

# **Institutional Repositories (IRs) for Content Management in Bangalore Theological Libraries: Prospects and Challenges**

**Yesan Sellan**

Chief Librarian

South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies (SAIACS),

Bangalore – 560077, yesans@gmail.com

Yesan Sellan is the Chief Librarian at South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies (SAIACS). Prior to joining SAIACS, he was the librarian of Church on the Rock Theological Seminary, Vizag and Serampore College, Serampore. He also serves as Secretary of Forum of Asian Theological Librarians (ForATL) and Executive Secretary of Indian Theological Library Association (ITLA). He is currently pursuing his PhD studies at Bharathidasan University, Trichy

**Dr. S. Ally Sornam**

Associate Professor and Head, PG Department of LIS, Dean of Research and Development,

Bishop Heber College, Trichy – 620017, allysornam@gmail.com

**Dr. K.G. Jayarama Naik**

Assistant Professor, Dept. of Library and Information Science

Bangalore University, BANGALORE – 560 056, kgjrnaik.1964@gmail.com

**Abstract:** This paper attempts to study the possibilities of establishing Institutional Repositories (IRs) in select Bangalore theological libraries. Open Access Repositories play an important role in dissemination of scholarly works. The benefit of IRs is huge, it helps preserve and disseminate the knowledge. Institutional repositories Theological institutions in India are yet to make their invaluable historical, cultural and resources accessible in open access repositories. Implementation of IRs at UTC and SAIACS open up the opportunity for theological community to be part of the global community of scholars and share their scholarly productivity. The success of IRs demands the cooperation and support of the heads of the institutions and a change of attitude of the faculty towards IRs as a potential place for making their scholarship visible and available to others. National and regional theological organizations, library associations and other theological fraternity should come forward to support this new initiative for the benefit of everyone.

**Keywords:** Institutional Repositories, Digital Libraries, Theological Libraries, Knowledge Management, Theological Education

## **1. Introduction:**

The impact of IT in the library and information services is enormous and the benefit of IT applications in libraries is vast. IT helps libraries to create, manage and disseminate information to its patrons efficiently. The search and retrieval of information in a digital environment is much more meaningful. IT has greatly influenced libraries to exploit them for its information services. In today's context libraries are posed with the challenge of managing their resources. The availability of Open Access repositories enhances the dissemination knowledge worldwide.

Academic institutions, faculty members and students are creators of scholarly knowledge in their respective areas of specialization or subject disciplines. They consist of articles, books, research reports, theses and dissertations and others. The scholarly knowledge produced by the academic community is to be preserved and disseminated for the benefit of others. The proliferation of knowledge demands that the academic community access information in a timely manner. Institutional Repositories (IRs) play an important role in academic institutions for this great task. This article proposes to set up IRs at United Theological College (UTC) and South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies (SAIACS). It further attempts to discuss the concept of IR, its relevance, importance, software requirements and current trends with reference to digital archives initiatives in theological education.

## 2. Theological Institutions:

Theological institutions can be defined as institutions offering ministerial training for people to be involved in Christian ministry. These institutions are entrusted with the responsibilities of teaching, training and counseling of religious leaders for church-based, parish ministries, or the training of faculty members for other seminaries or to provide leadership training to the leaders of para-church organizations. The arrival of Serampore missionaries (William Carey, William Ward and Marshman) in the early 1800s and setting up of an educational institution in Serampore, West Bengal (i.e. Serampore College (University), founded in 1818), led to the formation of theological institutions in India for the purpose of formal ministerial training.<sup>1</sup>

Ranson<sup>2</sup> notes that Carey and his colleagues who founded Serampore College had the desire to prepare “missionaries from those born in the country”<sup>2</sup>. It is estimated that at least 300 colleges in India are involved in theological education.<sup>3</sup> The Joint Library Committee (JLC) has currently 18 theological seminaries in Bangalore as its members.<sup>4</sup> The United Theological College (UTC) and South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies (SAIACS) are part of JLC, since its inception.

### 2.1 United Theological College (UTC)

The United Theological College (UTC), Bangalore, was founded by the co-operation of London Missionary Society, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, the United Free Church of England (now the Church of Scotland) Mission, the Arcot Mission of the Reformed Church in America and the Madura Mission of American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions<sup>5</sup>. Currently UTC library has over 92,000 books, 2,130 theses, 5,016 periodicals, 13,431 volumes

---

<sup>1</sup> Siga Arles, “The state of mission studies in India: an overview and assessment of publications and publishing,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 34.3 (2010): 156–162, <<http://ezproxy.asburyseminary.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001792793&site=eds-live>> (16 July 2014)

<sup>2</sup> Charles W Ranson, *The Christian Minister in India, His Vocation and Training: A Study Based on a Survey of Theological Education by the National Christian Council*, London; Redhill: Lutterworth Press, 1945, 45.

<sup>3</sup> Yesan Sellan, “Report of the Executive Secretary” (presented at the Triennial Conference of Indian Theological Library Association (ITLA), Bangalore, Oct 4-7, 2005)

<sup>4</sup> Yesan Sellan and S. Ally Sornam, “The Impact of Information Communication Technology (ICT) on Libraries in Select Theological Libraries in Bangalore: A Study,” *Journal of Contemporary Christian* 5.No.2 (2013): 44–61.

<sup>5</sup> Charles W Ranson, *The Christian minister in India*, 108-109.

of bound periodicals, 771 microfilms, 23,992 microfiche collections, 332 CD-ROM Discs, 93 cassettes and others. The UTC Library holds valuable manuscripts, historical documents, palm leaves, microform resources and other resources which have immense value for sociological, theological, missiological, religious and linguistic studies. These archival collections facilitate research not only for students of history of Christianity in India, but also those doing research in the general history of the Indian people. There are 1400 old and rare books are in the collection, including a commentary on Galatians in Latin written by Martin Luther and printed in Basel in 1522 and Bartholomew Ziegenbalg's *Grammatica Tamulica* (Tamil Grammar) printed in Trnquebar in 1713. The UTC library archival collections are used by research scholars from different universities in India and abroad. The UTC library microfiche collection includes ancient palm leaf writings dating back 600 years, original, historical records of missions and churches, the materials of the Christian Conference of Asia, Census of India 1872-1951, and publications such as the *Journal of Indian History*, *Man in India*, *Calcutta Review*, and others<sup>6</sup>. The original records preserved in the archives provide invaluable information about the life and conditions during the last two centuries. In 2007, UTC library digitized a part of its archival collections and they are available in PDF and JPEG format.<sup>7</sup> In addition to this UTC possess dissertations and theses of students and faculty collected over a century. This unpublished research works will be a boon to theological education and research in the field of religion and philosophy across the country. The UTC library is computerized by NIRMALS software for its housekeeping operations. The plans are underway to move to KOHA, best open source ILS for libraries, which facilitates importing and exporting MARC records. KOHA database can be integrated with any digital library database such as Dspace.

## **2.2 South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies (SAIACS), Bangalore**

SAIACS is a postgraduate theological institution, started in 1981. The SAIACS library collection includes over 50,000 books, journals, theses and dissertations and other rare archival collections in microforms. It also holds special collections of manuscripts, such as the records of trial proceedings related to the Vellore Mutiny of 1806 and translations of the Tamil Diary of a Christian Village School Teacher for 30 years in the mid-19th century. Other archival materials include art works: rare aquatints, miniatures, etc. and rare historic photographs: "Durbar of Raja of Gwalior circa Mutiny/Revolt of 1857 in North India" and "Ceremonial Arrival of Viceroy at British Residency in Hyderabad", circa 1901. SAIACS library is exploring the possibilities of developing an Indigenous Mission Archives Resource Centre (iMARC). Through this arrangement missionary records of Christian missionary organizations (started by Indians) will be preserved and digitized. This will facilitate scholars across the globe to access significant numbers of missionary reports and documentation on Indian Christianity and their contribution to nation building through community development projects such as education, health care, women empowerment, literacy projects and others. This poses a huge opportunity for SAIACS to play a key role in the field of theological education at South Asia level and development of theological scholarship. Apart from this SAIACS also has unpublished research works of

---

<sup>6</sup> United Theological College, Ecclesiastical Archives: 1982 Catalogue, Bangalore: United Theological College, 1982, 3.

<sup>7</sup> United Theological College, Digital and Microforms Catalogue of Archives. Bangalore: United Theological College, 2007.

students and faculty and others which are significant to theological research in India. Recently SAIACS library moved its bibliographic records from System for Library Information Management (SLIM) database to KOHA, one of the fastest growing open source software systems so far the world has seen. This catalogue is accessible via a campus wide network. In the near future the campus network will be accessible remotely. A pilot study is carried out to offer online education for distance education students. The availability of library services such as the full-text database ATLA Religion Database and access to IR will certainly help researchers.

### **3. Paradigm Shift in Scholarly Communication:**

The Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) suggests two ways to open access to peer-reviewed scholarly works: Open Access Publishing (OAP), as against traditional journals which are published as open access publications and instant online, open access to articles and Open Access Archiving (OAA) provides opportunity to authors to submit their peer-reviewed papers and published articles into the archive for open access<sup>8</sup>.

Over many centuries the traditional method, print method, has been used for scholarly communication. The dissemination of knowledge produced by scholars goes through several stages of process. They are peer review, correction and printing and post print process of distribution. Under normal circumstances time taken for scholarly publications to reach the end user differ. A study by Sreekumar and others suggests the change in the model of scholarly communication and the merits of three systems: Eprint Archive (2-3 hrs), ePublishing (3-4 weeks) and conventional publishing (52 weeks).<sup>9</sup> In this new model, access to scholarship by the end user through Eprint Archive is only a few hours compared to the traditional method which takes a much longer period. Cullen and Chawner conducted a study among 8 universities in New Zealand which confirms that faculty members are interested in making their works available for increasing their exposure<sup>10</sup>. Cullen and Chawner found that those who had deposited rated the benefits of depositing more highly than their non-depositing colleagues in relation to exposure and knowledge management. Open Access to the content has attracted the academic community to be more proactive and adopting the modern method of making their scholarly works through open access repositories. Making their research available to their colleagues, students and increasing the exposure of their research seem to be the leading motivation for depositing their works in institutional repositories<sup>11</sup>.

### **4. Need for IRs in Theological Institutions**

Numerous studies are carried out to ascertain the benefits of IRs such as archiving, dissemination of knowledge and others. With the increase in the cost of journal subscriptions and other factors,

---

<sup>8</sup> M. G. Sreekumar et al., "Institutional Repositories for Knowledge Management in Academic and Research Institutions," (presented at the International Conference on Semantic Web & Digital Libraries (ICSD 2007), Bangalore: Documentation Research & Training Centre, Indian Statistical Institute, Bangalore, 2007), 260-273.

<sup>9</sup> M. G Sreekumar et al., "Institutional Repositories," 264-265.

<sup>10</sup> Rowena Cullen and Brenda Chawner, "Institutional Repositories, Open Access, and Scholarly Communication: A Study of Conflicting Paradigms," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 37, no. 6 (2011): 460-470, <<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S009913331100156X>> (27 Aug. 2014).

<sup>11</sup> Rowena Cullen and Brenda Chawner, "Institutional Repositories," 468

educational institutions are facing the struggle to have timely access to published knowledge through traditional methods. Theological institutions are no exception to this plight. Theological institutions' financial investment in their libraries is comparatively meager as compared to non-theological libraries. In this scenario, open access repositories opens possibilities of accessing scholarly works with minimal investment, such as Internet fees. This is mooted by Halder and Chandra that IR system provides access to scholarly content in the least possible time and even from remote places<sup>12</sup>.

According to the statistics available from [www.doar.org](http://www.doar.org) , of 2698 IRs, less than 5% are from religion and philosophy subjects<sup>13</sup>. It is also noted that not even a single open access repository in India is developed in the field of religion and philosophy, while 69 institutional repositories are available for other studies.<sup>14</sup> In a study carried out by Sarika Sawant, it is noted that 10 out of 13 repositories were dominated by science and technology subjects.<sup>15</sup>

## 5. Selection of Software

While a number of Open Source Software systems (Dspace, Eprints, FEDORA and others) are available for the setting up of IR. A study by Fayaz Ahmad Loan in an article on "Open Access Digital Repositories in Asia" throws light on the current status of IRs in Asia and their future. Across Asia, Dspace is found to be suitable for repository managers because of its noteworthy features, such as flexibility, customization, interoperability and others<sup>16</sup>. His study reveals that 63% of repositories are developed using Dspace and more than 90% out of 400 repositories are Institutional Repositories. The use of Dspace for creation of IRs at SAIACS and UTC has the greater advantage of being part of a growing number of IRs in Asia. Interconnecting with other repositories in the future will be convenient. The choice of OSS, institutions' financial investment software is null. It is not locked up with commercial vendors. It further adds greater value to the institution for availing universal community support, easy upgrade and enhanced features of search and retrieval and supports archiving in standard format.

### 5.1 DSpace

DSpace, open source digital library software was developed by Hewlett Packard and MIT libraries in 2000. Dspace is deployed worldwide for building digital institutional repositories that

---

<sup>12</sup> Sambhu Nath Halder and Suvra Chandra, "Users' Attitudes towards Institutional Repository", 51

<sup>13</sup> "OpenDOAR Chart - Subjects in OpenDOAR - Worldwide", n.d., <<http://www.opendoar.org/onechart.php?cID=&ctID=&rtID=&clID=&lID=&potID=&rSoftWareName=&search=&groupby=cl.clTitle&orderby=cl.clCode&charttype=bar&width=600&caption=Subjects%20in%20OpenDOAR%20-%20Worldwide>> (16 Jul. 2014).

<sup>14</sup> "OpenDOAR Chart - Subjects in OpenDOAR - India", n.d., <<http://www.opendoar.org/onechart.php?cID=99&ctID=&rtID=&clID=&lID=&potID=&rSoftWareName=&search=&groupby=cl.clTitle&orderby=cl.clCode&charttype=bar&width=600&caption=Subjects%20in%20OpenDOAR%20-%20India>>. (16 Jul. 2014).

<sup>15</sup> Sarika Sawant, "Institutional Repositories in India: A Preliminary Study," *Library Hi Tech News* 28.10 (2011): 6–10, <<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?articleid=17009856>> (16 Jul. 2014).

<sup>16</sup> Fayaz Ahmad Loan, "Open Access Digital Repositories in Asia: Current Status and Future Prospects," *International Journal of Information Science & Management* 12, No. 2 (2014): 35–45, <<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lih&AN=96907205&site=ehost-live>> (27 Aug. 2014).

captures, stores, indexes, preserves and redistributes content in digital format. Over 1000 repositories are developed using Dspace. Some of the most common formats currently managed within the DSpace environment are PDF, Word, JPEG, MPEG and TIFF files. Although out-of-the-box DSpace only auto-recognizes common file formats, files of any format can be managed by DSpace. It supports digital preservation, planning and managing institutional repositories in research and academic institutions. The community support for Dspace is significant. It enjoys the largest community support compared to all other IR software systems.

The following are the suggested workflow for setting up of IRs at SAIACS and UTC.

- ❖ **Content Development:** Submission of content to the repository is simple. Any authorized user can submit works from their workstation. Creation of reviewer for each collection and its sub-collections helps maintain quality content as added to the repository. Certain submitted items need to be authorized. In order to have substantial submission of scholarly works and other institutional related documents, it is essential to get the faculty, administrators on board for this process. In this stage, a well-defined work plan and role for each faculty and administrators, IT personnel and others in Dspace will make content submission, review and approval, archiving easier and efficient.
- ❖ **Work flow :** In Dspace<sup>17</sup> the starting of the submission of works begins with the selection of community and the sub-collection to which this document belong to, description of the work such as names of the authors, title, publisher and other details. The next step is to assign subject keywords, abstract and other details. In the third stage, define the embargo period and reason for this period. In the fourth stage is uploading of the file and description of the file, usually the name of the file is mentioned. Before granting license, the review of the details to ensure its correctness and followed by license type to be chosen such as Public Domain, Creative Commons or No Creative Commons. If the work is submitted under creative commons, then the submitter allows or disallows his/her work for commercial use and permission given/denied to edit/modify the work. The last step is to place your license or agree for the distribution license to ensure that no copyrighted materials are submitted. If submitted, it is understood that submitter has permission from the copyright holder to do so. The diagram below, by Greene and Shutton, shows the process of submission of a work in Dspace<sup>18</sup>.

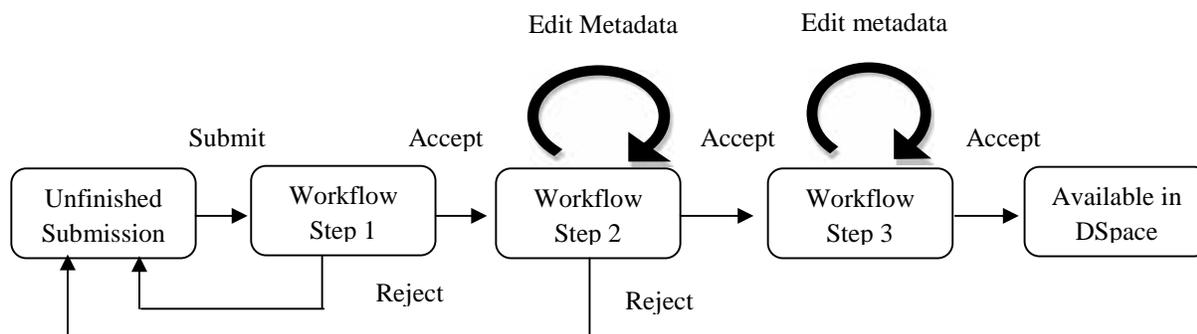


Fig 1: Workflow steps

<sup>17</sup> See <http://demo.dspace.org/xmlui/> (29 Aug.2014).

<sup>18</sup> Mira Greene and Sarah Sutton, "Introduction to Dspace" 42.

- ❖ **Metadata extraction:** Extraction of metadata from the existing library database, KOHA to Dspace database will help to integrate bibliographic records which will enhance the accessibility at the OPAC level. A Perl script will help in this process.

## 6. Role of IR in Theological Education:

Though there are more than 200 theological institutions in India, yet Indian theological institutions have not made a significant attempt to reap the benefit of IT applications for their institutional and library services. It is sad to observe that due to the lack of vision, financial and technical support, the development of theological institutions is not at par with secular educational institutions. In the last decade or so, slowly Indian theological institutions have felt or rather been forced to make changes in their thinking and perspective about IT infrastructure and its benefits. As Anuradha and Baradol's study rightly concludes that in the context of the rise of users' expectations and the change of technology, if theological libraries want to prove their existence in this modern age, they will have to adapt to developments in technology<sup>19</sup>. In this present scenario I would like to make my observations on the implications of IR in theological education. On the one hand the theological institutions are faced with financial scarcity to invest in library development and IT infrastructure. But the facts remain the same, if theological education has to reach its highest excellence and to meet the information needs of its clients such as pastors, para-church organizations, faculty members and students who are spread across the country. The investment on the development of IT, especially in the library, is far more worth doing so. These libraries have a great treasure in the form of manuscripts on paper, palm leaf, cloth, leather, or metal. No matter that good care is taken, time and environment has its impact on them. If these valuable resources are digitized, they can be made available for scholars and researchers forever through their IRs.

The development of IRs at SAIACS and UTC opens up huge opportunities for the benefit of many theological educators and learners. Especially the knowledge produced in the form of theses, dissertations, conference papers, lecture notes and historical documents and others from these two institutions who offer postgraduate and doctoral level studies in theological education. SAIACS and UTC are regarded as premier theological institutions representing two major theological fraternities, such as Asia Theological Association, evangelical theological institutions, and Serampore College (University) affiliated colleges. These two institutions have played a significant role in producing scholars and great thinkers in the field of theological education. The role of SAIACS and UTC is very important, especially to make their institutional scholarship available to the outside world through the development of IR. SAIACS' archival collection, especially the recent donation of Dr. Robert Eric Frykenberg's<sup>20</sup> personal library

---

<sup>19</sup> Anuradha Voolapalli and A. K. Baradol, "Technology Impact in Theological Libraries: A Myth or Reality?," *DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology* 31 No.6 (2011): 488, <<http://publications.drdo.gov.in/ojs/index.php/djlit/article/download/1324/572>>. (28 Aug. 2014).

<sup>20</sup> Dr. Robert Eric Frykenberg, is the Professor Emeritus, Department of History and South Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin.

resources, is important for the study of Asian history, mission, and social and cultural studies. Similarly the library archival collection of UTC is also another significant historical collection and potential for digitization. Recently UTC has digitized part of its archival collection. It has yet to be made available in a digital database server. Hence these two great theological institutions can play an important role by having an open access digital repository consisting of their archival collections available for others. This open access repository can pave way for other theological institutions in India to develop similar repositories. A few Indian protestant theological institutions with potential for developing IRs are;

- a. Aizwal Theological College, Aizwal
- b. Andhra Christian Theological College, Hyderabad
- c. Bishops College, Kolkata
- d. Gurukul Lutheran Theological Seminary, Chennai
- e. Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam
- f. Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam
- g. Serampore College, Serampore
- h. Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary, Madurai
- i. Union Biblical Seminary, Pune

Listed below are some of the important Roman Catholic seminaries in India with the prospective for developing IRs;

- a. Bhopal Regional Theologate, Bhopal
- b. Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore
- c. Kristu Jyothi College, Bangalore
- d. Morning Star Regional Seminary, Barrackpore, West Bengal
- e. Pontifical Institute of Theology and Philosophy, Alwaye, Kerala
- f. Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong
- g. St. Paul's Seminary, Trichy
- h. St. Peter's Pontifical Seminary, Bangalore
- i. Vidyajyothi College of Theology, New Delhi

A network of IRs of theological institutions in India can contribute to the development of National Repository for Theology (NRT). This NRT can be a big boon for seminaries to make their digitized resources available to the global community of theological learners and educators. The role of a NRT is significant to make the knowledge produced by the faculty and students of theological education at their desktops. A great deal of time is saved and knowledge is disseminated. The launch of the union catalog of Joint Library Committee (<http://server.2cqr.in:8080>) is a historic development. It is the first Asia level union catalogue for theological libraries and has proven the success of this network of libraries. The institutional repositories can not only offer benefit to the institutions, but also to the academic community consisting of faculty, students and others to find IR as a channel of scholarly communication.

## **7. Potential Challenges in IR:**

While there are numerous benefits of IRs, we cannot ignore the challenges that lie ahead. The cooperation and support of theological institutions' administrators is a must for the starting point of IR. The lack of planning and workforce from IT can lead to disaster. One important aspect for the success of IR depends on the support of faculty. The participation of faculty in IR is

significant. It is mooted by Jantz and Wilson that the marketing of IR services and how IRs can advance scholarship among faculty is important<sup>21</sup>. They further emphasize that faculty need to be made aware that IRs are among the best hope for increased visibility of their scholarship and preserving their research. The libraries have greater responsibilities for the success of IRs by way of marketing and articulation of IR services. The perception about IR among faculty needs to be changed, such as the fear of plagiarism, acceptance of sub-standard works in IR, the lack of popularity and reaching small groups of people. Another major constraint would be the acceptance of IR as an alternate way of publishing their research works. The metadata description for each item should be done carefully. The internal quality measures in place will ensure that the quality of metadata description of items and the approval by concerned department heads on the quality of work submitted. However, potential benefits attached with IR can outweigh the challenges.

## **8. Conclusion:**

The implementation of IRs at the selected theological institutions will open a wider scope for theological education in India. The success of IRs demands the cooperation and support of the heads of the institutions and a change of attitude of faculty towards IRs as to see IR as a potential place for making their scholarship visible and available to others. The establishment of NRT for Indian theological education will be a huge benefit to the unseen theological community, which is spread across the country. Theological organizations such as Board of Theological Education for Senate of Serampore College (BTESSC), Asia Theological Association (ATA) India Chapter, National Council for Churches in India, India Missions Association and others should come forward to support this venture financially and create awareness among its constituent members. The support of Indian Theological Library Association and other regional library forums will certainly enhance the quality and success of IRs. A further study on establishing national repository for theological education will be a boon for theological institutions to make their presence known in the modern age.

---

<sup>21</sup> Ronald C. Jantz and Myoung C. Wilson, "Institutional Repositories: Faculty Deposits, Marketing, and the Reform of Scholarly Communication," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* , 194