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### Investigating the Awareness and Use of Electronic Resources and their Relationship among Legal Professionals at the High Court of Azad

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the awareness and usage of electronic resources among legal practitioners at the High Court of Azad Jammu & Kashmir. Data collected from 478 respondents highlights a strong reliance on digital tools, with many using electronic resources daily for legal research, case preparation and staying updated on recent legal developments. The majority of respondents were male (87.4%), with 68.6% falling within the 25-40 age range. A majority (65.48%) holds a Master's degree and 51.7% were enrolled in MS/M.Phil. programs. The primary purposes for using digital tools include accessing general and subject-related information, staying informed on current decisions from the Supreme Court of Pakistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir, preparing for cases and gathering evidence from similar cases. Legal practitioners also frequently use electronic resources to access national statutes, improve legal knowledge and stay updated on legislation and constitutional developments. Additionally, these resources are commonly used for writing petitions, appeals and revisions in civil, criminal and service litigations. The majority of respondents preferred electronic resources over printed materials, with many using the High Court library occasionally, while some never used it. A strong relationship was found between awareness and usage of electronic resources, although awareness of the full range of available tools remains moderate, particularly concerning advanced search techniques and specialized legal databases. The most preferred electronic resources were electronic newspapers, databases and bibliographic databases, with the HEC digital library and Summon being used more frequently than others. The findings suggest that enhancing access to and awareness of digital resources, as well as offering better training programs, could significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of legal practice in the region.

**Keywords:** Electronic Resources; Legal Professionals; High Court Of Azad Jammu & Kashmir; Digital Transformation; Legal Technology; Legal Research; Awareness; Usage; Legal Databases

### Introduction

In today's digital world, electronic resources have become a key part of legal research and practice. From online legal databases to digital case law archives, these tools help legal professionals work faster, access up-to-date information and improve the quality of their legal arguments. Despite their growing importance, it's unclear how well these resources are known and used by legal professionals in certain regions especially in developing legal systems.

The awareness and use of electronic resources among legal professionals is gaining increasing attention as the legal field continues to embrace digital transformation. Legal technology, or "legal tech," represents a burgeoning area where information and communication technologies (ICT) are integrated into legal services to enhance efficiency and access. Legal professionals are becoming increasingly reliant on digital resources, which are essential for tasks ranging from research and document management to providing legal advice online. The use of online law forums and digital platforms for legal advice and information dissemination highlights the significance of this transition. These platforms empower not only legal professionals but also non-experts by improving their access to specialized legal knowledge. Furthermore, this shift is evident in diverse contexts, such as in the strategies legal professionals employ when participating in these forums, indicating a cross-cultural

dimension to how legal information is communicated online (Diani, 2023).

Additionally, the digital transformation in the legal sector is supported by a broader trend of integrating digital technologies across various industries to improve efficiency and performance. For instance, in business contexts, digital transformation is seen as a catalyst for enhancing operational performance and creating competitive advantages through digital resource utilization and competence development (Teng et al., 2022).

The relationship between the awareness and use of electronic resources and the performance of legal professionals can be likened to findings in other sectors where digital transformation leads to improved innovation and competitive capabilities. For legal professionals, this means that an increased familiarity and engagement with digital resources can potentially enhance their legal practice, streamline processes and expand the scope of their services beyond traditional methods.

This study focuses on legal professionals at the High Court of Azad Jammu & Kashmir. It looks into how aware they are of electronic legal resources, how often they use them and what kinds they rely on most. It also examines whether there's a link between awareness and actual use. By understanding these patterns, this research aims to highlight gaps and suggest ways to support better access and training for legal professionals in using digital tools effectively.

### **Research Questions**

How much is the awareness level of electronic resources of legal practitioners practicing at the High Court of AJ&K?

What is the purpose of legal practitioners, practicing at the High Court of AJ&K by using electronic resources?

Which kind of legal information is desired by legal practitioners while searching electronic resources?

What type of electronic resources and databases are used by the legal practitioners practicing at the High Court of AJ&K?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Level of Awareness about Electronic Resources**

Hussain and Jan (2018) in Pakistan, conducted a study with aim to examine the electronic resources and services perception among library users of National Defense University (NDU) Islamabad, they explored that vast number of participating students were well aware about the different electronic services provided by NDU library i.e. NDU-Digital library, HEC databases, NDU-OPAC and email services as well.

Li (2012) found that most of participants were well aware about different techniques of searching online. Akpojotor (2016) investigated the use of electronic information resources among postgraduate students; Researcher used descriptive research method for this study. It was found that respondents were very well conversant about the worth and value of e-resources. Most of respondents have good skills about the usage of electronic information resources. Moreover, available information resources were the helpful for the students.

Kwadzo (2015) studied the usage of electronic databases among university students. It was determined that majority of respondents have good understanding of electronic database. Students have skill to explore and search their desired material across various databases. Further It was found that information related to use of databases students were obtained through classroom lecture, Library orientation seminar and information literacy program. However, it was noted that the usage of electronic

databases improved the knowledge and overall searching and browsing skills of students.

Ankrah and Atuase (2018) conducted a study in Cape Coast, through a cross-sectional research design, it was found that the level of awareness of students was very good about e-resources in the library and mostly students of the university preferred Google Scholar, web based database for searching their required information resources.

Adojoa and Dzokotoe (2017) conducted a study on academic libraries as hub of knowledge. It was found that 88% respondents use library, 65% electronic collection presents in the library. Further, it was identified that respondents were very well familiar with the value of electronic collection but they use rarely electronic information resources.

Ahmad and Muneebullah (1994) carried out a study to examine the awareness and use of electronic information resources, the study was a descriptive cross sectional survey. It was found that male students have better computer experience than female students, both male and female students prefer search engines like Google for fulfilling their information

Tlakula and Fombad (2017) conducted a study on the level of use of the electronic resources. Qualitative research method was used in this study. The interview was conducted for the collection of information from the respondents. The population of study was regular enrolled 3rd year students in school of human resources. It was found that the level of usage of electronic information resources among undergraduate students were small and had limited access to SABINET and EBSCO databases. The level of understanding and awareness of undergraduate students were not good. They feel difficulties in browsing the electronic and online databases. The management of school should have to develop computer and information literacy skill in their students and arranged seminar on electronic information resources in order to effectively utilize the information needed resources.

Anaraki and Babalhavaeji (2013) investigated the awareness and use of electronic resources in three Iranian Universities by administering a questionnaire to collect relevant data, they explored the scarcity of awareness and searching skills about the usage of electronic resources among all three universities' participants.

Mbabu et al. (2013) found that an overwhelming majority of students were well aware about the various available databases. Ugboma and Edewor (2008) explored in their study that the internet as a major source of EIRs followed by electronic data bases, electronic journals and digitized collection. However, in Nigerian universities huge percentage of electronic information resources subscribes.

Sivathaasan et al (2014) probed the usage of electronic information resources and explored that there are minor differences among ages of respondent's language and experience of use of electronic information resources. However, the average use of electronic information resources does not make difference among five faculties. Ankrah and Atuase (2018) investigated the use of electronic resources among postgraduate university students in Cape Coast, findings unveiled that majority of respondents do not used Google, Google scholar as a search engine but instead of this they give priority to search library databases for information. Further, it is found that the respondents locate the problems of poor internet speed which was a major barrier and waste lot of time of users.

### **Purpose of using Electronic Resources**

Tella et al (2018) examined the use of e-resources among academic departments. Data was collected through questionnaire by using survey method of research. It was

determined that the large number of participants use electronic information resources for research, educational assignments and course work. However, the electronic information resources provided a current, latest and growing amount of knowledgeable collection across multidimensional users in academic departments.

Another study, based on mixed method research approach carried out by Jabeen et al. (2017) with aim to explore the purpose, satisfaction level and barriers in using the various resources of digital libraries among graduate and post-graduate students of five universities of Ningbo-China. Findings of their study unveiled that majority of the respondents from all five participating universities used digital library resources to complete their course work, research articles, thesis and dissertation.

In Pakistan, Khan and Shaikh (2014) conducted a study to assess the information needs and seeking behavior of Master degree students of Social Sciences in university of the Peshawar, they explored that an overwhelming number of the participants use the diverse resources available in different electronic formats, to complete their class tasks and assignments and for the preparation of examinations.

Deans and Durrant (2016) carried out a quantitative survey to examine the “knowledge and use of online databases and the library’s OPAC by final-year business associate degree students in five selected Jamaican community colleges”. The study found that significant number of participants use internet to complete their assignments and the internet was preferred source of information among majority respondents. Furthermore, less usage of “online databases” by participants found.

Amjad et al. (2013) explored the purpose of using electronic resources among majority of the participants were to fulfill various educational tasks, for the research needs and enhancing knowledge in their field. Swift and ease of the access and the round the clock availability were the core reasons of using electronic sources among most of participants.

Mirza and Mehmood (2012) explored in their study that the core purpose of using electronic resources among most of participants were to study and completing their research projects. Li’s (2012) study found the significant number of participants used various search engines to complete their assignments and the most of participants were well aware about different techniques of searching online.

Gouseti (2017) investigated the use of various digital technologies by doctoral students through a qualitative method, It was found that majority of the participants use the online databases, Google scholar and Emailing, for the purpose of research, besides this the usage of online books, journals which were accessible through their library, the information sources available in electronic forms were preferred choice among majority participating doctoral students.

Chen-Gaffey and Getsay’s (2016) case study, found the significant use of books in electronic formats as compared to books in printed forms found whilst one important reason of using E-books their current nature. Raza and Upadhyay (2006) assessed the “use of electronic journals by the researchers of Aligarh Muslim University, India” the findings of their study revealed that most of participants use electronic journals daily and when needed, for the purpose of research, enhancing knowledge and studying.

Nisha and Ali (2012) found that majority of respondents know the worth of electronic journals and they were using for obtaining information and collection building. Further, it was also explored that respondents use these journals with two purposes one for searching a relevant materials and second for the research use. However, few of respondents use only for retaining information which help them in academic assignments.

Deng (2010) found that the use of electronic resources was higher in Australian

universities, maximum respondents considered that e-resources are useful in their learning. They used these resources for different purposes i.e. learning, research activities, up-dating the knowledge, etc. the main reasons influencing the use of these resources indicated by the respondents were cognizance and quality of the information available through the use of electronic resources.

Okiki and Asiru (2011) investigated the use of electronic information resources among post-graduate students in Nigeria through a survey approach, using a self-structure questionnaire; finding unveiled that majority of the users used electronic information resources for their research work. Also, it was noted that 55% users used electronic information resources for their academic course work assignments. Furthermore, it was investigated that large numbers of users prefer those types of electronic information resources which were high quality and holding up to date information. Moreover, it was found that most of respondents get information on browsing scholarly search engine over internet. of users were unable to collect information from internet because of their poor ICT skills.

Omotayo (2010) explored that academic journals and the other collection of books are the most famous sources of information among student for the academic and research purpose. However, in order to enhance the effective use of E-resource, the need to develop the students' ICT skills also found. Furthermore, the study indicated that, factors such as awareness and skills are the determining factors that may influence users' decision to use electronic information resources.

Rehman and Ramzy (2004) conducted a study on the awareness and use of electronic information resources among health academics departments. It is found that the main purpose for which libraries are used is; research, preparation of academic assignments, lecture preparations and to update the knowledge. Urhiewhu (2014) analyzed the availability and use of electronic information resources among undergraduate students, findings revealed that university library subscribed various Online/offline services through which the information source in electronic format made available in university library to serve their users.

Nagata, Kytomaki and Toda (2010) conducted a study to determine that students need of library use and value. It was found that the use of electronic libraries was identifying educational output are obtained according to need of library usage. It was found that the educational groups use the library for its material and research purposes.

Zhang et al. (2011) probed the use of electronic information resources among seven universities in China. It was found that various purposes for which e-resources were used are; for the research, for the teaching and enhancing information. Brophy (1993) explored the various benefits of electronic information sources that the facility of e-resources could be used by multiple users; the other advantage of the electronic resources is provision of current information in a swift and convenient manners.

Kelley and Orr (2003) investigated the use and access the electronic information resources among university students, to explore the usage, kind of information, modes and ways through which they had access and worth of that information. Findings revealed that majority of the respondents obtain information through internet and they prefer the use of electronic information resources, the students use library for their research purpose. Moreover, the distance respondents obtain information from university library.

Soni, et al. (2018) conducted a study to find the present status of access and usage among LIS professional and researchers like CD-ROM databases, online databases, online journals, OPAC etc. However study highlights the challenges, benefits and

progress perceived by research scholars while using electronic collections. It is also found that research scholars obtain information about e-resources and databases in their departments through the library website and Internet.

Ahmad and K. C. Panda (2013) conducted a study among academic staff on awareness and use of electronic information resources. Survey method of research was used in this study. Questionnaire was used as a data collection instruments from respondents. It was found that most of academic staff members were lack of skills relevant to use of library and specific information resources browsing for their need. Emwanta and Nwalo (2013) study explored that the most of the students from both participating universities visit their libraries to use the electronic information resources. However, it was noted that most of respondents not only depends on university library information resources; they were also search through internet.

Chohan, Bhatti and Naeem (2017) noted that the impact of usage, electronic information resources among students of Islamia university of Bahawalpur. The survey design of research was used in the present study. The questionnaire was used for the collection of data from the respondents. The total population of study was 300 students enrolled in university under study. Questionnaires among the respondents were distributed by using random sampling. It was found that majority of respondents ages were in the rage of 20 to 25 years. Majority of respondents were female. Most of the respondents having BS degree education and only 20 percent of total population M.Phil and PHD students. The mean grade point average of respondents was found to be 3.43 and maximum 4. Further it was found that Majority of respondents visit library after one week. While among total population 42 respondents never use library. Moreover, it was investigated that the respondents whose visit to university library their usage of electronic information resources was high as compared to other. Dhanavandan (2012) verified in his study that majority (66%) of the respondents satisfied with the usage of electronic resources and they were given more prominence to them as compare to print resources and their demanding for electronic resources in their area of interest is growing day by day. Sinh and Nhung (2012) asses that users' behaviour are library to influence the usage of e-databases and the parameter which effect the use of databases were; usage aim, preference and the mechanism through which users search, Further it was found that full-text databases were preferred more than bibliographic databases. Javed et al. (2014) conducted a study with aim to examine the satisfaction level of library services in Nishter Medical College, Multan-Pakistan. Findings of their study unveiled that resources available in various printed forms were preferred by the majority of library users followed by electronic and audio visual resources.

### **Relationship between the Awareness and Use of Electronic Resources**

Ukachi (2015) found in a survey-based study that electronic information resources were used inappropriate manners because of dearth of information literacy skills. However, a strong positive association was found between information literacy skill and the usage of electronic information resources. Zabed (2013) found that majority of the students were not well-known with the electronic resource; therefore they were failed to understand the value of these resources as research tools. The study also found that the students used electronic information resources for learning and research. Adeleke et al. (2016) assess the relationship between information literacy and use of electronic information resources among postgraduate students, the study found that large number of participants were not using e-resources and dearth of searching skills were main hurdle in using e-resources.

Ahmed et al. (2017) conducted a study through survey questionnaire approach to examine the “relationship between e-resources usage and research productivity among the university scholars in Pakistan” the study population comprised on M.Phil and PhD scholars enrolled in Arts and Humanities faculties of two universities “The Islamia University of Bahawalpur” and “Bahauddin Zakaria University Multan” the findings of their study revealed that usage of e-resources has positive impact on participants’ research work and also research productivity.

Lo et al. (2017) highlighted that contents in various digital forms have some advantages that digital contents easily available from anywhere round the clock and saving time, money, space and manpower are the other benefits of digital contents. Al-Saleh (2004) explored that due to lack of ICT skills among respondents the majority of the library users gave priority to printed source of information. Sivathaasan and Velnampy (2013) found that usage of electronic information resources has a strong and positive association with academic performance. According to Spenzi (2016) the easy accessibility, user-friendly interface and unrestricted access to electronic resources are the major benefits of web searches/information searches for the students as well as researchers.

Chisenga (2004) investigated the usage of electronic collection. It was observed that various information resources available in electronic formats are used by majority respondents in university library, the usage frequency of E-resource in university library depend upon the knowledge and skills of respondents related to information technology. Moreover, it was found that electronic information resources were valuable tools for research.

Adeyoyin et al. (2016) conducted a study to explore electronic information resources (EIR). It was noted that electronic resources have increase the grip of their subject and make their mind optimistic and active. Further it was seen that electronic information resources provide deep information. Ozoemelem (2009) analyzed that awareness of electronic information resources has been valuable for the academic development of students now a days. It was discovered if students know the use and now worth of information resources their writing ability and understanding related to research will improve, It was also identifies that search engine and many other browsing sources of various collections are more worthy in order to access electronic information. However, the awareness and usage frequency of users both are found correlated with each other. If the use of information resources increases their awareness should be up to the mark.

Dadzie (2005) probed the use of electronic resources among students and faculty, It was determined that a notable number of respondents were high users of computer for the browsing of electronic collection. Further, it was studied that respondent’s internet usage is high as compared to scholarly collection. The low usage is due to poor awareness about the scholarly information resources. Moreover university library arranged seminar on the awareness and use of electronic collection. Sinh and Nhung (2012) found that the behavior of users’ is likely to influence the usage of e-databases and the parameters which affect the use of databases are; usage aim, preference and the mechanism through which users search, Further it is found that full-text databases were preferred more than bibliographic databases.

Armstrong et al. (2001) reported that use for which EIS are employed and limited access reveal the limited array of EIS used and the ad inappropriate nature of search techniques are used among students over a wide range of subject. A small variation occurs across various disciplines of academic studies. The Majority of students frequently use social application of mobile and internet which affect their academic



efficiency. The responsibility of academic staff and LIS profession were that they taught the users of respective libraries about the positive use of internet.

Raza and Babar (2017) conducted a study on online resources among students among students of university of Punjab, the survey design approach was used in the study and the questionnaire for the collection of data was used. It was found that electronic information resources were very important and have played a key role in academic work, assignments and major use for research work by M.Phil and PhD students. Further, it was found that access to online resources provided to students from university, they can easily access the digital library resources from their home and work places. However, it was determined that university provide free of cost HEC digital library resources access to their users at any time from everywhere through university VPN services login.

Ani and Ahiauzu (2008) explored the development of electronic information resources (EIRs) in Nigeria, through a survey method using a questionnaire for the collecting data; it was discovered that the internet is a big source for the development of electronic information collection. Majority of libraries in Nigeria provided facility of internet to their users, so that users of university libraries are able to get access the electronic and online collection from any work place. However, it is seen among all the available electronic collection users depend on electronic journal and databases. The majority of respondents obtained their needed information from electronic journals and databases. The university library should have to subscribe a maximum numbers of electronic databases in order to fulfill the need of their users.

### **Research Methodology**

The aim of this study was to assess the ‘Awareness and Use of Electronic Resources by the Legal Practitioners, Practicing at the High Court of Azad Jammu & Kashmir’. To get the required information for answering the research questions, the researchers designed a research instrument. The questionnaire was distributed directly to 500 respondents among Legal Practitioners, Practicing the High Court of Azad Jammu & Kashmir by the researcher. The researcher assembled the 478 functioning responses and response rate was 95.5%. The data was discussed by researcher with the supervisor to assist in the data record and statistical analysis. SPSS statistical software was used for analyzing the gathered data.

### **Demographic Information of the Respondents**

Demographic analysis of the respondent is presented in table 1,2 & 3. It indicates that majority of the respondents were male 418 (87.4%) and 60 (12.55%) were female. Age of the respondents’ shows that the majority (68.6%) of the respondents was between the age group of 25-30-40 years and 183 (38.28%) respondents were in the age group of < 35 years. While 82 (8.6%) respondents 26-30 years and only 36 (3.8%) respondents were in the age group more than 39 years of age. The level of education the majority of the respondents 361 (65.48%) were Master program, 117 (51.7%) were enrolled in the MS/M.Phil.

### **Demographic Information of the Respondents**

**Table.1 Gender Distribution**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Male</b>	418	87.5
<b>Female</b>	60	12.5
<b>Total</b>	478	100.0

**Table.2 Age wise Distribution**

Age Groups	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 30 years	103	15.1
30-35 years	155	42.6
35-40 years	146	35.6
More than 39 years	74	4

**Table.3 Level of Education**

Education level	Frequency	Percentage
BS	14	2
Master	313	65
MS/M.Phil	117	24
PhD	7	2

**Respondents Responses*****Usage of High Court Library***

The two hundred and seventy six (28.8%) respondents reported that they use library daily, 250 (26.1%) on weekly basis, 128 (13.3%) monthly basis, 281 (29.3%) use library occasionally while 24 (2.5%) respondents reported that they do not use library.

**Table.4 Usage of High Court Library**

	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	276	28.8
Weekly	250	26.1
Monthly	128	13.3
Occasionally	281	29.3
Never used	24	2.5

### Usage Frequency of Electronic Information Resources to Seeking Information

In response to a question that how often do you use electronic information resources? Majority of the respondents 386 (40.3%) reported that they used electronic information resources to seek information daily, 242 (25.2%) reported that they use electronic information resources weekly, 123 (12.8%) use electronic information resources monthly, 188(19.6%) occasionally use of electronic information resources. However, only 20 (2.1%) never used electronic information resources to seek information.

**Table.5 Usage Frequency of Electronic Information Resources to Seeking Information**

	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	386	40.3
Weekly	242	25.2
Monthly	123	12.8
Occasionally	188	19.6
Never used	20	2.1

### Preference of Electronic Information Resources over Traditional Resources

In response to a question that do you prefer to use electronic information resources over traditional resources. The majority of the respondents 369 (38.5%) reported that they prefer sometime electronic information resources over traditional resources, 319 (33.3%) prefer often, 164 (17.1%) prefer always, 92 (9.6%) respondents prefer rarely and only 15 (1.6%) respondents never preference of electronic information resources over traditional resources.

**Table.6 Preference of Electronic Information Resources over Traditional Resources**

	Frequency	Percentage
Never	15	1.6
Rarely	92	9.6
Sometime	369	38.5
Often	319	33.3

### **Purpose of Using Electronic Information Resources**

Respondents were asked 5 statements for a purpose of using electronic information resources. All 5 statements received a mean score 4, indicating that majority of respondents were agreed that they use electronic information resources to obtain latest information (M=4.03, SD=.930), they use to electronic information resources for conducting research' (M=4.02, SD=.932), they use electronic information resources to prepare exams' (M=4.01, SD= .923), ' they use electronic information resources for keeping my knowledge up-to-date' (M=3.99, SD= .895) and 'they use electronic information resources for preparing class assignments' (M=3.90, SD= 1.078)

**Table.7 Purpose of Using Electronic Information Resources**

Rank	Statements	N	Mean	St.Div
1	For general information	959	4.03	.930
2	For subject related information	958	4.02	.932
3	To access the current decisions of the supreme court of Pakistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir	959	4.01	.923
4	To access the current decisions of the High Courts of Pakistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir.	959	3.99	.895
5	For case preparation	959	3.90	1.078
6	To access important national statutes and their amendments.	957	3.80	1.036
7	For improving legal knowledge	957	3.88	.678
8	For legislation	958	3.99	.762
9	For rules, regulations and procedures regarding information	956	3.79	.346
10	For constitutional developments at national and international level.	957	3.22	.679
11	For evidences from different similar cases	958	3.87	.523
12	For writing petitions, appeals and revision based on civil, criminal and service litigations	959	3.99	.436

Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Uncertain, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

### **Reasons for Using Electronic Information Resources**

Respondents were asked 7 statements to determine the reasons for using electronic information resources. Six statements received a mean score between 3.53 to 4.01, showing that majority of the respondents use electronic information resources very often because its save time (Mean=4.01, SD= 1.005), helpful for class assignments/presentations (Mean=3.79, SD=1.108), easily accessible (Mean=3.79, SD=1.082), availability of electronic information resources in Court library

(Mean=3.54, SD=1.193) and one window searching facility (Mean=3.53, SD=1.006). On the other hand, two statements received mean score between 3.31 to 3.50 indicating that respondents were used 'sometime' that the browsing database for scanning new information (M= 3.50, SD= 1.087) and searching capability in various electronic information resources (M=3.31, SD= 1.133).

**Table.8 Reasons for Using Electronic Information Resources**

Rank	Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Save Time	959	4.01	1.005
2	Helpful for class assignments/ presentations	959	3.79	1.108
3	Easily accessible	959	3.79	1.082
4	Availability of digital resources in university library	959	3.54	1.193
5	One window searching facility	959	3.53	1.066
6	Browsing databases for scanning new information	959	3.50	1.087
	Searching capability in various digital information resources	959	3.31	1.133

Scale: 1= Never, 2= Rarely, 3= Sometime, 4= Often, 5= Always

#### **Awareness about Digital Information Resources and Services**

Respondents were asked a set of fourteen statements regarding their awareness about electronic information resources and services. All these statements received a mean score between 2.66 to 3.41, indicating that respondents were 'moderately aware' about 'digital information resources keep latest information' (M= 3.41, SD= 1.173), 'quite a number of search engines to use while searching the information (google, yahoo, msn)' (M=3.40, SD= 1.089) and 'how to limit online search by fields (such as date, place, format)' (M=3.31, SD= 1.128).

**Table.9 Awareness about Digital Information Resources and Services**

Rank	Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I am aware that digital information resources keep latest information.	959	3.41	1.173
2	I am aware with quite a number of search engines to use while searching the information (google, yahoo, msn)	959	3.40	1.089
3	I am aware how to limit online search by fields (such as date, place, format)	959	3.31	1.128
4	I am aware of appropriate search tools to use when searching for information	959	3.30	1.125
5	I have sufficient knowledge/awareness of specific digital information resources available online	959	3.17	1.055

6	I am aware how to perform online search that could result in at least 10 valid references on the given topic	959	3.16	1.150
7	I am aware how to develop a search query that could help me find required information	959	3.05	1.156
8	I am aware that my university library is providing access to e-books and journals through HEC.	959	2.96	1.218
9	I am aware of HEC digital library	959	2.92	1.147
10	I am aware about using a Boolean search (i.e., the use of and or and not) to find relevant results.	959	2.90	1.158
11	Through HEC digital library I can freely access digital information resources (databases)	959	2.89	1.099
12	I am aware of HEC electronic books and e-journals	959	2.80	1.193
13	I am aware of digital information resources (such as Springer link, Emerald databases)	959	2.72	1.182
14	I am aware of HEC Summon (search engine)	959	2.66	1.180

Scale: 1= Not at all aware, 2= slightly aware, 3= moderately aware, 4= Very aware, 5= extremely aware

### Preferred Information Resources

#### What Kind of Electronic Information Resources do you prefer to Use?

Respondents were asked six statements about kind of electronic information resources and services they do prefer to use electronic information resources. All these statements received a mean score between 2.94 to 3.33, indicating that respondents 'sometime' prefer 'electronic newspapers (M= 3.33, SD= 1.156), electronic databases (M=3.19, SD= 1.120, bibliographic databases (M=3.12, SD= 1.073), indexing databases (M=3.06, SD=1.360) and institutional repositories (M=2.99, SD=1.361).

**Table.10 What Kind of Electronic Information Resources do you prefer to Use?**

Rank	Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Electronic newspapers	959	3.33	1.156
2	Electronic databases	959	3.19	1.120
3	Bibliographic databases	959	3.12	1.073
4	Indexing databases	959	3.06	1.160
5	Institutional repositories	959	2.99	1.361
6	Electronic Thesis/ Dissertations	959	2.94	1.307

Scale: 1= Never, 2= Rarely, 3= Sometime, 4= Often, 5= Always

### Usage Frequency of Different HEC Subscribed Databases

Respondents were given a list of twelve databases in order to determine their usage frequency of HEC subscribed databases. Nine items received a mean score between 2.51 to 3.06 indicating that respondents usage frequency of these databases were 'sometimes' e.g., HEC digital library (M=3.06, SD= 1.295), HEC Summon (M=3.01, SD=1.214) and Science Direct (M=2.94, SD=1.294). On the other hand, three items received a mean score between 2.42 to 2.49 indicating that the respondents were 'rarely' use these databases e.g., 'IEEE' (M= 2.49, SD=1.276), Willey-Blackwell Journal (M= 2.48, SD= 1.319).

**Table.11 Usage Frequency of Different HEC Subscribed Databases**

Rank	Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	HEC digital library	959	3.06	1.295
2	HEC Summon	959	3.01	1.214
3	Science Direct	959	2.94	1.294
4	JStore	959	2.93	1.287
5	Science Online	959	2.89	1.294
6	Elsevier	959	2.76	1.258
7	Springer link	959	2.63	1.199
8	MC Graw Hill Collections	959	2.58	1.317
9	World Bank e- Library	959	2.51	1.332
10	IEEE	959	2.49	1.276
11	Willey-Blackwell Journal	959	2.48	1.319
12	Emerald	959	2.42	1.264

Scale: 1= Never, 2= Rarely, 3= Sometime, 4= Often, 5= Always

### Impact of Electronic Resources

The result of table 12 shows that there is a strong relationship between awareness and use of electronic information resources.

**Table.12 Impact of Electronic Resources**

Rank	Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	E-resources are useful for my academic learning	959	3.23	1.042
2	E-resources help me in solving my job assignments	959	3.11	1.074

3	E- resources use improve my case study	959	3.07	1.012
4	E-resources are valuable source of professional information for me	959	3.04	1.035
5	E-resources provide me up-to-date information related to my profession	959	3.04	1.043

## Results and Discussion

This study aimed to assess the "Awareness and Use of Electronic Resources by Legal Practitioners Practicing at the High Court of Azad Jammu & Kashmir." The majority of respondents were male (87.4%), with 68.6% falling within the 25-40 age range. A majority (65.48%) holds a Master's degree and 51.7% were enrolled in MS/M.Phil. programs. Most were daily users of electronic information resources, with 40.3% of respondents using these resources on a daily basis. The results indicated that a large number of respondents preferred electronic information resources over printed materials, with 38.5% expressing a preference for electronic resources. This preference aligns with findings from Javed and Bhatti (2013), who noted that most respondents used general e-book collections and expressed satisfaction with digital resources.

The study also revealed that most respondents utilized electronic resources primarily for academic assignments and research work. Zhang et al. (2011) similarly found that e-resources were predominantly used for research purposes. Rehman and Ramzy (2004) supported this, emphasizing that libraries are mainly used for addressing research problems and academic tasks. Additionally, the respondents reported that electronic information resources were beneficial for accessing the latest information, conducting research, preparing legal cases and staying updated with knowledge. These findings align with Adeyoyin et al. (2016), who noted that electronic resources improve understanding of subjects and foster creativity. A majority of respondents indicated that the primary reason they used electronic resources was to save time. However, barriers such as lack of specific knowledge, financial constraints and insufficient software were noted as hindrances to fully accessing e-library collections. Most respondents were aware of electronic resources that provide up-to-date information through search engines like Google, Yahoo and MSN and they were knowledgeable about various online tools, including the HEC digital library and Boolean search techniques. This awareness is consistent with Nisha and Ali (2012), who found that users were well aware of electronic journals and used them for information retrieval and collection building. The study also highlighted that respondents used a variety of electronic information resources, such as electronic newspapers, bibliographic and indexing databases, institutional repositories and electronic dissertations. They reported using platforms like the HEC digital library, HEC Summon, Science Direct and JSTOR, though most accessed these resources on an occasional basis. This finding is similar to Akpojotor (2016), who observed that respondents were aware of the value of e-resources. A relationship between awareness and the use of electronic resources was found, supporting Omotayo (2010), who concluded that awareness and skills are key factors influencing legal practitioners' use of electronic information resources.



## Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into the awareness and usage of electronic resources among legal practitioners at the High Court of Azad Jammu & Kashmir. The findings reveal a strong reliance on digital tools for legal research, case preparation and staying informed about legal developments. Legal practitioners predominantly prefer electronic resources over traditional printed materials, with the HEC digital library and other specialized databases being the most frequently used. While respondents are generally aware of basic electronic resources, gaps exist in their awareness of advanced search techniques and specialized legal databases. The main reasons for using electronic resources include saving time, accessing up-to-date information and conducting legal research. A significant number of respondents (40.3%) use electronic resources daily and 38.5% prefer digital tools over traditional resources when seeking information. The study also highlights that the majority of respondents use electronic resources to obtain the latest information, conduct research, prepare for exams and keep knowledge up-to-date. Time-saving, ease of access and the availability of resources in the court library were also key factors driving their usage. While the use of HEC-subscribed databases like HEC digital library, HEC Summon and Science Direct is moderate, there is room for improvement in fully utilizing these resources. Respondents were moderately aware of available electronic resources, but more advanced knowledge and search techniques could significantly improve their effectiveness. Given the increasing reliance on digital tools, it is clear that legal practitioners would benefit from enhanced awareness and more comprehensive training programs. Such initiatives would help them maximize the potential of available electronic resources, improving both the efficiency and effectiveness of legal practice in the region. Addressing the existing gaps in awareness and usage can play a crucial role in ensuring that legal practitioners stay well-equipped in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

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