

Practices of Archiving and Sharing the Scholarly Literature by the Indian Research Community

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Abstract: *This study examines self-archiving practices among the Indian research community. The survey method was adapted, and a specifically designed questionnaire was used to achieve the study objectives. The study population included those who had published research papers in Scopus-indexed journals established by the NIScPR, IAS, ICAR, DRDO, and ICMR. The findings show that the majority of the researchers were aware of the self-archiving concept as a means for providing open access, but not many of them had practical experience in self-archiving, which was found to be statistically significant with Tukey's (HSD) test. Lack of institutional repositories, publishers' copyrights, and lack of researcher interest which means they do not know the benefits of self-archiving and open access were the major reasons for not employing scholarly literature archiving. Among the respondents, the majority used ASNS for sharing scholarly literature, and most of them had profiles on ResearchGate, Academia, Google Scholar, ORCID ID, and Mendeley.*

Keywords: Self-Archiving, Sharing, Scholarly Literature, ASNS, Open-Access, IR's

1. Introduction

In the rapidly evolving academic landscape, open access to scholarly literature has become a crucial factor in enhancing research visibility and collaboration. When the research community engages in self-archiving and sharing their scholarly literature through available platforms, the goal of open access can be achieved. The preservation and archiving of scholarly publications play an important role in protecting the IP, fostering research, and promoting open access [1]. Therefore, there is a need to know the attitude of researchers and methods used for archiving scholarly scientific literature.

Self-archiving is the practice of researchers depositing their scholarly works in repositories in the form of e-prints. An e-print can be termed as either a digital preprint or a post-print and version of record. The key definitions given by the Preprint: "This term encompasses all versions that have not yet undergone peer review [2]. Once a preprint has been submitted to a journal, it is often referred to as the submitted version or the author's original manuscript (AOM)". Post-print: "This is the final draft sent by the authors to the journal or publisher after peer review but before publication. It is commonly referred to as the author manuscript, author version, author accepted version, final author version, or author accepted manuscript (AAM)." Version of record: "Also known as the final version or published version, this is the typeset and formatted version that appears in the journal or is released by the publisher. In the context of electronic journals, it is sometimes simply referred to as the publisher's PDF". Self-archiving is where authors can retain copyright on pre-prints, post-prints, and gallery proofs of their work and can upload them onto personal, academic social networking sites, institutional repositories, subject based repositories and so on [3], [4]. It is a key strategy for enhancing open access to scholarly literature by safeguarding the original research carried out using public funds and taxpayers' money [5].

Self-archiving offers several advantages for promoting open access. Such as enabling scholars to make their work freely available and overcoming barriers associated with traditional publication models where access may be restricted or require payment [6]. This can enhance the visibility and impact of research and facilitate the global sharing of knowledge. However, technical constraints, licensing concerns, and economic considerations must be addressed to ensure the long-term preservation and sustainability of self-archiving approaches [7].

A recent study indicates that approximately 92% of Indian LIS researchers are aware of self-archiving practices. ResearchGate platforms have become popular among researchers for disseminating their work, facilitating broader access and engagement within the academic community [8]. The study explored the fact that most of the Indian LIS professionals archived their papers in E-LIS repository and India posited the top one among the Asian countries [9]. The benefit of self-archiving content is that it can be found by a larger audience with a quick Google search [10]. Self-archiving is frequently described as the "green way" to OA; this method allows for the free public distribution of full-text articles. Researchers can provide readers with access to their scholarly articles by making them freely accessible [11]. Indian taking initiatives like Shodhganga, IndiaRxiv, and various university-led digital libraries enable scholars to share their findings freely, fostering greater knowledge dissemination [12]. Despite the growing awareness of the benefits of self-archiving, challenges such as copyright restrictions, embargo policies, and a lack of institutional mandates still hinder their widespread adoption. The Indian research community has been slower to embrace self-archiving than other regions, with low levels of participation and awareness [13], [14].

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2. Research Questions

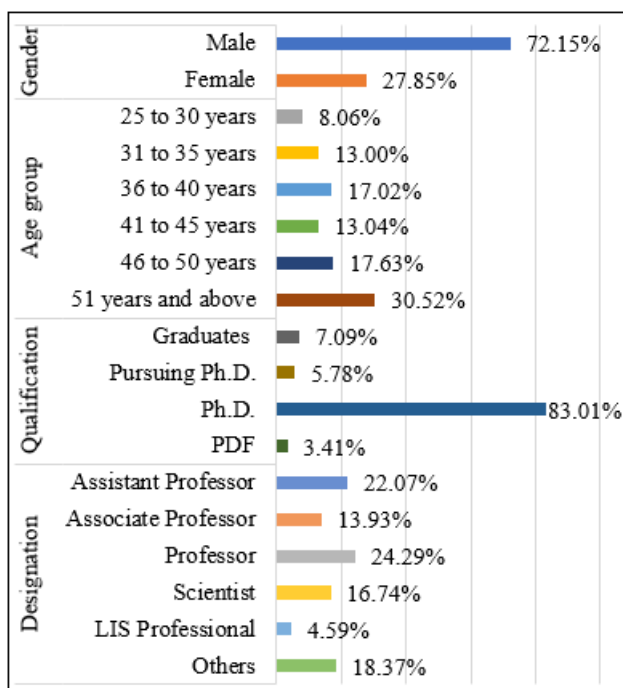
- Participation of Indian researchers in self-archiving practices?
- What are the reasons why researchers do not archive scholarly literature?
- What self-archiving methods does the research community use?

3. Methodology

This study aimed to use survey methodology and the Google Forms questionnaire tool to gather responses from the Indian research community across the country, particularly from those who published research papers in Scopus-indexed journals established by the NIScPR, IAS, ICAR, DRDO, and ICMR from 2014 to 2023. Additionally, the SPSS package and MS Office Excel were used for data analysis, while the Zotero reference management tool was used for citations and references in the study.

4. Results Analysis

The 675 valid responses, which are analyzed, summarized and presented in the form of tables and graphs suitably. The results in the tables and graphs represent the frequency, percentage, and statistical values as needed.



Graph 1: Demographic Information of the Respondents

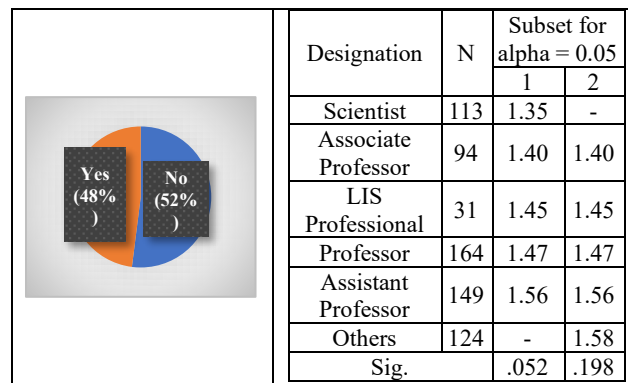
Data in the graph-1 shows the demographic information of the respondents. The study surveyed 675 respondents, of whom the majority were male (72.15%), whereas 27.85% were female and from older age groups. A significant proportion (83.01%) held doctoral degrees, and 60.3% were involved in research and teaching as professors, assistant professors, and associate professors. The remaining respondents were other professionals (18.37%) engaged in research activities, including scientists (16.74%) and LIS professionals (4.59%).

Table 1: Level of understanding of scholarly literature archiving concepts

Variable	Level of Understanding		
	Excellent	Good	Average
OA/OA Initiatives [Awareness]	28.88%	46.81%	24.29%
Pre-prints/ Post-Prints	27.11%	43.11%	29.77%
Institutional Repositories (IR)	28.29%	37.03%	34.66%
Academic Social Networking Sites [ASNS]	23.55%	42.22%	34.22%
Copyright Laws (©)	24.00%	38.66%	37.33%
Creative Commons (CC) License	24.88%	44.00%	31.11%

The data presented in Table 1 provide insights into the Indian research community's level of understanding regarding various aspects of self-archiving and methods used for scholarly literature sharing. Open access initiatives and pre-prints/post-prints are particularly well-understood, with 28.88% and 27.11% of respondents, respectively, reporting an "Excellent" level of understanding. Similarly, the understanding of institutional repositories and academic social networking sites is reasonably high, with 28.29% and 23.55% of respondents, respectively, reporting an "Excellent". However, copyright laws and the use of creative commons licenses appear relatively lower, with only 24% and 24.88% of respondents respectively reporting an "Excellent" level, while 37.33% reported an average level of understanding.

The study findings indicate a relatively high overall level of understanding, with a significant proportion of respondents expressing "Excellent" or "Good" understanding across different concepts. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement, particularly in copyright and licensing areas.



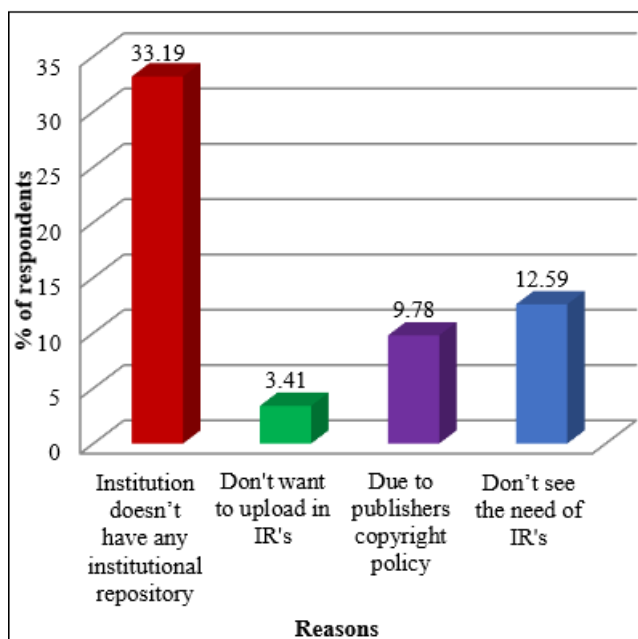
Graph 2: Archiving Scholarly Literature in International Repositories: Designation-Wise

This study found differences in institutional repository archiving among various designation groups. Nearly half of the respondents only reported archiving scholarly literature. Subset-1, including Scientists, Associate Professors, LIS Professionals, and Professors, did not show significant differences in archiving behavior. Subset-2, consisting of Assistant Professors and Others, exhibited significantly higher archiving tendencies than Subset-1.

The statistical significance for Subset-1 was slightly above the threshold, indicating that the differences were not significant. For Subset-2, the higher p-value indicates significant difference between the Assistant Professors and Others. Scientists and Associate Professors archived less

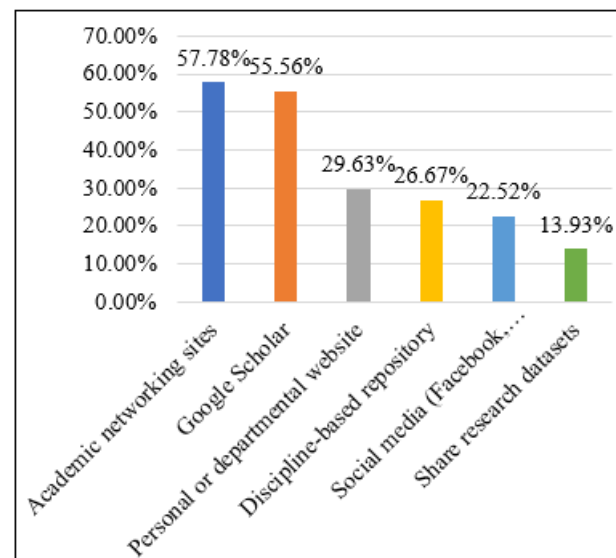
frequently than Assistant Professors and Others category professionals, who tended to archive more often, although the difference between them was not significant. Professors and LIS Professionals were in the middle, with moderate archiving levels.

The study found some variation in archiving among the designation groups, with the assistant professors and others showing higher levels. However, the statistical significance was weak; therefore, the differences may not be conclusive. Further research is required to confirm the impact of job designation on institutional repository archiving.



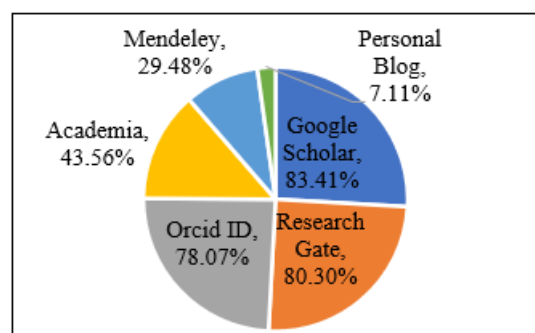
Graph 3: Reasons for Not Archiving Scholarly Literature in IR's

Data in graph 3 show that the highest 224, (33.19%) indicated that their institution does not have any institutional repository. This indicates that a lack of infrastructure is the main barrier to the use of the repository. A moderate percentage (12.59%) stated that they do not see the need to upload their work, implying a lack of awareness or perceived benefit. Moreover, 9.78% of respondents refrained from uploading their work due to publishers' copyright policies, suggesting that legal concerns are a factor. The lowest percentage (3.41%) was from individuals who have an institutional repository but choose not to upload, indicating personal reluctance rather than external barriers.



Graph 4: Platforms for Sharing Scholarly Literature

Academic social networking sites and other scholarly literature sharing platforms, including "Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter-X," have gained significant popularity in the current Internet era, outpacing traditional sharing methods. Graph-4 reveals that academic networking sites (57.78%) were the most preferred platform for sharing scholarly literature, likely due to their visibility, accessibility, and ease of use. Google Scholar (55.56%) is another major platform. Personal or departmental repositories (29.63%) are also moderately utilized, indicating that some researchers prefer to store their work within their institutions. Discipline-based repositories (26.67%) and social media, such as Twitter-X, Instagram, and WhatsApp (22.52%), are also used. Research dataset-sharing platforms are the least (13.93%), suggesting that researchers may be hesitant to share raw data or lack proper dataset-sharing platforms such as Figshare, Zenodo, Google Dataset Search, and Kaggle.



Graph 5: Presence on Academic Social Networking Sites (ASNS)

Pie chart 5 represents the percentage of researchers with accounts of academic or research-related scholarly sharing platforms. Most 83.41% have Google Scholar accounts. This indicates that researchers and academics widely used. ResearchGate to share and index research papers with (80.30%) is the second most popular platform, indicating that a significant portion of researchers actively used it to share and access research publications. Orcid ID (78.07%) is also widely adopted by academics to maintain their professional research profiles. A moderately (43.56%) of respondents have Academia platform profiles. 29.48% have account of

Mendeley reference management tool is used by 29.48% for citation and bibliography management. Only (7.11%) have profiles of Personal Blogs.

5. Recommendations/ Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen self-archiving and scholarly literature-sharing practices among the Indian research community:

- **Establish Institutional Repositories (IRs):** Higher education and research institutions should establish and maintain institutional repositories to facilitate the systematic archiving, preservation, and open access of researchers' scholarly publications. The absence of institutional repositories was the major barrier identified in the study (33.19%).
- **Develop Institutional Self-Archiving Policies:** Institutions should formulate clear policies encouraging or mandating researchers to deposit eligible scholarly works, such as preprints, post prints, theses, dissertations, and other research outputs, in institutional repositories.
- **Strengthen Copyright and Licensing Awareness:** Libraries should provide regular guidance and training on publishers' copyright policies, embargo periods, author rights, and Creative Commons licenses. This will help researchers overcome uncertainty regarding whether and how their publications can be archived.
- **Conduct Regular Awareness and Training Programmes:** Libraries and LIS professionals should organize seminars, workshops, and orientation programmes on open access, self-archiving, institutional repositories, and scholarly communication. Special emphasis should be given to demonstrating the benefits of self-archiving to researchers.
- **Enhance the Role of LIS Professionals:** Library professionals should actively support researchers in repository deposit, copyright checking, metadata creation, digital preservation, and scholarly communication. Their involvement is essential for the successful development and management of institutional repositories.
- **Promote Responsible Use of Scholarly Sharing Platforms:** Since Academic Social Networking Sites were the most preferred method of sharing scholarly literature (57.78%), researchers should be encouraged to use platforms such as ResearchGate, Google Scholar, and ORCID alongside institutional repositories rather than relying exclusively on social networking platforms.
- **Provide Institutional and National-Level Support:** Adequate technical, financial, and policy support should be provided by institutions and higher-education bodies such as UGC and AICTE to establish sustainable repositories and promote open-access practices across Indian higher education and research institutions.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined the multidimensional aspects of institutional repositories and methods used for sharing scholarly literature. The results indicate that researchers are highly aware of institutional repositories and their associated concepts. However, an analysis of institutional repositories' archiving practices reveals that researchers are not using them

effectively. This is due to a lack of awareness of the benefits, a shortage of institutional repositories, and limited knowledge of publishers' copyright policies. Instead, they have significantly used academic social networking sites such as ResearchGate, Academia.edu, ORCID ID, and Mendeley, for sharing and disseminating their scholarly work.

The institutional repository is a highly potent concept that can catalyze transformative change within higher education institutions and the broader scholarly ecosystem they support. When properly developed, it advances many objectives and addresses a wide range of needs. Apex bodies responsible for educational advancement, such as the UGC and AICTE, must take proactive measures to establish higher education institutional repositories. LIS professionals play a pivotal role in the development of successful repositories for their respective institutions, thereby permanently reshaping the landscape of scholarly communication. The IR's system facilitates access to scholarly content in the shortest possible time, even from remote locations. Its user-friendly and straightforward nature is drawing increasing patronage to institutional repositories. Ultimately, library authorities should persistently organize seminars, workshops, and user awareness programs to educate potential users on the relevance of the institutional repository to the research community.

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