

Knowledge Management and its Application in the Academic Libraries in India

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Structured Abstract:

Background: Knowledge Management (KM) encompasses the processes of identifying, creating, capturing, organizing, storing, sharing, and utilizing knowledge and information within an organization or community to enhance learning, collaboration, and innovation.

Objective: This paper aims to explore the various dimensions of Knowledge Management and its applications within the field of library and information sciences.

Methods: The study examines the roles of librarians, information professionals, and information technology experts in managing knowledge resources, including expertise, intellectual property, and databases. It analyzes the overlap and distinctions between traditional library practices and modern information technology approaches to information management.

Results: KM involves managing diverse knowledge resources to facilitate organizational goals. Librarians and information professionals excel in searching, selecting, acquiring, organizing, preserving, repackaging, disseminating, and serving information. Meanwhile, advancements in information technology and systems have positioned IT professionals as key contributors to information management, creating a shared domain with library sciences.

Conclusion: The integration of KM practices in library and information sciences highlights the complementary roles of traditional librarianship and modern information technology. This synergy enhances the effective management and utilization of knowledge resources, fostering innovation and collaboration.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Information Technology, Innovations.

Introduction

Knowledge is the full utilization of information and data, coupled with the potential of people's skills, competencies, ideas, intuitions, commitments and motivations. Knowledge is an intellectual capital when people out of creation, add value to Information. In dictionaries, the meaning of knowledge is “familiarity gained by actual experience, practical skill and acquaintance or “intellectual experience with perception of truth” or merely “acquaintance with facts. Father of Library Science Padmashree Dr. S. R. Ranganathan has defined the Knowledge as “totally of ideas conserved by humans.

Knowledge and Library Science

The concept and name--“Knowledge Management”--was started and popularized in the business world during the last decade of the 20th century. It was the business world that first recognizes the importance of knowledge in the “global economy” of the “knowledge age”. In the new knowledge economy, the possession of relevant and strategic knowledge and its sunceasing renewal enables businesses to gain competitive advantage. The applications of knowledge management have now spread to other organizations including government agencies, research and development departments, universities, and others. The management of information has long been regarded as the domain of librarians and libraries. Librarians and information professionals are trained to be experts in information searching, selecting, acquiring, and organizing, preserving, repackaging, disseminating, and serving. However, professionals in information technology and systems have also regarded information management as their domain because of the recent advances in information technology and systems. One of the clearest evidences of this is that the positions of “Information Officer” in many organizations are generally held by y information technologists instead of librarians. In fact, most of the work of Information Officer has to do with developing and managing the IT infrastructure and systems.

Knowledge Management is value-added. It draws upon pooled expertise, Knowledge Management is value-added. : It draws upon pooled expertise, relationships, and alliances. Organizations can further the two-way exchange of ideas by bringing in experts from the field to advise or educate managers on recent trends and developments. Forums, councils, and boards can be instrumental in creating common ground and organizational cohesiveness.

Knowledge management is an audit of "intellectual assets" that highlights unique sources, critical functions and potential bottlenecks which hinder knowledge flows to the point of use. It protects intellectual assets from decay, seeks opportunities to enhance decisions, services and products through adding intelligence, increasing value and providing flexibility. Knowledge management is a process of creating, storing, sharing and re-using organizational knowledge (know-how) to enable an organization to achieve its goals and objectives. • Historical Background • Acquisition of Books • Organisation • Reference Services • Demand of the five Laws.

Knowledge Management is visionary. This vision is expressed in strategic business terms rather than technical terms, and in a manner that generates enthusiasm, buy-in, and motivates managers to work together toward reaching common goals. Knowledge Management is complementary. It can be integrated with other organizational learning initiatives such as Total Quality Management (TQM). It is important for knowledge managers to show interim successes.

Importance of Knowledge Management

Knowledge and Information Management is important only to extent that it enhances an organization's ability and capacity to deal with various situations that emerges during various operations. An organization has it look into the following four dimensions. Mission: What are we trying to accomplish? Competition: How do we achieve a competitive edge? Performance: How do we deliver the results? Change: How do deal with change? KM provides innovative and cost effective solution to the library users. Information technology, especially the cyber technology drives the way of knowledge management. Use of cyber technologies accelerates the rate of quality, quantity and cost effectiveness with improved productivity and suitability in services. It decreases cost and harnesses the human intelligence very efficiently. Knowledge Management involves enhancing organizational learning.

Knowledge management seeks to make the best use of the knowledge that is available to the Library, while creating new knowledge in the process. Knowledge management should be about exploiting and realizing knowledge of the employees and building a culture where knowledge sharing can thrive. Throughout the process, the library will generate value from their intellectual and knowledge-based assets. Therefore, the library will continue to grow

and prosper from the knowledge of employees throughout the library. This is also a great benefit for new employees replacing retirees within the library structure. Knowledge management is often facilitated by information technology, but technology itself is not knowledge management.

The Objective of Knowledge Management for Libraries

Knowledge innovation is the core of the knowledge economy society. As bases for collection, processing, storage and distribution of knowledge and information, libraries represent an indispensable link in the scientific system chain, an important link in the knowledge innovation. Libraries take part in scientific research process directly. The library work is an element of knowledge innovation. They act as bridge for turning the results of knowledge innovation into realistic productive forces. Knowledge Management in libraries is to promote relationship in and between libraries, between library and user, to strengthen knowledge internetworking and to quicken knowledge flow. Libraries will carry out researches on development and application of information resources, construction of virtual libraries, protection of intellectual property rights in the electronic era etc., thus founding the base for knowledge innovation in the knowledge economy era.

Needs and Scope of Knowledge Management in Library

The need for application of knowledge management in libraries can be analysed on the basis of factors:

Limitations of Existing Initiatives: TQM Performance Appraisal of Employee and other such as initiatives have helped libraries to become more accountable towards their job and responsibilities. However these initiatives are not able to harness the inherent talent of library personnel's as well as their intrinsic knowledge that could differentiate the services provided by the libraries and create a winning advantage in the society.

Value of Knowledge: Applied know –how can enhance the quality of products and services. It may be helpful in achieving cost effectiveness in the various library operations and services.

Minimize Duplication of Efforts: By retaining knowledge as organizations downsize or reshuffle, library and information centres can save costly mistakes or reinventing the wheel.

Sharing of Best Practices: Library and information centres can save millions a year by taking the knowledge from their best performers and applying it similar situations elsewhere. The applied know-how of the best performing library and information centres may be adopted as a model.

Enhanced Innovation: The development like Internet has revolutionized the concept of global village, this may be helpful to Library and Information Centres as to cater the library services globally by applying KM methods in improving their information products and services. A success of such small initiatives will motivate them for the further innovation in its operations and services.

Knowledge Management in Library

Business world is changing in the new knowledge economy and in the digital age, libraries of all types are undergoing drastic changes also. The new role of Libraries in the 21st century needs to be as a learning and knowledge centre for their users. As a learning organization, libraries should provide a strong leadership in Knowledge management. Unlike the business organization, the learning organization should share of knowledge with others outside. Libraries should improve their Knowledge management in all of the key areas of library services. The exponential growth in human knowledge in a variety of formats, libraries need to develop their resources, access and sharing strategies from printed to electronic and digital resources. Restricted by limited funding, technology, staff and space, libraries must carefully analyse the needs of their users and seek to develop cooperative acquisition plans to meet the needs of users. Libraries should be developed and maintained an integrated online public access catalogue (OPAC) with both internal and external resources as well as printed and other formats of knowledge. Useful websites and knowledge sources should be regularly searched and selected from the internet and included in OPACs.

Resource Sharing and Networking

Traditionally, libraries have a long practice of resource Resources sharing and networking. These have been greatly expanded by the rapid development of computer, telecommunication networking and digital technologies. The sources of the cooperative work and resources sharing of OCLC (Online Computer Library Centre) and Ohio LINK (Ohio Library and Information Network) in US, is the best examples in resource sharing and networking with

the result of the full cooperation and participation of all member libraries without selfishness. Large and major libraries must take the lead in such an Endeavour.

Tool for Knowledge Management (IT)

To facilitate the implementation of knowledge management, a well-defined and operational knowledge management system should be in place. Latest information technology should be used in the libraries. In this regard, the library director / librarian should consider himself as the knowledge officer of the entire organization and should work together with the chief information officer, heads of the planning department, the computer and information technology centre, the human resource management department, the finance department etc. design and develop such a system. Such knowledge management system should be built on the existing computer and information technology infrastructure including upgraded intranet, extranet, internet and available software programs to facilitate the capture, analysis, organization, storage and sharing of internal and external information resources for effective knowledge exchange among users, resource persons (faculty, researchers, subject experts etc., publishers, government agencies, business and industries and other organizations via multiple channels. In recent years, many of the newly developed information technology for databases and information / document management can be utilized in knowledge management such as data warehousing, data mining, text mining etc.

Human Resource Management (HRM)

The most important resource in the knowledge economy system is the talents who grasp knowledge. The talent competition has become the focus of market competition in the knowledge economy era. In the knowledge economy era, the libraries will attach importance to vocational training and lifelong education of library staff to raise their scientific knowledge level and ability of acquiring and innovative knowledge. They also will respect the human value, guide and bring into play wisdom potentialities of library staffs. It is an important way for raising work efficiency of library staff. An all-round improvement of library staff equality and positioning of the human value will become important objectives of knowledge management in Library and Information centres. The library staff members of Universities and research committees should be inventoried, indexed regularly and be made searchable and accessible through electronic databases created and maintained by libraries. The expertise should be appreciated with appropriate Rewards and incentives. As a learning organization,

libraries should allocate annual funding to provide continuing education and staff training to all staff members. Knowledge must be renewed and expanded to prevent it from becoming stagnant. Libraries should also encourage the transfer of knowledge and experience from experienced staff to new staff members. A mentoring system should be in place to help new comers to learn from experienced library staff. Informal seminars, discussion sessions for staff can interact and exchange “lessons learned” “best practices” and other experiences should be scheduled at regular intervals and at convenient times sit and chat rooms can be created through intranet libraries should be attending to favourable working conditions and environment, which will contribute to better staff retention.

Knowledge Management and User Services












The utmost goal of knowledge management is to provide users with a variety of quality services in order to improve the communication, use and creation of knowledge. Informational bout each user can be obtained by analysing the records of user registration, surveys, circulation and inter library loan, frequently asked reference questions and the use of journals and digital resources, etc., User satisfaction and needs should be collected through periodical user’s surveys. The findings should be used for the planning and redesign of the existing library services. Some of the manual services of the library such as “new publication alert” and “Dissemination of information” should be done automatically by employing the “push Technology” with great efficiency and convenience. Each library user can also set up his virtual “my library / portal” for new information / resources provided by the library. The utmost goal of knowledge management is to provide users with a variety of quality services in order to improve the communication, use and creation of knowledge.

Technologies for Knowledge Management of Libraries

Due to impact of globalization, economic competition and revolution of ICT, the libraries are undergoing tremendous change its environment. ICT tools and techniques, knowledge management systems, internet, web resources, digital libraries have made a significant change in the existing library systems and services. It is a major challenge for the library professionals. Knowledge acquisition is the starting point of knowledge management in Libraries. The application of IT, enlarges the scope of knowledge acquisition, raises Knowledge acquisition, speed and reduces knowledge acquisition cost. It is impossible to accomplish such important tasks by using man’s brain only in the modern society in which

the knowledge changes with each passing day. It will be possible to link closely knowledge sources and knowledge workers by computer networks, thus constructing knowledge networks in libraries based on realization of single point Informationalization.

Following is the Data wise List of Technologies for the Knowledge Management

-  Intranet within an organization
-  Document management systems
-  Information retrieval systems
-  Relational and object databases
-  Electronic publishing
-  Groupware and work flow systems
-  Push technologies
-  Help desk applications
-  Brain storming applications
-  Data warehousing and data mining
-  Globalization

Exploring the new Dimensions

Knowledge Management can be helpful in introducing the library and information professionals globally, providing them a platform for their regular skill enhancement and up-to-date, realistic and practical knowledge. It can be used for the purpose of converting the traditional learning system into an eLearning practice, thus accelerating the new dimensions of its scope and coverage.

Knowledge Management in Libraries

Libraries can use information technology as a tool for knowledge management. In libraries, knowledge management begins with knowledge acquisition. The scope of knowledge acquisition is expanded by the use of information technology. Promoting knowledge innovation is the aim of library knowledge management. The foundation of the knowledge economic society is knowledge innovation. As the foundation for information and knowledge

distribution, processing, storage, and gathering. Libraries are a crucial component of knowledge innovation and an essential link in the chain of scientific systems. Second, libraries actively participate in the process of scientific research. One aspect of knowledge innovation is the work done in libraries. Thirdly, knowledge conversion and dissemination are important topics for libraries to focus on. The goal of knowledge management in libraries is to strengthen connections inside and among libraries.

Conclusion

Knowledge Management is an emerging field, much rooted or hyped since late 1990s. Due to the complicated nature of knowledge and its management, it is often difficult to estimate or demonstrate the value of the Knowledge Management. In the business world, knowledge management has been regarded as strategically important for organizations to gain a competitive advantage over their competitions, to add value their products, to win greater satisfaction from their customers. In the library world, there is a lesson to be learned from the business world. For any library to succeed in implementing knowledge management will require a strong leadership and vision from the top administration. Information Technology and systems can provide effective support in implementing knowledge management. Libraries should work together with Information Technology Professionals and others to develop the appropriate knowledge management systems. Libraries, with limited budget and human resources, should utilize the current management structure and technology to implement KM, either bottom-up or top-down. With an effort, KM will help to increase libraries operational efficiency and later to the ever increasing need.

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