

Teachers' Awareness and Participation in Institutional Repository Movement at Assam University, Silchar

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Abstract

Universities play the prime role in Research and Development (R&D) of any country. The teachers of the university thus bear the responsibility to generate more and more knowledge resources to keep the nation in the forefront. Institutional Repositories (IRs) are thus being created to keep and store the intellectual assets of any university or a particular organization. It keeps the materials in central place so that anyone from anywhere can access and use these resources. But little interest among the teachers has greatly affected the main goal of IR success. The present paper deals with the results of a survey conducted among the teachers of Assam University which represents their awareness about IRs. The present paper also highlights the issues related to university based repository. The results showed that though the university has implemented a functional IR but there are still some hesitations among teachers regarding IR participation and use. The researchers thus suggested for organizing more and more awareness programmes on IR and its advantages so that more teachers get familiar and get comfortable to use it.

Keywords: Institutional Repository, Open Access, Teachers, Assam University, India

1. Introduction

After internet revolution the system of scholarly content writing and publishing has been greatly changed. Internet plays a huge role on maintaining and distributing scholarly content throughout the globe. Researchers started to pay more heed to do research so that each respective nation could be at progressive forefront. As soon as the thrust for knowledge kept increasing, so as the medium or channel for storing and distributing this knowledge is also increasing day by day. The concept of Open Access (OA) journals and repositories are playing as a forefront player to grab the best of offerings from the internet or World Wide Web (WWW).

Institutional Repositories (IRs) provides the best platform for scholarly content distribution and store. The best advantage of IRs is that it can store any amount of content in a central location based on the storage capacity of the server. Nowadays academicians are using this technology for wider distribution of research available at no cost and helps to overcome copyright issues. Teachers play the main source of scholarly content organization into an IR. For the growth and development of an IR, constant submission flow of research is an absolute demand. Only a few institutions in India have IRs and it is being noticed that IRs are facing severe shortage of importance by the academicians these days which is something that we should really be concerned about. The less involvement on the part of faculties is a major backlog for the success



of IR. An attempt has been made to study the teachers' awareness on IRs at Assam University.

2 Literature Review

Ammarukleart (2017) in his doctoral thesis conveyed multiple factors for the success of university-based IRs. He mentions factors such as 'performance expectancy', 'social influence', and 'resistance to change' were the prime issues of concern for the use of IRs by faculty of Thailand Research University.

Tmava and Miksa (2017) in their study examined the factors that affect faculty participation in IRs and investigated the limit of those factors that influence faculty participation in IRs. They explained the difficulties faced by the faculty members during the submission process which is one of the main causes for decreased use of IRs.

Samir (2017) did open repository study on Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. He found that there was a lack of clear idea about open access policy as most of them access the content by registering themselves. The researcher advocated for implementation of an open access policy, which will greatly enhance OA repositories for developing countries.

Iqbal and Ali (2017) did a study on the awareness and use of open access resources among the library users of Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT). They found barriers that library users face while dealing with OA resources such as problem in screen reading, lack of programme instruction guide, training and lack of search skills.

Raju, Raju, and Claassen (2015) have complimented IR by saying that open access publishing is controlled by two parts: one is IR and the second is

publishing directly with an open access publisher. The first can be commonly referred as "green route", with the significant objective of openly sharing research output of the institution.

Dutta and Paul (2014) did a survey among the science and technology faculties of University of Calcutta and commented that the faculty members' outlook towards IR was more or less encouraging.

Sinha & Bhattacharjee (2006) in their paper done a case study on Assam University and commented on the needs for developing IR. They strongly suggested that an IR can serve as a mechanism for the betterment of the teachers, research scholars, and postgraduate/ graduate students will give them the chance to use, communicate and distribute their research works.

There are a lot of studies done on teachers' perception towards IRs which mostly states the unwillingness on their part to involve in IR. One of the vital issues in this view is the copyright.

The review of literature has shown that no studies have been done on the chosen topic and it clearly reveals the gap. A survey has been conducted recently among the teachers of Assam University to understand the issues towards IR and also the copyright awareness on IR and its usage. The paper highlights main issues regarding teachers' awareness about IRs and whether they have a will to deposit their scholarly contents.

3 Objectives

Following are the objectives of the study:

- ❖ To know teachers' knowledge about IRs;
- ❖ To find out teachers' eagerness towards IR participation;

- ❖ To find out teachers' mindset towards IR advantages; and
- ❖ To study the awareness towards dual copyright among the teachers.

4 Methodology

For the present study, a descriptive survey method consisting of a structured questionnaire has been adopted for collection of data. Teachers of different departments of Assam University were taken for the study. All 39 departments of the Assam University have been considered for this survey. There are 306 Teachers in all 39 departments as on August, 2018. 10% (31) of them were selected under three categories such as Professors, Associate Professors and Assistant Professors for this survey.

5 Institutional Repository (IR) at Assam University

The IR preserves the scholarly output in a digital form for its longevity. Lynch (2003) defines IR "A university based institutional repository is a set of services that a university offers to the members of its community for the management and dissemination of digital materials created by the institution and its community members." The content of an IR can be of scholarly or can be materials for different purposes like managerial, teaching and research materials, both published and unpublished. Putting content into an IR enables staff and institutions to manage and preserve it, and therefore derive maximum value from it. So, the need for developing IR becomes very essential for growing consensus on the part of students and the faculty members.

Assam University was established in the year 1994 after enactment of the Assam (Central) University Act 1989. There are two campuses of Assam University i.e, one in Silchar and the other one in Diphu. There are total 39 departments in Silchar Campus and 11 departments in the Diphu campus.

The Central Library of Assam University started building its own IR under National Digital Library of India (NDL of India) pilot project sponsored by Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), till 31.08.2016 there is a total of 7000 number of holdings in the IR comprising 986 numbers of theses and still growing at a faster pace (Sharma, A K 2016).

6 Data Analysis and Findings

6.1 Awareness about IR

For the proper utilization of IR, its awareness among the teachers is essential. It is revealed that the picture of IR awareness among teachers is not quite pleasing. 64.52% of respondents stated their awareness about it while 35.48% of the respondents mentioned their unawareness regarding IR concept and use. It was also found that Assistant Professors were much aware about IR when compared to other designated teachers

6.2 Source of Knowledge about IR (N=31)

The role of WWW is increasing day by day. Its importance was felt in the study also when the researchers found out that the teachers got their prime source of knowledge about IR from using internet (35%). Discussions with other teachers (20%) and Colleagues (20%) also formed a strong part among the respondents while dealing with their source of knowledge about IRs. The results also

showed that information from library website (10%) and from librarian/ library staff (15%) regarding IR was very low compared to other sources mentioned above.

6.3 Submission of Scholarly Content to the IR (N=31)

The results show that 70% of the respondents did use IR for content submission. While 30% of the respondents mentioned that they have never submitted any scholar content to any IR.

6.4 Advantages for Depositing into IR (n=22)

When the researchers asked respondents about depositing advantages into IR, the maximum respondents supported that depositing content to the IR ‘boosts up their images in the university’ (35.71%). 28.57% of the respondents pointed out ‘safekeeping of the contents in terms of plagiarism’ were the prime advantage for their usage. ‘Increase in Global Recognition in Terms of Citations’ was also found to be higher in response i.e., 21.43%.

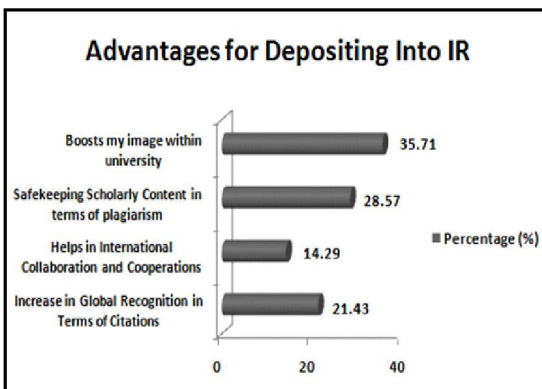


Fig. 1: Advantages for Depositing into IR

6.5 Reasons for Not Depositing into IR (n=9)

It was found that 33.33% of the respondents highlighted reasons like ‘presence of better reputed

scholarly journals’, ‘copyright issues and plagiarism’ for not depositing in IR. Also 16.67% of respondents identified issues like ‘lack of interest in IR concept’ and ‘Not Having Proper Guidelines’ as their main constraints for accessing IR.

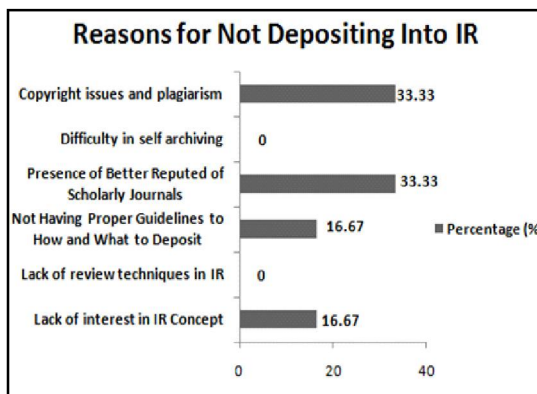


Fig. 2: Reasons for Not Depositing into IR

6.6 Teachers' Interest to Deposit into IR after Knowing its Advantages (n=9)

The researchers found out that after knowing IR advantages 90% of the respondents expressed their interest to use IR for scholarly content submission. But still 10% respondent still stuck to their reluctance to use IR.

6.7 Types of Materials to Deposit in IR (n=22)

The below Fig.3 discloses the most widely deposited content in IR is ‘Research Articles’ (55.55%). It was also found that 22.22% of teachers opt for ‘Thesis’ for depositing in IR. 11.11% of teachers stated their will deposit departmental dissertations to the IR. While, 5.56% of the respondents chose ‘Assignments’ and ‘book/book chapter’s’ to be the deposited contents into the IR.

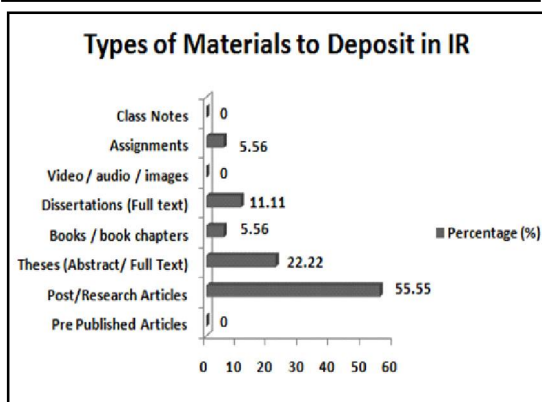


Fig. 3: Types of Materials to Deposit in IR

6.8 Awareness about Dual Copyright (N=31)

It was found that 80.65% of the respondents were aware about dual copyright which truly simplifies author's knowledge regarding dual publishing their content while retaining the copyright to themselves. On the other hand, 19.35% teachers were not sure to contribute their content in IR due to their fear about copyright issue.

7 Suggestions and Recommendations

On the basis of the data analysis following suggestions have been made, which will help to clear teachers' perception towards IRs:

- ❖ There should be a functional IR running on internet or on intranet;
- ❖ The IR should be frequently updated so that it does not miss users' attention;
- ❖ Teachers should be made aware about IR through various means like by organizing seminars, conferences, orientation;
- ❖ The IR manager should make it mandatory for individual teacher's contribution to the IR;

- ❖ The teachers should be made aware more about the advantages an IR can bring to their professional life;
- ❖ The IR manager should help the teachers during the self-archiving instructions and in the process;
- ❖ Teachers should archive more and more variety of content to the IR for the global view and not only restrict to research articles; and
- ❖ For the better acceptance and use of IR, the teachers should be made aware about the advantages of dual copyright.

8 Conclusion

The concept of digitization has increased the popularity of research output in digital form rather than its print form. Therefore, the need for IR for storing scholar content and for accessing it free of cost by the needful research community is hence very important for the advancement of science. The present article tried to determine teachers' knowledge regarding Assam University IR and participation of them in depositing. The results showed that though the university has implemented a functional IR but it is not frequently updated which caused hesitations among the teachers regarding IR participation and use. The researchers thus suggested for organizing more and more awareness programmes about IR and its advantages so that more teachers get familiar and get comfortable to use it.

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Note:

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