

Utilization of Institutional Repositories among Users in Selected Universities in Karnataka: An Empirical Study

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ABSTRACT

The present study examines the utilization of Institutional Repositories among users in selected universities in Karnataka. The study is based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire from teaching faculty and research scholars. The findings revealed that a large proportion of respondents (87.16%) were aware of Institutional Repositories, and a majority (75.31%) actively used them for academic and research purposes. Institutional Repositories were primarily utilized for accessing research-related materials and supporting scholarly activities.

The study further indicated that users perceived several benefits, including enhanced accessibility and visibility of scholarly work, increased citation impact, and long-term preservation of institutional outputs. However, respondents also reported challenges such as technical issues, poor browsing ability, limited access to repository resources, and lack of institutional support, which affected effective utilization.

Overall, the study highlights that while Institutional Repositories are widely recognized and used among teaching faculty and research scholars, improvements in system usability, accessibility, and institutional support are essential to enhance their effective utilization and maximize their contribution to scholarly communication and research dissemination.

Keywords: Institutional Repositories; Utilization; User Awareness; University Libraries; Scholarly Communication; Academic Users.

1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of institutional repositories is closely associated with the transformation of scholarly communication in the digital age. The rapid advancement of information and communication technologies, along with the increasing demand for open access to research outputs, has led universities to adopt digital platforms for managing scholarly content. According to Lynch (2003) an institutional repository is a set of services that supports

the management and dissemination of digital materials created by academic communities. Similarly, Crow (2002) emphasized that IRs enhance institutional visibility and contribute to the long-term preservation of intellectual output.

Over time, institutional repositories have evolved from simple archival systems into dynamic platforms that facilitate knowledge sharing, collaboration, and academic communication. Suber (2012) highlighted that open access repositories reduce barriers to information access and improve the reach of scholarly work. In university environments, IRs provide access to research articles, theses, conference proceedings, and other academic materials that support teaching and research activities.

Despite their widespread adoption, the effectiveness of institutional repositories largely depends on user engagement. Factors such as awareness, accessibility, usability, and institutional support influence how users interact with these systems. While institutional repositories are available in many universities, differences exist in the extent to which they are utilized. Therefore, it becomes essential to examine user perspectives to understand their role in academic environments.

The present study investigates the utilization of institutional repositories among users in selected universities of Karnataka, focusing on awareness, usage patterns, perceived benefits, and challenges.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Awareness of Institutional Repositories among Users

Awareness has been consistently identified as a key factor influencing the utilization of Institutional Repositories. (Sawant, 2012a) studied users' perspectives toward institutional repositories in India and reported that (85.94%) of respondents were aware of institutional repositories, whereas (14.05%) were not aware of them. The study indicated a high level of awareness among users regarding institutional repository services.

Dutta and Paul (2014) examined awareness of institutional repository-related issues among faculty members at the University of Calcutta and found that (51%) of faculty members were aware of institutional repositories, while the remaining respondents were not aware of repository-related services and activities.

Yang and Li (2015) investigated faculty awareness toward institutional repositories at Texas A&M University and reported that only (27%) of faculty members were aware of the institutional repository, indicating a comparatively lower level of awareness among respondents.

Downing-Turner and Sauer (2022) studied faculty awareness of institutional repositories at a master's-granting university and revealed that (68%) of faculty respondents were aware of the institutional repository, while the remaining respondents lacked awareness regarding repository services.

Mbughuni et al. (2022) examined awareness of open access institutional repositories among academic staff in Tanzania and found that (92.5%) of respondents were aware of institutional repositories, whereas only a small percentage of respondents were not aware of repository services.

2.2 Usage Patterns of Institutional Repositories

Several studies have examined how users interact with Institutional Repositories. Sawant (2012) studied users' perspectives toward institutional repositories in India and found that (74.21%) of respondents used institutional repositories for accessing scholarly information and research materials, whereas (25.79%) of respondents did not use institutional repositories regularly. The study indicated that institutional repositories were increasingly utilized for academic and research purposes among Indian users.

Yang and Li (2015) investigated faculty usage of institutional repositories at Texas A&M University and reported that only (21%) of faculty members used the institutional repository, whereas (79%) of faculty members did not use repository services for scholarly communication and research purposes.

Downing-Turner and Sauer (2022) examined faculty use of institutional repositories at a master's-granting university and revealed that 40% of faculty respondents used the institutional repository, while (60%) of respondents did not use repository services regularly. The study highlighted that repository usage among faculty members remained comparatively moderate despite awareness of repository services.

Mbughuni et al. (2022) investigated institutional repository usage among academic staff in Tanzania and found that (46.2%) of respondents used institutional repositories for accessing and depositing scholarly content, whereas (53.8%) of respondents demonstrated limited or no repository usage.

These studies suggest that repository usage is determined by a combination of user needs, awareness, and system design.

2.3 Perceived Benefits of Institutional Repositories

Institutional Repositories offer several advantages that support academic and research activities. Sawant (2011) conducted a preliminary study on institutional repositories in India and reported that (92.86%) of respondents perceived institutional repositories as beneficial for providing better services to contributors and the academic community. The study further revealed that respondents recognized institutional repositories as important tools for improving access to scholarly information and supporting academic communication.

Sawant (2012) examined users' perspectives toward institutional repositories in India and found that (78.12%) of respondents perceived institutional repositories as useful for accessing scholarly information and research materials, whereas (21.88%) of respondents expressed limited perception regarding repository usefulness. The study indicated that institutional repositories significantly supported research and academic activities among users.

Yang and Li (2015) investigated faculty perceptions toward institutional repositories at Texas A&M University and reported that (58%) of respondents perceived institutional repositories as beneficial for increasing research visibility and accessibility, while (42%) of respondents showed lower perception regarding repository benefits.

Mbughuni et al. (2022) examined academic staff perceptions toward open access institutional repositories in Tanzania and revealed that (72.5%) of respondents perceived institutional repositories as beneficial for enhancing research visibility and accessibility, whereas (27.5%) of respondents demonstrated comparatively lower perception regarding repository benefits.

2.4 Problems and Challenges in Using Institutional Repositories

2.4.1 Technical Issues

Technical problems were identified as one of the major barriers affecting the effective utilization of institutional repositories among users. Several studies reported that users experienced issues related to poor internet connectivity, server downtime, slow retrieval systems, login failures, and inadequate technical infrastructure while accessing repository resources.

Njoku and Ken-Agbiriogu (2023) identified technical issues as a major barrier affecting repository utilization and reported that (67.20%) of users experienced internet and system-related difficulties while accessing repository resources. Hurum et al. (2024) their study revealed that approximately (59.20%) of users experienced technical problems while accessing institutional repositories. Ezema (2024) reported that around (61.30%) of respondents encountered technical difficulties while utilizing repository systems.

2.4.2 Lack of Institutional Support

Lack of institutional support was another significant challenge affecting repository utilization among faculty members, research scholars, and students. The literature indicated that inadequate awareness programmes, insufficient training, and limited administrative encouragement reduced repository participation and accessibility.

Manjunatha and Thandavamoorthy (2011) studied researchers' attitudes toward depositing materials in institutional repositories of universities in Karnataka and found that inadequate awareness initiatives and limited institutional encouragement negatively influenced researchers' participation in repository activities.

Sawant (2012) observed that although (85.94%) of users were aware of institutional repositories, many respondents lacked proper institutional guidance regarding repository contribution and self-archiving practices.

(Njoku and Ken-Agbiriogu (2023) reported that around (56.40%) of respondents experienced inadequate institutional support and lack of user education while utilizing institutional repositories.

Ezema and Eze (2024) found that nearly (57.80%) of respondents considered lack of institutional support and awareness programmes as major barriers affecting repository utilization.

2.4.3 Poor Browsing and Navigation Facilities

Poor browsing and navigation systems were frequently reported as major barriers affecting users while accessing repository resources. Several studies observed that repository interfaces lacked user-friendly browsing structures, effective navigation mechanisms, and proper organization of scholarly resources.

Njoku and Ken-Agbiriogu (2023) found that around (58.30%) of respondents experienced browsing and searching difficulties while utilizing institutional repositories.

Hurum et al. (2024) revealed that nearly (68.40%) of users experienced problems related to searching and browsing repository resources.

Masawe et al. (2024) also identified that nearly (56.70%) of users considered repository browsing and navigation facilities inadequate for effective information retrieval.

2.4.4 Difficulty in Finding Specific Materials

Difficulty in locating relevant scholarly resources within institutional repositories was frequently identified as a major challenge among repository users. Poor metadata practices, inadequate indexing systems, and ineffective search mechanisms negatively affected information retrieval.

Russell and Day (2010) observed that nearly (62.40%) of users experienced difficulty in locating scholarly materials because of poor metadata organization and ineffective repository browsing structures. Ezema and Eze (2024) also identified that around (55.40%) of respondents experienced retrieval difficulties because of ineffective search systems and poor metadata standards.

Hurum et al. (2024) reported that approximately (63.70%) of users experienced retrieval difficulties while locating relevant scholarly materials within repository systems.

Masawe et al. (2024) found that around (60.50%) of respondents faced difficulties in locating specific academic materials because of inadequate search and retrieval facilities.

2.4.5 Problems in Accessing and Downloading Materials

Armbruster and Romary (2010) also observed that approximately (59.80%) of respondents experienced problems in accessing quality scholarly materials because of repository limitations and restricted resource availability.

Njoku and Ken-Agbiriogu (2023) found that (61.90%) of respondents experienced difficulties in downloading scholarly documents from institutional repositories.

Masawe et al. (2024) reported that (58.90%) of users faced limitations in accessing and downloading full-text scholarly resources from repository systems.

Hurum et al. (2024) identified copyright-related restrictions as major barriers affecting accessibility and downloading of repository materials among academic users.

3. OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To examine the awareness of Institutional Repositories among users.
- ✓ To analyze the utilization of Institutional Repositories.
- ✓ To identify the purposes of using Institutional Repositories.
- ✓ To study the benefits of Institutional Repositories.
- ✓ To identify the problems faced while accessing the materials.

4. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a survey method to examine the utilization of Institutional Repositories among users in selected universities of Karnataka. The population consisted of 2,081 users, including 748 teaching faculty members and 1,333 research scholars from six universities.

The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan formula, which provides an adequate and representative sample for the given population. Accordingly, 254 faculty members and 299 research scholars were

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selected. A random sampling technique was employed to ensure equal opportunity for selection and to minimize sampling bias.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. Although responses were obtained from users across different disciplines, only those who actively used institutional repositories were considered for analysis.

5. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The study was limited to six universities which were University of Mysore, Bangalore University, Mangalore University, Kuvempu University, Gulbarga University, and Tumkur University where Institutional Repositories were actively implemented and utilized by users.

6. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Awareness of Institutional Repository

Table 1 Awareness of Institutional Repository

Responses	Teaching Faculty (%)	Research Scholars (%)	Total (%)
Aware	208 (37.61)	274 (49.55)	482 (87.16)
Do not Aware	46 (8.32)	25 (4.52)	71 (12.84)
Total	$n = 254$ (45.93)	$n = 299$ (54.07)	$N = 553$ (100)

Note: Percentages are presented in parentheses. n = sample size of each group; N = total respondents.

Table 1 shows that a large majority of respondents (87.16%) were aware of Institutional Repositories, while a smaller proportion (12.84%) were not aware.

Among teaching faculty, (37.61%) indicated awareness, whereas (8.32%) reported that they were not aware. In contrast, (49.55%) of research scholars were aware of Institutional Repositories, compared to (4.52%) who were not aware.

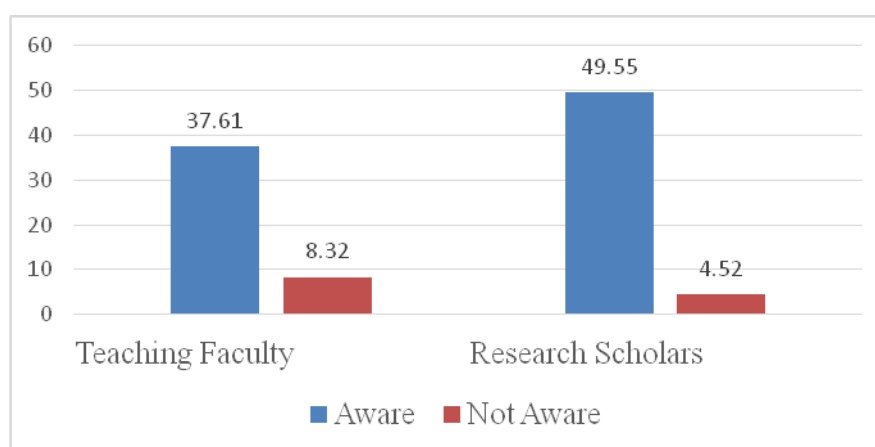


Figure:1 Awareness of Institutional Repository

6.2 Sources of Awareness About the Institutional Repositories.

Table 2 Sources for Awareness about the Institutional Repository

Source of Awareness	Faculty Members (%)	Research Scholars (%)	Total (%)
	<i>n</i> = 208	<i>n</i> = 274	<i>N</i> = 482
Through library professionals	73 (15.15)	85 (17.63)	158 (32.78)
Through the library website	68 (14.11)	76 (15.77)	144 (29.88)
Through library orientation	63 (13.07)	69 (14.32)	132 (27.39)
Through a colleague	38 (7.88)	44 (9.13)	82 (17.01)
Flyers, Posters, and Brochures	29 (6.02)	23 (4.77)	52 (10.79)

Note: Percentages are presented in parentheses. Multiple responses were recorded.

Table 2 shows that the most common source of awareness was through library professionals (32.78%), followed by the library website (29.88%) and library orientation programmes (27.39%). Awareness through colleagues accounted for (17.01%, while flyers, posters, and brochures constituted the least reported source (10.79%).

Among faculty members, awareness was primarily through library professionals (15.15%), followed by the library website (14.11%) and library orientation (13.07%). Awareness through colleagues accounted for (7.88%), whereas printed materials such as flyers and brochures contributed 6.02%.

A similar pattern was observed among research scholars, where library professionals (17.63%) served as the main source, followed by the library website (15.77%) and library orientation (14.32%). Awareness through colleagues was reported by (9.13%), while printed materials accounted for (4.77%).

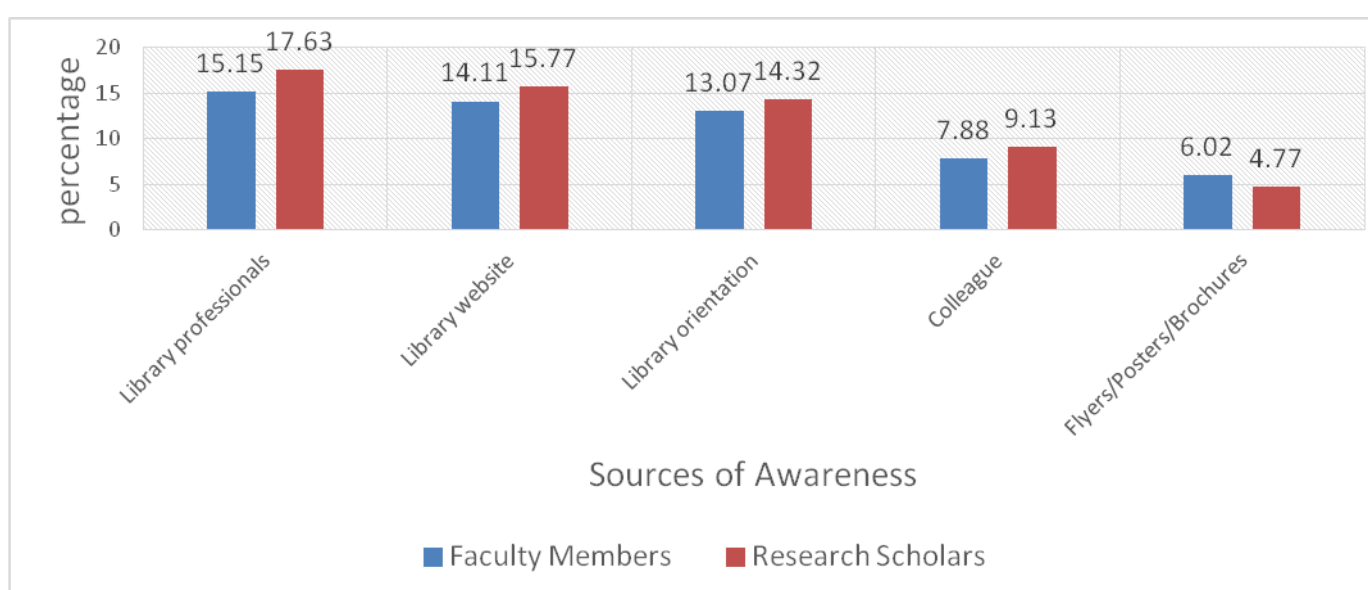


Figure:2 Sources of Awareness About the Institutional Repositories.

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6.3 Use of Institutional Repositories.

Table 3

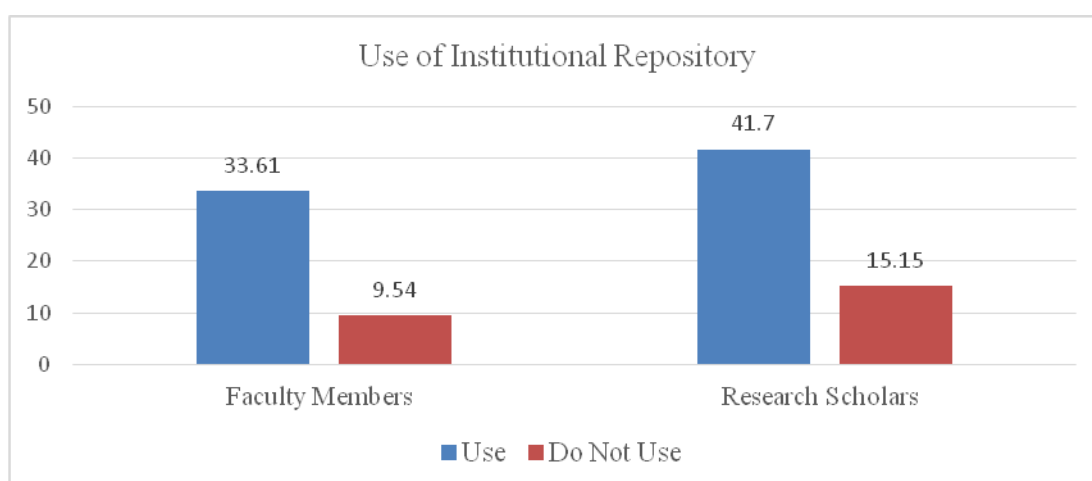
Use of Institutional Repository

Responses	Faculty Members (%)	Research Scholars (%)	Total (%)
Use	162 (33.61)	201 (41.70)	363 (75.31)
Do Not Use	46 (9.54)	73 (15.15)	119 (24.69)
Total	<i>n</i> = 208 (43.15)	<i>n</i> = 274 (56.85)	<i>N</i> = 482 (100)

Note: Percentages are calculated based on the total number of respondents (*N* = 482).

Table 3 shows that a majority of respondents (75.31%) used Institutional Repositories, whereas (24.69%) reported that they did not use them.

Among faculty members, (33.61%) indicated that they used Institutional Repositories, while (9.54%) reported non-use. In the case of research scholars, (41.70%) used Institutional Repositories compared to (15.15%) who did not use them.



6.4 purposes of using Institutional Repositories.

Table 4 Purpose for Using the Institutional Repository

Purposes	Designation	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
To search my research-related materials	Faculty Members	74 (20.39)	58 (15.98)	15 (4.13)	09 (2.48)	06 (1.65)
	Research Scholars	96 (26.45)	65 (17.91)	21 (5.79)	13 (3.58)	06 (1.65)
To prepare lectures and share course materials	Faculty Members	64 (17.63)	51 (14.05)	23 (6.34)	16 (4.41)	08 (2.20)

	Research Scholars	76 (20.94)	64 (17.63)	31 (8.54)	17 (4.68)	13 (3.58)
To reduce duplication of academic works	Faculty Members	54 (14.88)	46 (12.67)	26 (7.16)	21 (5.79)	15 (4.13)
	Research Scholars	76 (20.94)	53 (14.60)	32 (8.82)	23 (6.34)	17 (4.68)
To avoid the high costs of traditional publishing	Faculty Members	49 (13.50)	38 (10.49)	31 (8.54)	25 (6.89)	19 (5.23)
	Research Scholars	59 (16.25)	43 (11.85)	39 (10.74)	37(10.19)	23 (6.34)
To find emerging trends and ideas contributing to my research and academic work	Faculty Members	68 (18.73)	47 (12.95)	21 (5.79)	14 (3.86)	12 (3.31)
	Research Scholars	78 (21.49)	63 (17.36)	31 (8.54)	18 (4.96)	11 (3.03)
To share intangible knowledge	Faculty Members	52 (14.33)	41 (11.29)	26 (7.16)	25 (6.89)	18 (4.96)
	Research Scholars	65 (17.91)	48 (13.22)	43 (11.86)	29 (7.99)	16 (4.41)

Note: Faculty members ($n = 162$) and research scholars ($n = 201$). Percentages are calculated based on the total number of users ($N = 363$).

Table 4 shows that the primary purpose of using the Institutional Repository was to search research-related materials, with a high proportion of respondents indicating strong agreement teaching faculty (20.39%) and (26.45%) research scholars and agreement (15.98%) faculty (17.91%) research scholars.

A considerable percentage of respondents also agreed that Institutional Repositories were useful for preparing lectures and sharing course materials, with (17.63%) of faculty members and (20.94%) of research scholars strongly agreeing, followed by (14.05%) and (17.63%), respectively, indicating agreement.

The data further indicate that reducing duplication of academic work was an important reason, as reflected by (14.88%) of faculty members and (20.94%) of research scholars expressing strong agreement. Similarly, a notable proportion of respondents considered Institutional Repositories useful for identifying emerging trends and ideas contributing to academic work (18.73% faculty; 21.49% research scholars strongly agreed).

In terms of economic benefits, fewer respondents strongly agreed that Institutional Repositories helped avoid the high costs of traditional publishing (13.50% faculty; 16.25% research scholars), with relatively higher percentages distributed across neutral and disagreement categories.

The sharing of intangible knowledge also received moderate support, with (14.33%) of faculty members and (17.91%) of research scholars strongly agreeing, while a noticeable proportion remained neutral or expressed disagreement.

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6.5 Benefits of Institutional Repositories.

Table 5 Benefits of Using Institutional Repositories

Benefits	Designation	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
It enhances the accessibility of my work to university members.	Faculty Member	37 (10.19)	58 (15.98)	35 (9.64)	18 (4.96)	14 (3.86)
	Research Scholars	48 (13.22)	83 (22.86)	38 (10.47)	21 (5.78)	11 (3.03)
It increases personal prestige or visibility of my scholarly work.	Faculty Members	35 (9.64)	57 (15.70)	43 (11.84)	15 (4.13)	12 (3.30)
	Research Scholars	53 (14.60)	76 (20.94)	37 (10.19)	21 (5.78)	14 (3.86)
It increases my university's visibility.	Faculty Members	46 (12.67)	52 (14.32)	32 (8.81)	17 (4.68)	15 (4.13)
	Research Scholars	51 (14.05)	73 (20.11)	41 (11.29)	23 (6.34)	13 (3.58)
It helps in teaching, learning, and research.	Faculty Members	36 (9.92)	42 (11.57)	53 (14.60)	13 (3.58)	18 (4.96)
	Research Scholars	32 (8.81)	37 (10.19)	72 (19.83)	35 (9.64)	25 (6.89)
It increases the citation count of my scholarly or research works.	Faculty Members	43 (11.84)	56 (15.43)	34 (9.37)	18 (4.96)	11 (3.03)
	Research Scholars	58 (15.98)	75 (20.66)	42 (11.57)	17 (4.68)	9 (2.48)
It facilitates interdisciplinary research.	Faculty Members	46 (12.67)	51 (14.05)	35 (9.64)	18 (4.96)	12 (3.30)
	Research Scholars	41 (11.29)	63 (17.35)	58 (15.97)	21 (5.78)	18 (4.96)
It preserves institutional outcomes for a long time.	Faculty Members	49 (13.50)	64 (17.63)	31 (8.54)	12 (3.30)	6 (1.65)
	Research Scholars	58 (15.98)	79 (21.76)	37 (10.19)	18 (4.96)	9 (2.48)
It helps to view research output from different departments in one place.	Faculty Members	54 (14.88)	62 (17.08)	24 (6.61)	15 (4.13)	7 (1.93)
	Research Scholars	63 (17.35)	75 (20.66)	37 (10.19)	14 (3.86)	12 (3.30)

Note: Percentages are calculated based on the total number of respondents ($N = 363$). Faculty members ($n = 162$) and research scholars ($n = 201$).

Table 5 shows that a considerable proportion of respondents perceived multiple benefits from the use of Institutional Repositories. A high percentage of respondents agreed that Institutional Repositories enhanced the accessibility of their work to university members, with (10.19%) of faculty members and (13.22%) of research scholars strongly agreeing, followed by (15.98%) and (22.86%), respectively, indicating agreement.

The increase in personal prestige or visibility of scholarly work was also recognized, as reflected by (9.64%) of faculty members and (14.60%) of research scholars strongly agreeing, along with (15.70%) and (20.94%) indicating agreement. Similarly, respondents acknowledged that Institutional Repositories contributed to increasing the visibility of their universities, with (12.67%) of faculty members and (14.05%) of research scholars strongly agreeing.

With regard to academic support, (9.92%) of faculty members and (8.81%) of research scholars strongly agreed that Institutional Repositories supported teaching, learning, and research, although a relatively higher proportion remained neutral ((14.60%) faculty; (19.83%) research scholars).

The data further indicate that Institutional Repositories contributed to increasing citation counts, as shown by (11.84%) of faculty members and (15.98%) of research scholars strongly agreeing, followed by (15.43%) and (20.66%) agreeing. In addition, respondents recognized the role of repositories in facilitating interdisciplinary research, with (12.67%) of faculty members and (11.29%) of research scholars strongly agreeing.

Long-term preservation of institutional outputs was identified as an important benefit, with (13.50%) of faculty members and (15.98%) of research scholars strongly agreeing, supported by (17.63%) and (21.76%) indicating agreement. Furthermore, a notable percentage of respondents agreed that Institutional Repositories helped in viewing research outputs from different departments in a single platform, as reflected by (14.88%) of faculty members and (17.35%) of research scholars strongly agreeing.

6.6 Problems Faced While Using Institutional Repositories.

Table 6 Types of Problems Faced in Using Institutional Repositories

Challenges	Designation	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Technical issues	Faculty Members	67 (41.36)	46 (28.40)	24 (14.81)	17 (10.49)	8 (4.94)
	Research Scholars	86 (42.79)	67 (33.33)	27 (13.43)	21 (10.45)	12 (5.97)
Lack of institutional support	Faculty Members	59 (36.42)	52 (32.10)	21 (12.96)	16 (9.89)	14 (8.64)
	Research Scholars	78 (38.81)	56 (27.86)	31 (15.42)	19 (9.45)	17 (8.46)
Poor browsing	Faculty Members	75 (46.30)	51 (31.48)	18 (11.11)	12 (7.41)	6 (3.70)

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ability	Research Scholars	83 (41.29)	58 (28.86)	24 (11.94)	15 (7.46)	9 (4.48)
Difficulty in finding specific materials	Faculty Members	52 (32.10)	45 (27.78)	35 (21.60)	13 (8.02)	17 (10.50)
	Research Scholars	65 (32.34)	57 (28.36)	43 (21.39)	21 (10.45)	15 (7.46)
Some materials cannot be accessed/downloaded	Faculty Members	67 (41.36)	53 (32.72)	18 (11.11)	15 (9.26)	9 (5.56)
	Research Scholars	83 (41.29)	58 (28.86)	29 (14.43)	17 (8.46)	14 (6.96)

Note: Percentages are calculated based on the total number of respondents ($N = 363$). Faculty members ($n = 162$) and research scholars ($n = 201$).

Table 6 examines the types of problems and challenges faced by faculty members and research scholars while using Institutional Repositories. The table highlights various difficulties related to technology, institutional support, accessibility, and information retrieval experienced by repository users.

Technical issues emerged as a major challenge for both faculty members and research scholars. Among faculty members, (41.36%) strongly agreed and (28.40%) agreed that technical issues affected their use of the repository. Similarly, among research scholars, (42.79%) strongly agreed and (33.33%) agreed that technical issues posed challenges while accessing and utilizing repository resources. These findings suggest that technical problems remained a significant barrier to the effective use of Institutional Repositories.

Lack of institutional support was another challenge reported by the respondents. Among faculty members, (36.42%) strongly agreed and (32.10%) agreed that inadequate institutional support affected repository usage. Likewise, (38.81%) of research scholars strongly agreed and (27.86%) agreed with this view. This indicates the importance of institutional guidance, training, and support for the effective utilization of repository services.

Poor browsing ability was also identified as a major challenge. Among faculty members, (46.30%) strongly agreed and (31.48%) agreed that browsing difficulties affected their use of the repository. Similarly, (41.29%) of research scholars strongly agreed and (28.86%) agreed that poor browsing ability hindered efficient access to repository resources. The findings suggest that navigation and interface-related issues may have affected information retrieval.

Difficulty in finding specific materials was also reported by both groups. Among faculty members, (32.10%) strongly agreed and (27.78%) agreed that locating specific materials was difficult. Similarly, (32.34%) of research scholars strongly agreed and (28.36%) agreed with this challenge. These responses suggest the need to improve search functionality, metadata quality, and content organization within the repository.

Some materials could not be accessed or downloaded, which was another concern reported by the respondents. Among faculty members, (41.36%) strongly agreed and (32.72%) agreed that this issue affected repository use. Similarly, (41.29%) of research scholars strongly agreed and (28.86%) agreed that restrictions on accessing or downloading materials posed difficulties. This finding highlights the importance of ensuring the availability and accessibility of repository resources.

FINDINGS

- A majority of the respondents (87.16%) were aware of the Institutional Repository, while only (12.84%) reported a lack of awareness. The level of awareness was higher among research scholars (49.55%) than teaching faculty (37.61%) (Table 1).
- Library professionals (32.78%), library websites (29.88%), and library orientation programmes (27.39%) were identified as the primary sources through which respondents became aware of Institutional Repositories (Table 2).
- A majority of the respondents (75.31%) reported using the Institutional Repository, whereas 24.69% indicated that they did not use it. The level of repository use was higher among research scholars (41.70%) than faculty members (33.61%) (Table 3).
- The primary purpose of using the Institutional Repository was to search for research-related materials, with (36.37%) of faculty members and (44.36%) of research scholars expressing agreement. Other major purposes included finding emerging trends and ideas for research and academic work (31.68% faculty members; 38.85% research scholars), preparing lectures and sharing course materials (31.68% faculty members; 38.57% research scholars), and reducing the duplication of academic works (27.55% faculty members; 35.54% research scholars). (Table 4).
- The major benefits of using Institutional Repositories included helping users view research outputs from different departments in one place, which was reported by (31.96%) of faculty members and (38.01%) of research scholars. Long-term preservation of institutional outputs was recognized by (31.13%) of faculty members and (37.74%) of research scholars. (Table 5).
- Technical issues were identified as one of the most common problems faced while accessing Institutional Repositories, as reported by (41.36%) of faculty members and (30.77%) of research scholars. Poor browsing ability was another major challenge, reported by (29.76%) of faculty members and (35.16%) of research scholars. (Table 6).

CONCLUSION

The study examined the utilization of Institutional Repositories among users in selected universities of Karnataka. The findings indicated that a majority of respondents were aware of and actively used Institutional Repositories for academic and research purposes, particularly for accessing scholarly materials.

Institutional Repositories were found to enhance accessibility, visibility, and preservation of scholarly work. However, challenges such as technical issues, difficulties in browsing, and limited institutional support affected their effective utilization.

Overall, the study highlights the need to strengthen awareness initiatives, improve system usability, and enhance institutional support to ensure more effective utilization of Institutional Repositories.

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