
Institutional Repository Practices in University Libraries: A Librarian's Perspective

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Abstract

Institutional Repositories (IRs) have become integral to academic libraries for the organization, preservation, and dissemination of scholarly output. The present study examines institutional repository practices in selected university libraries of Karnataka from a librarian's perspective. A survey method was adopted, and data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to librarians. The findings indicate that repositories are developed using open-source software such as DSpace and EPrints and contain core scholarly materials, including theses, dissertations, journal articles, and conference proceedings. Content collection practices are largely mediated by library professionals, as formal submission mandates are not widely implemented. The study also identifies challenges related to technical support, copyright issues, limited funding, and the availability of skilled personnel. The findings suggest the need for strengthened institutional policies, improved technical infrastructure, and systematic content submission practices to enhance the effective management of Institutional Repositories.

Keywords

Institutional Repositories; Academic Libraries; DSpace; EPrints; University Libraries

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1. Introduction

Institutional Repositories (IRs) play a significant role in academic libraries by facilitating the organisation, preservation, and dissemination of scholarly output. They provide a centralized platform for storing various forms of intellectual contributions, including theses, dissertations, journal articles, and conference proceedings. In the context of increasing emphasis on open access and digital scholarship, IRs have emerged as essential tools for enhancing research visibility and accessibility. University libraries are responsible for developing and managing Institutional Repositories, ensuring the effective organisation and accessibility of digital resources. The success of IRs depends on factors such as software selection, policy framework, content development, and user participation. Despite the growing importance of IRs, challenges related to technical infrastructure, funding, and policy implementation continue to affect their effective utilisation.

The present study focuses on Institutional Repository practices in selected university libraries in Karnataka from a librarian's perspective, with particular emphasis on development, materials management, and challenges.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Software Used for Developing Institutional Repositories

The selection of software is a fundamental aspect in the development of Institutional Repositories (IRs), as it determines functionality, accessibility, and long-term preservation of digital content. Open-source software platforms such as DSpace and EPrints are widely used in academic institutions due to their flexibility and cost-effectiveness. DSpace supports digital preservation, interoperability, and management of diverse content types, making it one of the most widely adopted repository systems (Smith et al., 2003). Similarly, EPrints provides strong support for self-archiving and easy customization, making it suitable for institutional use (Gutteridge, 2002). Several studies have confirmed the dominance of open-source software in repository development. Singh (2025) reported that DSpace is the most commonly used software among institutional repositories in India. The choice of software often depends on institutional requirements, technical support, and customization capabilities, which aligns with the findings of the present study where both DSpace and EPrints were equally adopted.

2.2 Purposes of Institutional Repositories

Institutional Repositories (IRs) have emerged as a vital component of academic libraries, serving multiple purposes related to scholarly communication, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge. The primary purpose of IRs is to collect, organize, preserve, and provide access to the intellectual output of an institution (Crow, 2002). According to Pinfield et al. (2016), institutional repositories increase the global visibility of research by making it freely accessible online. This improved visibility leads to higher citation rates and greater academic recognition for institutions and researchers. Genoni (2004) emphasized that repositories function as long-term digital preservation systems that safeguard valuable academic content. This ensures that research outputs remain accessible for future use, even as technologies evolve.

Chandrupa et al. (2024) emphasized that repositories contribute to the preservation and dissemination of knowledge, supporting academic and research activities. Singh (2025) reported that repositories contribute to improving the international visibility of universities by showcasing their research outputs on global platforms. This strengthens the academic reputation of institutions.

2.3 Types of Materials Available in Institutional Repositories

The diversity of content available in IRs reflects the intellectual output of faculty members, research scholars, and students across disciplines. Early literature classified IR content into three broad categories: published research materials, unpublished research materials, and supporting research materials. Published materials include journal articles, book chapters, and conference papers, while unpublished materials consist of theses, dissertations, working papers, and technical reports. Supporting materials include datasets, models, and supplementary research outputs (Velmurugan, 2010).

Anyaoku et al. (2019) investigated digital preservation practices in university repositories and observed that repositories preserve multimedia resources, scholarly publications, institutional documents, and digital academic materials.

Vasanth et al. (2024) observed that modern institutional repositories include research articles, theses, dissertations, conference papers, datasets, multimedia resources, and other digital scholarly assets created by faculty members, researchers, and students.

2.4 Methods of Materials Collection for Institutional Repositories

Effective content collection is essential for the growth and sustainability of Institutional Repositories. Genoni (2004) emphasized that librarians must actively engage in content acquisition through systematic collection strategies. These include direct submission, faculty engagement, and harvesting from external databases. Kim (2011) examined the motivations influencing faculty participation in self-archiving within institutional repositories. The study found that increased visibility of research, wider dissemination of scholarly work, and long-term preservation were the major factors encouraging faculty members to deposit their research outputs in repositories.

Osman et al. (2023) explored repository content recruitment strategies in Malaysian higher education institutions and found that mediated deposit, self-archiving, promotion activities, and institutional performance indicators were effectively used to collect scholarly materials for repositories. Lappalainen and Narayanan (2023) reported that publication metadata and full-text documents were collected from databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Dimensions, and Unpaywall. The study found that metadata harvesting and automated ingest systems were increasingly adopted for repository population and scholarly content acquisition.

2.5 Challenges Faced in Building Institutional Repositories

Institutional Repositories face several technical, organizational, and policy-related challenges. Christian (2009) investigated the challenges in developing open access institutional repositories in Nigerian academic and research institutions. The study identified inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, lack of institutional policy, limited technical expertise, and low awareness as major barriers to repository development. Kim (2011) identified lack of motivation, copyright concerns, and limited awareness as barriers to repository contribution.

Pinfield et al. (2016) also emphasized that sustainability issues, including policy gaps and resource limitations, affect repository development. These challenges are reflected in the present study, where technical support and copyright issues were common across all universities, along with challenges

related to policies, funding, and manpower Ezema and Eze (2024) examined the status and challenges of institutional repositories in university libraries in South-East Nigeria. The study reported that inadequate ICT infrastructure, shortage of skilled manpower, insufficient funding, and weak institutional support affected repository development and sustainability.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the software used for developing institutional repositories.
2. To study the purposes of building institutional repositories.
3. To analyse the types of materials available in institutional repositories.
4. To identify the methods of materials collection for institutional repositories.
5. To analyse the challenges faced when building institutional repositories.

4. Methodology

The present study adopted a descriptive survey method to examine Institutional Repository practices in university libraries from a librarian perspective. The study focused on six universities in Karnataka University of Mysore, Bangalore University, Tumkur University, Gulbarga University, Kuvempu University, and Mangalore University which have established and are actively using Institutional Repositories.

4.1 Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was developed to collect data from librarians. The questionnaires were distributed directly to the librarians of the selected universities. The respondents provided information based on their experience in managing Institutional Repositories. The collected data were organized, tabulated, and analysed using descriptive statistical techniques, mainly percentage analysis. The results were presented in tabular form and interpreted systematically.

5. Scope of the Study

The study is limited to Institutional Repository practices in selected university libraries of Karnataka that have actively implemented IRs. It focuses

specifically on the perspectives of librarians involved in repository development and management. The study covers aspects such as software used, types of materials available, materials collection methods, and challenges.

6. Analysis and Interpretation

6.1 Use of Software in Selected Universities

The selection of appropriate software plays a crucial role in the development and management of Institutional Repositories. The platforms adopted by the selected universities reflected their approaches to organizing, preserving, and providing access to scholarly content.

Table 6.1: Use of Software in Selected Universities

Name of the University	Software Used
Bangalore University	EPrints
Gulbarga University	DSpace
Kuvempu University	EPrints
Mangalore University	DSpace
Tumkur University	DSpace
University of Mysore	EPrints

Table 6.1 indicates that Bangalore University, Kuvempu University, and the University of Mysore adopted EPrints for developing their Institutional Repositories, whereas Gulbarga University, Mangalore University, and Tumkur University implemented DSpace. Both software platforms were used equally among the selected universities, suggesting that the choice depended on the universities' requirements, technical support, flexibility in customisation, and the ability to manage and preserve digital resources effectively.

6.2 Purpose of Building an IR.

The implementation of Institutional Repositories is driven by several academic and administrative objectives. The identified purposes reflected the role of repositories in preserving scholarly outputs, enhancing access, and supporting institutional visibility and collaboration.

Table 6.2: Purpose of building an IR

Purposes	Bangalore University	Gulbarga University	Kuvempu University	Mangalore University	Tumkur University	University of Mysore
The university's mandates	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
To preservation university's intellectual outputs.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To provide materials free and unrestricted access to the university's members.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To increase the university' global visibility.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To share knowledge and foster collaboration across the university.	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Reduce duplication in multiple works.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note. ✓ indicates the factor considered by the respective university .
 Table 6.2 indicates that Gulbarga University, Kuvempu University, Mangalore University, Tumkur University, and the University of Mysore considered the university's mandates as a purpose for implementing Institutional Repositories, whereas Bangalore University did not include this aspect. All the selected universities considered preservation of the university's intellectual outputs, provision of free and unrestricted access to university members, enhancement of the university's global visibility, and reduction of duplication in multiple works as key purposes. The purpose of sharing knowledge and fostering collaboration across the university was considered by Bangalore University, Gulbarga University, Kuvempu University, Mangalore University, and the University of Mysore, while Tumkur University did not indicate this factor. These purposes were considered to ensure preservation of scholarly outputs, provide wider and unrestricted access to academic resources, improve the global presence of the university, encourage knowledge sharing and collaboration, and minimize duplication in research work. The overall pattern reflected that Institutional Repositories were implemented to support effective scholarly communication, enhance research visibility, and promote efficient utilization of academic resources.

6.3 Materials Collection for Uploading to the IR.

The collection of materials is a crucial step in the effective functioning of Institutional Repositories. The methods adopted by universities for gathering scholarly content reflect their strategies to ensure comprehensive and continuous repository development.

Table 6.3: Materials collection for uploading to the IR

Collection of Materials	Bangalore University	Gulbarga University	Kuvempu University	Mangalore University	Tumkur University	University of Mysore
Mandate for submission of materials.	X	X	X	X	X	X
Regular follow-ups and reminders through email.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Collecting materials from existing platforms (Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, ResearchGate, etc.)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Direct contact with the faculty members and research scholars	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: ✓ indicates the method followed for materials collection

Table 6.3 indicates that all the selected universities in Karnataka adopted various methods for collecting materials for their Institutional Repositories, including regular follow-ups and reminders through e-mail, collection of materials from existing platforms such as Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, and ResearchGate, and direct contact with faculty members and research scholars. However, none of the selected universities followed a mandate for submission of materials to the Institutional Repository. The adoption of follow-ups and reminders facilitated timely submission of materials, while the use of existing platforms enabled efficient identification of research outputs. Direct interaction with faculty members and research scholars further supported comprehensive collection of materials. The absence of a formal mandate indicated that the

universities relied on voluntary and mediated approaches rather than compulsory submission practices. Overall, the findings reflected a flexible and supportive approach towards materials collection in Institutional Repositories.

6.4 Types of materials available in the IR.

Institutional Repositories serve as digital platforms for the organization, preservation, and dissemination of scholarly and academic intellectual output of universities. The types of materials available indicate the scope, diversity, and content management practices adopted by the selected universities in Karnataka.

Table 6.4: Types of materials available in the IR.

Materials Available	Bangalore University	Gulbarga University	Kuvempu University	Mangalore University	Tumkur University	University of Mysore
Theses and Dissertations	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Conference proceedings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Journal articles	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Books and book chapters	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Teaching & Learning materials (Lecture notes, Tutorials, Manuals, Tables etc.)	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓
Research data and Datasets	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓
Newsletters, Bulletins, Annual reports	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Question papers	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X
Syllabi	✓	✓	X	X	X	X
Patents	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓
Project works	✓	X	X	✓	X	X
Multimedia (Video, audio, image, recordings, etc.)	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X

Note: ✓ indicates the availability of the material in the Institutional Repository Tumkur University. Research data and datasets were available in Gulbarga University, Kuvempu

The table 6.4 indicated that conference proceedings, journal articles, and books and book chapters were available in the Institutional Repositories of all the selected universities in Karnataka. Theses and dissertations were available in Bangalore University, Kuvempu University, Mangalore University, and Tumkur University, whereas Gulbarga University and the University of Mysore did not indicate this material. Teaching and learning materials were available at Bangalore University, Gulbarga University, Kuvempu University, and the University of Mysore, but not at Mangalore University or

University, and the University of Mysore, whereas Bangalore University, Mangalore University, and Tumkur University did not indicate this material.

Newsletters, bulletins, and annual reports were available in Bangalore University, Gulbarga University, Kuvempu University, Tumkur University, and the University of Mysore, while Mangalore University did not include these materials. Question papers were available in Bangalore University,

Gulbarga University, Kuvempu University, and Tumkur University, whereas Mangalore University and the University of Mysore did not indicate this material. Syllabi were available only in Bangalore University and Gulbarga University.

Patents were available in Bangalore University, Kuvempu University, Tumkur University, and the University of Mysore, while Gulbarga University and Mangalore University did not indicate this material. Project works were available in Bangalore University and Mangalore University only. Multimedia materials were available in Bangalore University, Gulbarga University, Kuvempu University, and Tumkur University, whereas Mangalore University and the University of Mysore did not include this type of content.

The availability of core academic materials such as journal articles, conference proceedings, and books and book chapters across all the selected universities indicated a strong emphasis on the preservation and

dissemination of scholarly outputs. These materials were found to be the most commonly available in the Institutional Repositories. At the same time, variations in the inclusion of materials such as datasets, multimedia, patents, and project works reflected differences in content coverage and institutional priorities. Overall, the findings suggested that scholarly and academic materials were commonly available and consistently maintained, the diversity of repository content varied among the selected universities in Karnataka.

6.5 Challenges Encountered When Building an IR.

The development of Institutional Repositories involves several technical, administrative, and organizational challenges. The difficulties experienced by the selected universities reflect the constraints faced during the implementation and management of repository systems.

Table 6.5: Challenges encountered when building an IR.

Challenges	Bangalore University	Gulbarga University	Kuvempu University	Mangalore University	Tumkur University	University of Mysore
Lack of fund	X	X	X	✓	X	X
Lack of policies	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓
Lack of technical support	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Copyright issues	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lack of interest from the contributors.	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Lack of skilled manpower	✓	X	✓	X	X	X

Note: ✓ indicates the challenge encountered by the respective university.

The analysis indicated that lack of funds was reported only by Mangalore University, while the other universities did not indicate this constraint. Lack of policies was identified as a challenge by Bangalore University, Mangalore University, Tumkur University, and the University of Mysore, whereas Gulbarga University and Kuvempu University did not report this issue. Lack of technical support and consideration of copyright issues were common challenges faced by all the selected universities in Karnataka. Lack of interest from contributors was observed in Bangalore University, Gulbarga University, Kuvempu University, and Mangalore University, while Tumkur University and the University of Mysore did not indicate this issue. Lack of skilled manpower was reported by Bangalore University and Kuvempu University, whereas the

remaining universities did not consider this as a challenge.

The presence of technical and copyright-related challenges across all universities highlighted the complexity involved in managing digital repositories. Policy-related and financial constraints reflected institutional limitations in establishing structured frameworks, while issues such as lack of interest and skilled manpower indicated challenges in human resource engagement. Overall, the findings demonstrated that both technical and organisational factors influenced the development of Institutional Repositories among the selected universities.

7. Findings

- Institutional Repositories in the selected universities were developed using DSpace and EPrints, with equal adoption of both software.
- Software selection was based on ease of installation, low cost, scalability, and long-term digital preservation.
- Institutional Repositories were used for preservation of intellectual output, unrestricted access, and enhancing research visibility.
- Theses, dissertations, journal articles, and conference proceedings were available in all repositories, while research data, multimedia, and patents were not uniformly available.
- Content collection was carried out through follow-up communication, direct contact with faculty, and external sources, without mandatory submission policies.
- Technical issues, copyright concerns, lack of funding, and shortage of skilled manpower were identified as the main challenges.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Institutional Repositories in the selected universities are developed using open-source platforms and support the preservation and access of core scholarly materials. However, the absence of mandatory submission practices affects systematic content growth. In addition, technical issues, limited funding, and shortage of skilled manpower restrict effective management and utilization. Strengthening institutional policies and infrastructure is essential for improving repository performance.

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