present Status of Law College Libraries

Table 1 presents the general profile of the responding law college libraries.

Table 1: Profile of Responding Law College Libraries (n = 14)

Indicator	Observation
University affiliation	7 colleges under G.U. and 7 under D.U.
Year of establishment	Oldest: 1914: Newest: 2018
Library opening hours	All libraries open for 8 hours per day
User strength	All law college has almost equal users strength
Library website	Only a few libraries maintain functional websites

The findings reveal uniformity in service hours but wide variation in library usage and digital visibility. Limited web presence suggests inadequate outreach and online service provision.

4.2 Organizational Structure and Human Resources

Staffing patterns and professional qualifications are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Staff Strength in Law College Libraries

Staff size	Number of libraries
1 staff	1
2–3 staff	12

6 staff	1
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Table 3: Professional Qualifications of Librarians

Qualification	Percentage
MLIS	92%
NET	14.28%
M.Phil	7.14%
PhD (pursuing)	7.14%

All libraries have at least one professionally qualified librarian on a permanent basis, indicating stability at the managerial level. However, the majority operate with minimal support staff, which limits the effective delivery of ICT-based services. Despite adequate academic qualifications, the low level of automation indicates the need for focused ICT training.

4.3 Collection Development and Funding Practices (Objective 3)

4.3.1 Library Collections

Table 4: Status of Library Collections

Aspect	Key findings
Print resources	Available in all libraries
Largest collection	11,047 volumes (approx)
Smallest collection	2,414 volumes (approx)
E-books/e-journals	Available in only 7 libraries
Periodicals	Limited (mostly 2–4 magazines; 2–3 newspapers)

Although print collections are reasonably developed, access to digital resources remains inadequate, creating an imbalance between traditional and electronic information sources.

4.3.2 Library Funding

Table 5: Annual Library Budget

Budget range	Number of libraries
₹50,000	1
₹1–1.5 lakh	Majority
₹2–2.6 lakh	2
Not reported	3

Most libraries depend solely on college funds, and limited budgets restrict investment in ICT infrastructure, automation software, and digital resources.

4.4 ICT Infrastructure, Automation, and Services (Objective 4)

4.4.1 ICT Facilities

Table 6: Availability of ICT-Based Facilities

Facility	Libraries (%)
Internet/Wi-Fi	100

Photocopier	85.71
Scanner	64.28
E-journals	50
E-books	7.14
Library webpage	21.42

While basic connectivity is available across all libraries, advanced digital facilities are limited.

4.4.2 Online Legal Databases

Table 7: Subscription to Online Legal Databases

Database	Libraries (%)
Manupatra	28.57
AIR Online	28.57
SCC Online	14.28
LexisNexis / Westlaw	0

The low level of database subscriptions significantly affects access to authoritative legal information.

4.4.3 Automation and Services

Table 8 Automation Status and Library Services

Aspect	Observation
Automated libraries	5 (Koha/SOUL)
OPAC availability	14.28%
Reference service	100%
Lending service	78.57%
CAS	64.28%
SDI	35.71%

Most libraries remain non-automated, resulting in limited ICT-enabled services and reduced efficiency in information retrieval.

5. Major Findings

- Law college libraries differ widely in age, collection size, and user strength.
- All libraries maintain uniform service hours but have limited digital presence.
- Staffing is minimal in most libraries, affecting ICT implementation.
- Print collections dominate over digital resources.
- Funding is largely dependent on internal college resources.
- ICT infrastructure exists at a basic level, but automation and database access are limited.
- Traditional services dominate, while ICT-based services remain underdeveloped.

6. Suggestions:

1. Older law college libraries with outdated collections should receive especial grants for modernization, digitization, and replacement of obsolete materials.
2. Although all libraries maintain uniform service hours, efforts should be made to strengthen their dig-

ital presence to enhance accessibility beyond physical timings.

3. At least one staff member with ICT and digital library skills should be appointed or designated in each law college library.
4. Consortia-based subscriptions should be encouraged to provide cost- effective access to digital legal resources.
5. As finding is largely depleted on internal college resources, a separate and protected library budget should be earmarked by college management.
6. Law libraries should implement or upgrade to ensure efficient housekeeping operations.
7. Law college libraries should adopt a hybrid service model that integrates traditional library services with ICT-based services.

6. Conclusion

The study concludes that law college libraries affiliated with Gauhati University and Dibrugarh University largely function within a traditional framework. Although basic services and internet access are universally available, the adoption of modern ICT tools, digital resources, and automation remains inadequate. Financial constraints, limited staffing, lack of standardized library policies, and insufficient ICT training hinder modernization efforts. Strengthening ICT infrastructure, expanding access to online legal databases, investing in professional capacity building, and developing uniform library policies are essential for these libraries to meet the evolving demands of legal education and research.

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