Faculty Perceptions and Attitudes Towards Institutional Repositories: A Review Study in the Context of Maharashtra Universities

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Abstract—**Institutional repositories (IRs) serve as digital platforms for preserving and disseminating the scholarly output of academic institutions. Their success, however, significantly depends on active participation by faculty members the primary contributors of academic content. This review paper examines the existing literature on faculty perceptions and attitudes towards institutional repositories, with a specific focus on universities in Maharashtra, India. The study explores levels of awareness, perceived benefits, motivational factors, and barriers that influence faculty engagement with IR systems. Evidence from various Indian universities— including those in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Gujarat—as well as international case studies from Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and Nigeria, has been critically analyzed. Findings reveal that while faculty generally recognize the visibility and preservation benefits of IRs, concerns such as copyright infringement, lack of awareness, and limited technical knowledge act as significant deterrents. The paper concludes with practical recommendations to improve faculty engagement in Maharashtra, including awareness-building initiatives, legal clarity, simplified repository platforms, and recognition-based incentives. This review contributes to a better understanding of how institutional and cultural factors shape the adoption of digital repositories and offers a roadmap for enhancing scholarly communication in Indian higher education.**

Index Terms—**Institutional repository, faculty perception, open access, scholarly communication, digital libraries, Maharashtra universities**

1. INTRODUCTION

Institutional repositories (IRs) are digital collections curated by academic institutions to preserve, manage, and disseminate their scholarly output, spanning journal articles, theses, datasets, and more (Wikipedia). Beyond archival purposes, IRs serve as a mechanism for enhancing research visibility, supporting knowledge management, and advancing open access ideals (Wikipedia, ResearchGate). Maharashtra, home to several leading Indian universities, has gradually embraced IRs yet faculty engagement remains inconsistent.

Faculty members form the backbone of content generation for IRs. Their awareness of repository infrastructure, perceived benefits, and motivational drivers fundamentally shape repository growth. While Indian IR initiatives such as the Shodhganga platform (for theses/dissertations) exemplify national-level participation, localized faculty perceptions within Maharashtra universities warrant concentrated review. This paper systematically examines existing literature both regional (India) and international to identify faculty attitudes toward IRs, levels of awareness, motivational factors, barriers, and strategies to foster positive engagement. The aim is to inform stakeholders administrators, repository managers, and policymakers on enhancing faculty participation in IRs in Maharashtra.

2. INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORIES: FUNCTIONS AND IMPORTANCE

Institutional repositories perform core digital library functions: collecting, classifying, preserving, and providing access to institutional knowledge (Wikipedia). They promote self-archiving, open access ("green" route), and improved research discoverability (Wikipedia, ResearchGate). In India, repositories like Shodhganga under INFLIBNET centralize theses and dissertations from hundreds of universities, reinforcing open credentials and research preservation (Wikipedia).

Such repositories not only consolidate intellectual output, but also democratize access and fortify the academic ecosystem. The DSpace example at MIT underscores how IRs can transform scholarly communication by enabling instant faculty submission and circumventing traditional publication lags (WIRED). These strengths underscore the need for faculty engagement, without which IRs may falter regardless of technical soundness (WIRED).

3. FACULTY AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION: EVIDENCE FROM INDIA

3.1 Awareness Levels

- University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka (comparable regional context): Only 40% faculty were aware of open access publishing; 15% had never heard of it. Awareness of their university IR was even lower (44%), whereas 47% were unaware (srels.org, iScholar).
- Annamalai University, Tamil Nadu: A high awareness rate 93.75% faculty were aware of IR and open access; only a small fraction (3.75% no idea; 2.5% no opinion) (accesson.kr, repository.kisti.re.kr). Awareness mainly emerged from workshops/seminars (32.5%) and library professionals (18.75%) (accesson.kr, koreascience.or.kr).
- University of Calcutta: Faculty awareness correlated strongly with usage and willingness to contribute; confusion around copyright (dual copyright) affected perceptions (ResearchGate).
- Minority Universities in India: Awareness high but submissions low. Professional visibility was cited as a major benefit; however, concerns included copyright infringement, technical complexity, and fear of plagiarism (ResearchGate).
- ICFAI Business School, Ahmedabad: Faculty displayed positive attitudes toward IR and knowledge-sharing. A pilot IR using DSpace improved institutional visibility; challenges included infrastructure, manpower, and awareness generation (ResearchGate).

3.2 Perception and Motivation

- West Bengal Universities: Among five universities surveyed, over half of faculty were aware, though nearly two-thirds did not want to contribute pre-published articles; reluctance dropped by a fifth for post-published content (collegelibraries.in).
- Annamalai University: Faculty motivations included increased visibility, preservation of scholarly materials, responding to administrative interest, and participating in scholarly communication (accesson.kr, koreascience.or.kr). Strong majority felt IRs facilitated rapid dissemination (88.75%), good indexing (94.38%), increased public opinion about the university (93.13%), protection from plagiarism (83.13%), and association with quality research (86.88%) (koreascience.or.kr).
- Peradeniya, Sri Lanka: Willingness to contribute: 55%; main motivator was support of open access; key barrier: fear of plagiarism (srels.org, iScholar).
- West Bengal: As above, willingness varied by article status (pre vs post-publication) (collegelibraries.in).
- ICFAI Business School: Positive attitude framed by desire to preserve and enhance visibility, with open-source DSpace facilitating implementation (ResearchGate).

3.3 Barriers and Concerns

Across contexts India, Nigeria, Malaysia common deterrents included:

- Copyright concerns and plagiarism fears (srels.org, ResearchGate, collegelibraries.in, jupidi.um.edu.my).
- Lack of awareness or familiarity (srels.org, Emerald, ResearchGate, collegelibraries.in).
- Technical and infrastructure challenges: at ICFAI, timely metadata, manpower allocation were issues (ResearchGate).
- Cultural inertia and publisher policies: Depositing work pre-print was often resisted; traditional publishing norms prevailed (collegelibraries.in, ResearchGate, jupidi.um.edu.my).

4. INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

- Malaysia (University of Malaya): Across 131 academics, science faculties were most receptive, especially regarding depositing theses, post-prints, and conference papers. Open access values and altruism were strong motivators; deterrents

included copyright, plagiarism, pre-print culture, publisher policies, and trust issues. Institutional mandates were generally accepted (jupidi.um.edu.my).

- Nigeria: Majority of lecturers unfamiliar or minimally knowledgeable about IR aims and objectives. Recommendation: extensive awareness campaigns and copyright guidance to shift negative attitudes (Emerald).

- Emerald Insight study (medium-sized university): Faculty scholarly productivity (volume of output) positively correlated with their IR perception and willingness to contribute, while seniority negatively impacted positive perceptions (Emerald).

These global comparisons reinforce that motivations visibility, altruism, dissemination remain universal, while barriers awareness gaps, copyright fears, tradition persist across geographies.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR MAHARASHTRA UNIVERSITIES

Drawing insights from Indian and international literature including studies from Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala, Sri Lanka, and business institutes several implications emerge for Maharashtra's academic institutions:

1. Awareness campaigns are essential: Workshops, seminars, and librarian-led outreach significantly boost awareness, as seen in Annamalai University (accesson.kr, koreascience.or.kr), University of Peradeniya (srels.org), and ICFAI pilot (ResearchGate).

2. Address legal and plagiarism concerns: Fear of plagiarism and copyright infringement are recurring barriers (srels.org, ResearchGate, jupidi.um.edu.my). Clear policy frameworks and guidelines are necessary.

3. Highlight benefits: Emphasize exposure, preservation, prestige, indexing, and dissemination as strongly recognized by faculty across cases (accesson.kr, koreascience.or.kr, collegelibraries.in).

4. Tailor outreach by faculty rank: Senior academics may have lower engagement levels (Emerald); tailored incentives or recognition may help.

5. Incentivize contributions through mandates: Malaysian faculties showed little resistance to institutional or funder mandates (jupidi.um.edu.my).

6. Technical ease of deposit: Using open-source platforms like DSpace helps, but training, metadata support, and user-friendly interfaces are vital.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

To bolster faculty engagement with institutional repositories in Maharashtra, consider the following evidence-based strategies:

1. Awareness and Capacity Building
o Conduct regular faculty workshops, seminars, and orientations focused on IR objectives, processes, and benefits. Use success stories from Indian contexts (Annamalai, ICFAI) to resonate locally.
o Engage librarians in proactive outreach roles, serving as points of contact for IR-related queries.

2. Policy and Legal Clarity
o Draft clear repository policies regarding copyright, self-archiving permissions, licensing (e.g. Creative Commons), and plagiarism safeguards.
o Provide guidelines on publisher copyright policies, dual copyright, and permissions to deposit work.

3. Incentives and Recognition
o Establish formal recognition rewards e.g., annual IR contributor awards, inclusion in performance appraisals.
o Consider mandates or require IR deposits in compliance with institutional or funding body guidelines, similar to Malaysia's acceptance examples.

4. Technical Infrastructure and Support
o Use established open platforms like DSpace for ease of deployment.
o Ensure that repository systems minimize barriers simple upload processes, metadata auto-fill, help documentation, and localization.
o Provide metadata support and training for faculty and library staff to streamline deposit.

5. Targeted Engagement by Faculty Profiles
o Customize messaging and incentives for senior faculty, emphasizing legacy, visibility, and leadership roles.

6. Monitoring and Feedback

o   Track submission rates, download metrics, and citation impact to demonstrate IR value.

o   Publicize repository usage metrics to show institutional effectiveness.

7. CONCLUSION

This review highlights that faculty perceptions and attitudes toward institutional repositories critically influence IR success in academic institutions. Across regional studies, including several Indian universities, common motivators enhanced visibility, preservation, open access ethos stand balanced by persistent barriers, notably awareness deficits, copyright anxiety, and entrenched traditional practices.

For Maharashtra universities, adopting a comprehensive strategy a blend of awareness campaigns, legal clarity, technical facilitation, motivational incentives, and policy frameworks is imperative. Institutional repositories possess the potential to elevate scholarly communication, safeguard academic legacies, and democratize knowledge access; yet without faculty adoption, repositories cannot realize this promise.

Future research should involve empirical surveys within Maharashtra universities to ascertain localized faculty perceptions and test the efficacy of interventions suggested. As India continues advancing its open access infrastructure (e.g., Shodhganga), integrating localized IR efforts with national platforms can ensure broader uptake and impact.

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