

# KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

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## ABSTRACT

*The emerging field of knowledge management offers academic libraries the opportunity to improve effectiveness. This paper discusses Knowledge Management theory and its application for library management.*

**Keywords:** Codification, knowledge management, social capital.

## INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is an expensive commodity, which if managed properly, is a major asset to the modern library. Knowledge management is concerned with the exploitation and the development of the knowledge assets of an organization with a view to furthering the organization's objectives. The knowledge to be managed includes both explicit, documentary knowledge and subjective knowledge, which resides in the minds of employees. Knowledge management embraces all the process associated with the identification, sharing and creation of information. Knowledge belongs to humanity and it is the torch, which illuminates the world. If the knowledge is to be kept radiant, it must have an impact over society. In old paradigm, "*Knowledge was Power*" must pave way for new motto, "*Sharing Knowledge is Power*". The demands of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is growing fast and indicates the direction of development towards creation of "*social capital*" and "*wealth creation*" through knowledge services.

Knowledge Economy is a knowledge- based economy. In the Knowledge Economy era, the management refers to effectively identify, acquire, develop, resolve, use, store and share knowledge, to create an approach to transforming and sharing of tacit and explicit knowledge, and to raise the innovation capability by utilizing the wisdom of the team. Since knowledge has become the driving force for social development, the attention of the society towards information and knowledge is rising and people's demands for information and knowledge are increasing step by step. This has provided a good environment for library development. Moreover, as information and knowledge has become important productive factor for the modern economic system, the society will inevitably require intensified management of information and knowledge. How to manage knowledge will become important subject facing libraries in the near future. Knowledge management in libraries should be focused on effective research and development of knowledge, creation of knowledge bases, exchange and sharing of knowledge among library staff (including its users). Training of library staff, speeding up explicit processing of the implicit knowledge and realization of its sharing.

## WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT?

Colleges, universities and their libraries are social organizations where workers transform resources for use by consumers through the function of teaching, research and services. Knowledge management may be defined as the set of process that create and share knowledge across and organization to optimize use of judgment in the attainment of

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mission and goals. It is an emerging discipline developing on the interstices of organizational psychology, Library and Information Science, Economics and Computer Science. KM is the art of creating value from organization's knowledge assets.

Herein are some of the description about KM by the world's leading thinkers on Knowledge Management:

*"Most activities or tasks are not one-time events. Whether it's drilling a well or conducting a transaction at a service station, we do the same things repeatedly. Our philosophy is fairly simple: every time we do something again, we should do it better than the last time"*

- (Sir John Steely Browne, BP, Harvard Business Review, 1997)

*"Knowledge Management is the discipline of enabling individuals, teams and entire organization to collectively and systematically create, share and apply knowledge to better achieve their objectives."*

- (Ron Young, CEO/CKO, and Knowledge Associates International.)

*"Knowledge Management will deliver outstanding collaboration and partnership working. It will ensure the region maximizes the value of its information and knowledge assets and it will help its citizens to use their creativity and skill better, leading to improved effectiveness and greater innovation"*

- (West Midlands Regional Observatory, U.K.)

We can define Knowledge Management as the collection of process that govern the creation, distribution and use of knowledge. It is also described as a collaborative process through which organizations generate value for their intellectual assets. Educators generate value when they conduct, report results and sometimes develop new products. Knowledge management has evolved from the combination of two factors-intellectual capital and intranets. Three Main Types of activities are covered under the KM:

- **Knowledge Generation:** Creation of new ideas and new patterns.
- **Knowledge Codification:** Converting one form of knowledge to another form of knowledge.
- **Knowledge Transfer:** Ensuring exchange of knowledge between individuals and departments or units of the organization.

### Knowledge Management in academic library

Role of knowledge management in libraries have become more and more important along with the development of knowledge economy. As a new method *Knowledge Management* in libraries leaves much to be desired in its theoretical system. Knowledge Management in libraries should include such aspects as follows-

- **Knowledge Innovation Management-** Knowledge Innovation Management in libraries refers to the management of the production, diffusion and transfer of knowledge as well as of the network system constructed by related institution and organization. It includes three aspects- i) theoretical, ii) technical and; iii) organization innovation management. Theoretical innovation management is to enrich and enlarge the theoretical and practical research fields of library and information science. Technical Innovation Management manages the network systems constructed by institution. It supports the evolution from conventional libraries to electronic or digital libraries. Organizational innovation management supports to create an effective management system adaptable to the operation procedures of libraries.
- **Knowledge Dissemination Management** - Libraries may play the part of knowledge pool, and use diverse media and channels to disseminate various new knowledge. Dissemination or communication of knowledge is an integral part of KM. Technology helps libraries to share knowledge recourses and expertise. Availability of open resources on internet and www and online education has made knowledge multi -sourced in "*anywhere, anytime*" paradigm.
- **Knowledge Application Management** – Library should attach importance to provision of services for people to acquire knowledge and achieve maximum function and efficiency of knowledge information based on high speed networks. It may be possible by setting up virtual libraries or Information Centers for enterprises, government and public organizations; scientific research institutions or setting up digitized knowledge services.
- **Human Resources Management-** We should pay full attention to diversity and variation of library staffs'

requirements, strengthen management of different library staffs by applying contingency management approach.

Knowledge management is a conscious strategy of getting the right knowledge to the right people at the right time. KM is being used to improve library operations. From theoretical point of view, knowledge can be considered as a pyramid. All knowledge begins at the bottom of the pyramid with data and unfiltered facts. When some context is added, in the case of libraries through cataloging or metadata, data become information. When inference is added such as references, information becomes intelligence, intelligence combined with certitude becomes knowledge and at the top; knowledge combined with synthesis becomes wisdom. Libraries have excelled at creating scholarly information and intelligence from data but they have not been as successful in generating organizational knowledge to achieve library goals. Knowledge Management is one way to develop and apply the organizational knowledge needed to improve library operations and effectiveness by developing skills.

#### **Role of Library Professional in Knowledge Management framework:**

Library professionals seek to accomplish following tasks:

- Able to deal with new technology.
- Generating new knowledge.
- Expert in capturing and transferring of information.
- Sharing knowledge without any geographical limitation.
- Manage knowledge as an asset.
- Representing knowledge in documents and database.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Knowledge Management is concerned with the entire process of discovery, creation, dissemination and utilization of knowledge. Librarians can use Knowledge Management to expand the library's role in administration and support services. They must have strategic goals, involve their users, and recognize technology as a functional tool. Knowledge Management can lead to a large role for libraries in broader academic community. Let us hope that in the coming years Knowledge Management would prove a good step in the right direction of every Indian educational institutions.

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