

**BREAKING THE STATUS QUO OF ACADEMIC
LAW LIBRARIES IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA:
AN ANALYSIS BASED ON THE VIEWPOINTS OF
LAW ACADEMICIANS, LEGAL PROFESSIONALS
AND LAW LIBRARIANS**

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Abstract

Academic law libraries has a major role in the cycle of legal education system. The concept of legal education without law library is incomplete. The main purpose of this study is to exam views of law academicians, legal and library and information science professionals on the improvement of academic law libraries in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). Qualitative approach based on an interview technique was adopted to conduct the study. Findings of the study demonstrates that there is a dire need of taking strategic based measures for the improvement of academic law libraries in KPK. The study also suggests some measures to the authorities on how to improve the current state of affairs of academic law libraries in the province

Keywords: Law libraries, Legal education, PBC, HEC, PLA, Khyber, Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Introduction and Context

Academic law libraries play a vital role in the development of legal education. They provide a sound foundation for legal education and research. Primarily law libraries support legal research and academics. They play a vital role in fostering creative and innovative legal professionals and practitioners and an aware society. Legal resource personnel equipped with sound legal knowledge protect the rights of the people and let them know about their rights and obligations. The

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functions of law libraries include supporting law faculty members and students' communities in their academic and research endures. It is the main and prime functions of law libraries to give access to legal information needed by the teaching and students' communities and staff of universities and colleges to which they are attached. The motive of the law library staff is to extend best possible services to those teachers, students and individuals using the library. Law library staff always encourages legal professionals, teachers and law students to ask for any assistance and help in order to satisfy their information needs.

In the present millennium law libraries have become specialized institutions and a model for emulation throughout the world. Law libraries always keep pace with the changes in the professional curriculum and development of legal research. The resources of law libraries are not strictly legal in nature, but materials coming from other areas of concern as political science, economics, and sociology etc. are also kept in law libraries so that Law may be informed by other disciplines too. According to Pollack (1959)¹, a legal practitioner should have at command many and various kinds of information. Such kinds of information and material would not be suspected of having anything to do with Law. A law library containing a collection of law books only would never be an efficient law library. Therefore, a good Law library has a good collection of law and others books. This would largely help to serve any special purpose in hand. Law libraries serve clients without any discrimination. They provide the best possible legal information facilities to users in time. These libraries are always considered backbone for fulfilling the information needs of its community and to the institution to which they are attached.

The emphasis of the study is on the examination of the current status of academic law libraries which are functioning in the academic institutions of KPK. The scope of this study is limited to the eighteen private sector affiliated law colleges and one constituent Law College of the University of Peshawar.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to know about the essential steps, necessary for the development and improvement of academic law libraries in the province of KPK.

Literature Review

At international level a vast amount of literature is available on various aspects of academic law libraries. However, in Pakistan there is a scarcity of literature on academic law libraries. Few studies have been conducted which mostly cover users' satisfaction with law libraries. However, with the exception of few no study has been under taken to examine the current state of affairs of academic law libraries in Pakistan and suggest possible guidelines for their improvement and development. Local literature include studies on law libraries i.e. Khan, Ahmed and Bhati, (2009)², Khan and Bhatti, (2012)³, Khan and Bhatti, (2015)⁴ and Khan and Bhatti, Khan and Jan, (2017)⁵. The study of Khan and Bhatti, Khan and Jan, (2017) has a close resemble with the current study in hand. The focus of this study was on suggesting possible guidelines for the improvement of academic law libraries in KPK. This study found that no legal institution was interested to improve and develop institutional academic law libraries in KPK.

Local literature depicts that academic law libraries have been an unexplored area in local research. However, this area is getting popularity and making place in the local literature. An MPhil level study was undertaken in 2010 which explored the information seeking patterns of law academicians in the legal academic institution of KPK based on the performance of their institutional law libraries. This findings of this study were quite discouraging because most of the teachers were not satisfied with the performance of their academic law libraries. Based on the findings of the above mentioned studies a hug gap in local literature was detected which stimulated the initiation of this study.

Some of the international studies are as under;

Murely (2009)⁶ studied the application of technologies in law libraries. She suggested that new technologies should be encouraged in academic law libraries so that their various services and facilities could be

improved. Darkey (2008)⁷ examined the impacts of budgets cuts on the functions of academic law libraries and found that it has a huge impact on the overall functions of academic libraries in Ghana. Lenz and Wohl (2008)⁸ studied organizational structures of U.S academic law libraries. They found that different academic law libraries in US have adopted various organizational structures for building library collections which were influenced by different dynamics like collection size, budget, and academic staff. Majid and Kasim (2000)⁹ surveyed the level of satisfaction of the law faculty members with their academic law libraries at International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM). Results of the survey found that teaching faculty was contented with the sources and resources of their library. A similarly kind of study with similar results was undertaken by Thanuskodi (2009)¹⁰ in India at Central Law College, Salem.

International literature is vast on various aspect of law libraries. Some of the important studies related to law libraries are Otike, (1997)¹¹, Otike, (1999)¹², Randtik and Fowler, (2016)¹³, Reeve and Welter, (2015)¹⁴, Sinder, (2015)¹⁵, Vreeland, (2000)¹⁶, Watson and Reeves, (2011)¹⁷, Prager, (2004)¹⁸, Thanuskodi (2012)¹⁹.

Research Methodology

This study is based on a survey of eighteen affiliated law colleges/ legal institutions and constituent Law College of the University of Peshawar. The population of the study includes senior law academicians working as heads of legal institutions, legal professionals working as part time teachers in the constituent and affiliated law colleges and library professionals employed in the libraries of affiliated and constituted law colleges. Interview technique was adopted for data collection. The list of the legal professionals working as part time teachers in the law colleges and legal institutions were obtained from the administrative sections of the concerned legal institutions. Since the population of legal professionals working as part time teachers were high. Therefore those legal professionals who were engaged in teaching for the last five years and using their institutional libraries were included in this study. Since the population of legal professionals engaged in part time teaching was high therefore, a manageable purposeful sample was selected as the rate

of five teachers per institution were selected for the study. The list of affiliated law colleges have been provided in the appendix.

Based on the review of relevant literature and consultations with peers in the field of law an interview guide was developed. The interview technique was deemed an appropriate tool to discover thoughts of the respondents regarding the issue in focus.

All interviews were recorded by taking notes. Using a thematic approach, contents of the interview texts were analyzed. In order to ensure anonymity the names and designations of the respondents have been kept concealed.

Analysis and interpretations of data

This study was conducted with the purpose to investigate the current scenario of academic law libraries in KPK and provide suggestions for their improvement. A semi structure interview technique was adopted with the purpose to study the prevailing situation in a realistic way. Frequency distribution of the respondents is reported in Table 1.

Table 1:

S.No	Interviewees	Frequency
1.	Legal professionals working as part time teachers in the constituent Law College	05
2.	Legal professionals working as part time teachers in the affiliated law colleges (5x18=90)	90
3.	Principal of the constituent Law College	01
4.	Library professional of the constituent law colleges	01
5.	Library staff of the affiliated Law Colleges	18
6.	Principals of the affiliated law colleges	18
	Total	133

Libraries of the law colleges and legal institutions are users' oriented?

Respondents were asked to provide an overall assessment of their law college libraries' services and facilities in meeting their educational, research and information needs effectively. Out of 133 respondents, more than 50% senior academicians and legal professionals were not satisfied with services and resources of academic law libraries in their

legal institutions. Library professionals working in these institutions reported that due to financial constraints in the recent few years and diminishing budgets has placed an impact on the sources and recourse of their libraries. Furthermore lack of attention of administration towards institutional libraries was also noted an influential factor in this regard. The whole analysis of the responses presents a gloomy picture of the current scenario of academic law college libraries in the province.

Obeying the guidelines

This question was posed to the respondents of the population. The principals of the affiliated law colleges uttered that rules of the University of Peshawar are binding upon them. However, the responses of Principal Law College, University of Peshawar, Legal professionals and library professionals was different from their narratives. They expressed that during the visits of affiliation committees all necessary arrangements are made but when affiliation is granted then no care is taken and the owners just focus on their business. All legal professionals also expressed that law colleges in the province do not obey the guidelines of the university. The apex court also issues directives to law colleges in Pakistan for the purpose of upgrading the standard of legal education. However, these directives remain dormant in these institutions

On a question whether there is any mechanism of examining library services and other facilities after the award of affiliations. Some of library and information science professional share that when the date of the affiliation committee is fixed then necessary arrangements are carried out which sometimes include borrowing books and other items in order to display them in the colleges for affiliation committees. Most of them apprehended that the absence of proper mechanism has been causing to the standards of legal education in KPK. They suggested the formation of a mechanism to ensure all facilities including library resources after granting affiliation to an institution.

The role of HEC

In response to this question all law academicians, legal professionals and library and information science professionals unanimously replied that HEC do not have a direct say in the affairs of legal institutions of KPK.

HEC only directs University of Peshawar and these directives are later on forwards to the affiliated law colleges in the form of notifications. All respondents demanded HEC role in the affairs of legal institution of the province. They regard it as a tool to compel institutions to adopt to proper standards.

Status of affiliation rules

All respondents expressed that the latest affiliation rules enacted in the University of Peshawar are of 2001 (amended). However, most of the respondents termed these rules as obsolete. Legal professionals expressed that in most of the cases these rules are misinterpreted. All library and information science professionals seconded this statement and expressed that the University of Peshawar must update these rules to keep pace with the changing trends and developments. They also mentioned that these rules are something translated differently by the affiliation seeking institutions. However, all legal professionals expressed that such short coming can be covered by making affiliation rules up to date.

The Role of Pakistan Bar Council (PBC)

All legal professionals expressed that PBC is actively contributing towards the development of legal education system in the province. PBC has also prepared legal education rules and issues guidelines for the improvement of legal education in KPK. However, all legal academicians and professionals accepted this fact that PBC's directive are often obeyed by the affiliated law colleges. All heads of legal institutions acknowledged the role of PBC in this regard and showed their commitment to comply with the directives of PBC in order to raise the standard of legal education system in KPK.

The role of Pakistan Library Association (PLA)

PLA is the main representative body of librarianship in Pakistan. Library professionals expressed that the stockholders of this association should formulation standards for the development of law libraries in KPK which will ultimately place a positive impact on the legal education system of Pakistan.

They also expressed that proper trainings should be arranged for the staff of the law libraries to enhance their professional skills. Moreover professional library staff should be appointed to properly run the affairs of law libraries.

The adoption of latest technologies in law libraries

During interview with law academicians and legal professionals it was observed that there was a scarcity of IT facilities in their institutional libraries. Most of them also complained about the unavailability of latest computers and fast internet facilities in their libraries. In-order to meet their instant academic and research needs, most of the law faculty members had developed their personal collections at homes and offices which means that their institutional law libraries were incapable of providing them their required information related to their academic and research needs.

Law academicians suggested that in order to fulfil the information needs of users latest collection should be development in law libraries. Moreover library professionals mentioned that the annual budget allocation for collection development in law library should also be increased in order to keep pace with the changing educational needs of users. It was also observed that access to HEC digital library was not available in the libraries of affiliated law college which needs to be extended to all the affiliated legal institutions. Moreover all respondents unanimously expressed that the arrangement of user education programs can influence to increase library usage in the legal institutional of the province.

The role of affiliated institutions

Law academicians, legal professionals and library and information science professionals expressed that the establishments of affiliated legal institutions are bound to develop library services and facilities as mentioned in the affiliation rules. They also expressed that it is their moral obligation to obey the orders and implement directives of the University of Peshawar.

Conclusion:

The study demonstrates that there is a dire need of revitalizing academic law libraries in KPK. The study recommends few suggestions. Though, despite the fact that these suggestions would look hypothetical to be implemented in practical terms. However, there still remains a hope that if these were implement in partial form then it would definitely place a good impact on the effectiveness of academic law libraries in KPK.

Based on the findings of the study some of the suggestions are as under;

- Peshawar University should formulate rigorous plans for all affiliated legal institutions to follow the guidelines as provided in the affiliation rules {affiliation rules 2001 (amended)}.
- In order to upgrade the level of legal education in Pakistan, all legal institutions and law colleges should ensure the compliance of the instructions of the Supreme Court.
- A mechanism should be devised in consultation with stakeholders of the affiliated legal institutions to evaluate and enhance the sources and resources of affiliated institutions in line with the university rules and regulations.
- There is need of providing share to different bodies to regularize and standardized the affairs of legal education system in KPK. Shareholder may include HEC, PBC, representatives of the affiliated institutions and PLA.
- There is a need of taking essential initiatives for the improvement of academic law libraries in KPK. These initiatives may include the establishment of proper law library setup, appointment of librarians, provision of sufficient budget, acquisition of new editions of books, subscription of latest and reputed law journals, provision of latest versions of computers and fast internet facility in law libraries, access to HEC digital library and organization of information literacy programs.

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Appendix

List of Law Colleges affiliated with the University of Peshawar

S.No.	Name of Law College/ Legal Institution	District	Program	Date of Affiliation
1	Abbott Law College	Abbottabad	LL.B.	29-04-1995
2	Abbott Law College	Mansehra	LL.B.	29-09-2003
3	Ayub Law College	Haripur	LL.B.	20-03-1999
4	Centre for Studies in Law and Democracy	Peshawar	LL.M.	06-08-2005
5	Frontier Law College	Peshawar	LL.B.	03-03-1990
6	Institute of Legal Studies	Peshawar	LL.B.	06-08-2005

7	Islamia Law College	Peshawar	LL.B.	03-03-1990
8	Jinnah Law College	Peshawar	LL.B.	26-12-1998
9	Justice Law College	Abbottabad	LL.B.	29-04-1995
10	Kohat Law College	Kohat	LL.B.	26-04-1995
11	Mardan Law College	Mardan	LL.B.	26-04-1995
12	Muslim Law College	Swat	LL.B.	26-04-1995
13	Peshawar Law College	Peshawar	LL.B.	24-09-1991
14	Quaid-e-Azam Institute of Legal Studies	Nowshera	LL.B.	20-03-1999
15	Supreme Law College	Peshawar	LL.B.	14-02-2004
16	Swabi Law College	Swabi	LL.B.	18-04-2000
17	Women Law College	Abbottabad	LL.B.	30-05-2002
18	Karakoram Law College, Gilgit Balistan	Gilgit	LL.B.	14-10-2014

Source: Academic Section, University of Peshawar