

Revamping of Academic Libraries through Knowledge Management

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Abstract

Today knowledge management (KM) is the winning word in all types of organisations whether service oriented or business oriented government or private. Academic libraries are not lagging behind in this race. Increasingly, library and information professionals are being referred to as knowledge managers and libraries and information centres as knowledge centres. This article highlights the know-how of knowledge management as well as how Knowledge management can inject new blood into the library. The evolution of Knowledge Management through the ages and recommendations of National knowledge commission has also been dealt here. The impact of knowledge management through human resources, knowledge innovation, Information technology, knowledge diffusion has been shown. Development of knowledge operation mechanism, mutual trust, open exchange, study and sharing has also been discussed which may rejuvenate libraries.

Keywords: Knowledge management, knowledge pentagon, Academic Libraries, knowledge innovation, knowledge diffusion.

Introduction

“The preservation of the means of knowledge among the lowest rank is of more importance to the public than all the property of rich men in the country.” (John Adams)

Academic Libraries have always had a pivotal role in the storage, processing and dissemination of information as well as knowledge. It is a universal fact running stone gathers no moss, so are the libraries which are on constant move to keep a pace with changing scenario. Steven.L.Baker (2001) said that “Librarianship is discipline that promotes an integrated approach to preserving, identifying, capturing, evaluating, retrieving and sharing the significant knowledge and information asset of society”. Knowledge Management refers to a collection of process, technologies and principles that serves to promote a learning environment supportive of the search community goal.

Knowledge is defined as a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information and expert insights that provides a frame work for evaluating and incorporating new experience and information. It originates and is applied in the mind of knower. In the organization it often become embedded not only in documents or repositories but also in the organizational routines, processes, practice and norms

Knowledge management is the explicit and systematic management of vital knowledge and its associated processes of creating, gathering, organizing, diffusion, use and exploitation. It requires turning personal knowledge into corporate knowledge that can be widely shared throughout on organization and appropriately applied.

Knowledge Management is an emerging field, much tooted or hyped since late 1990s. Knowledge Management is a complex process, which deals with creations, acquisitions, packaging and application of knowledge. It is the systematic, explicit and deliberate building renewal and application of knowledge related effectiveness and returns from its knowledge assets. Library & Information Science professional and Knowledge Manager have realized the importance of knowledge management.

Evolution of Knowledge management

David Snowden (2002) suggests that knowledge management has evolved in the three phases.

1. In the first phase of knowledge management is one in which the focus was on distributing information to decision makers for timely use in decisions.
2. The second age replaced Information Technology focus with one tacit /explicit knowledge conversion inspired by Nonka’s SECI model.
3. The third age will be one in which Knowledge is viewed paradoxically as a thing and a flow; context, narrative and content management will be central to our view of knowledge management.

Further he believes that there will be an understanding of organizations as engaged in sense making through utilization of Complex Adaptive System(CAS) phenomena constrained by human acts of free will attempting to order them and finally the use of the insights and practices of scientific management will be restricted

to appropriate context, while “ insights and learning” from theories of chaos and complexity will supplement them in context where these new insights are relevant.

Knowledge Management in Academic Libraries

Davenport explains that Knowledge Management as a process is about acquisition, creation, packaging and application of reuse of knowledge. In any organization, the libraries are the backbone of information dissemination and the different services offered by the libraries are mainly designed to fulfil the goals/missions of the organization. The main aim of library is to provide right information to the right user at the right time. Librarians deserve a central role in the development of processes and policies that harness an organization’s knowledge base. As keepers and disseminators of information within organization, librarians make substantial contributions to the successful implementation of knowledge management projects. Academic libraries are information centres established in support of the mission of their parent institutions to generate knowledge, and people equipped with knowledge in order to serve the society and advance the well-being of mankind. In the digital age, academic libraries face challenges from both within (academia) and without (the business sector). Implementation of knowledge management enhances the traditional functions of academic library. Academic departments, or even faculty and students, may purchase or build their own portals to meet their academic and/or research needs. Academic libraries are under pressure from two sides: reduced budget and increased demand from faculty and students. The implementation of Knowledge Management in academic libraries is mainly driven by its mission rather than by the competition from Internet-based reference services or electronic books.

Objectives of Knowledge Management in Academic Libraries

The main objective of Knowledge management is to ensure that the right information is delivered to the right person just in time, in order to take the most appropriate decision. The objectives are as follows:

- To promote collection, processing, storage and distribution of knowledge
- Faster and easier recovery of data and disseminate the information
- Reducing risks and errors

Knowledge Pentagon

The National Knowledge Commission of India set up by Prime Minister of India Mr Manmohan Singh in the year 2005 with a pledge to transform India into a Knowledge society. The recommendations of the commission are as follows:

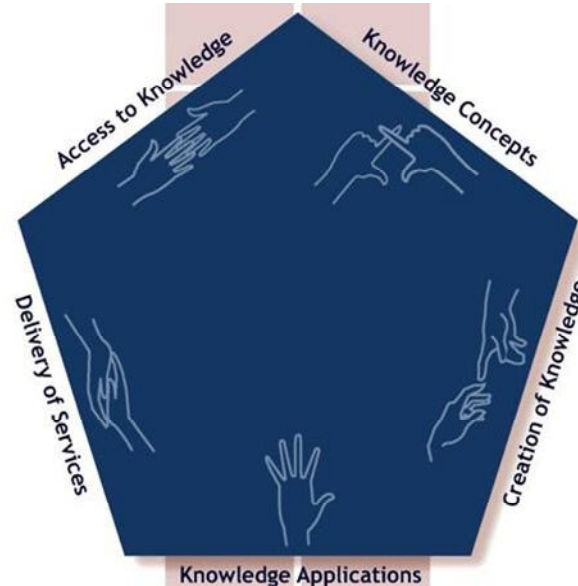
1. Build excellence in the education system to meet the Knowledge challenges of the 21st Century and increase India’s Competitive advantage in the field of knowledge.
2. Promote creation of Knowledge in Science and technology Laboratories.

3. Improve the management of institution engaged in Intellectual Property Right.
4. Promote Knowledge application in Agriculture and Industry.
5. Promote the use of knowledge capabilities in making Government an effective, transparent and accountable service provider to the citizen and promote widespread sharing of knowledge to maximum public benefits.

The National Knowledge Commission working group on Libraries has recommended to

1. Set up a National Commission on Libraries.
2. Prepare a national census of all Libraries.
3. Revamp LIS Education, Training, and Research Facilities.
4. Reassess staffing of Libraries.
5. Set up a central Library fund.
6. Modernize Library Management.
7. Encourage greater community participation in Library management.
8. Promote Information Communication Technology application in all Libraries.
9. Facilitate donation and maintenance of private collection.
10. Encourage public private partnership in LIS development.

Thus above mentioned recommendations focus on five major areas of knowledge which is known as knowledge Pentagon.



1. Knowledge concepts
2. Creation of knowledge
3. Knowledge application
4. Delivery of services and
5. Access to knowledge.

It is evident that revamping of Libraries through the knowledge is already on the way. Now the Libraries have to handle the creation, dissemination, utilization and preservation of knowledge in amore cautious and prompt way. In order to follow that some suggestion to make use of knowledge management are as follows:

Application of Knowledge Management in Academic Libraries

Application of knowledge management in Academic Libraries are of great importance .Libraries are attach to vocational training and lifelong learning of their personnel to raise their knowledge level and ability of acquiring and innovating knowledge. Application of knowledge management in libraries will help for all round improvement of library staff.

HRD in Library and Information Science

Human Resource Development is a process by which employees of an organization are helped to gain skills, competency in executing and there by achieves success through involvement. Human resource is an important resource in libraries and management is the art of exploiting deferent resources with minimum effort. Therefore applying KM upon HR will defiantly prove fruitful if emphasis is given on vocational training and lifelong educating of library personnel to raise their scientific knowledge level and ability of acquiring an innovating knowledge than undoubtedly it will act as a catalyst to boost their all round improvement which in turn will be benifishier for the LIS sectors by meeting of the demands of the users promptly and authentically.

Knowledge Innovation

Innovation is always in combed in every filed in management. It is establishing the status quo. In case of LIS sectors Knowledge invention need of the hour. Seems the perceptions of LIS sectors by the users are not significant enough hence knowledge invention can bring fresh lease of life in libraries the function of Libraries is collection, processing, storage and dissemination of information and it forms an important link in scientific community. The Library works is important supplement of knowledge innovation. Libraries behave mediator for transforming knowledge innovation into realistic productive forces. Thus being conscious of important of libraries KM can help them to mould them to fit the emerging demands. Like internet among library, enhancing public liaisons, starching knowledge inter networking, applications of information resources, construction of virtual libraries, and protection of IPR in the electronic era thus helping to build the support infrastructure for KI.

Information Technology

Knowledge management in academic library seeks knowledge acquisition as the

initial point. By harnessing the scope of knowledge acquisition raises knowledge acquisition speed and reduces knowledge acquisition cost. The knowledge acquired must be accumulated and converge in to Knowledge Worker. It is not only acquisition of knowledge but also sorting and security of the knowledge. In the present scenario Knowledge changes with each passing days so it is impossible to make use of human brains only of ample of IT options are available. By linking Knowledge sources and Knowledge workers by computer network we can construct Knowledge networks in libraries based on realization of single point informatization.

Knowledge Dissemination

There are various generators and channels of Knowledge by which it is generated flow. Knowledge creator does not have much time with to look for Knowledge users. Though there are multitude of knowledge that already exists in the minds of knowledge creators as restricted by various objectives conditions. Hence the academic libraries are playing the part of knowledge toser, use diverse media & channels to disseminate different type of knowledge.

Conclusion

The greatest challenge facing managers in the developed countries of the world is to raise the productivity of k and service work (Peter F Drucker). Hence we can conclude that km can have great impact of academic libraries. KM helps the libraries to come out from the existing crisis. If the resources of academic libraries can be effectively managed them it will prove fruitfull for the programmes of the libraries. Thus KM paves the way for enhancing productivity and efficiency in libraries sectors. As we have seen the birth and emergence of knowledge management as well as suggestion of National Knowledge Commission. Realizing the importance of knowledge management in libraries emphasizing on HRD, Knowledge Innovation (KI), IT, Knowledge Dissemination (KD) a sea of change can take place. By promoying Knowledge exchange among Libraries staff is strengthening innovations, consciousness & abilities, arising the libraries staff's enthusiasm & abilities of learning, making the Knowledge most efficiently applied to library culture & rebuilding library into a learning organization. Thus building rational design of the organization stricter & business procedures of libraries & cultural fostering, modernizing information support creating an environment & incentive mechanism for innovation, exchange, study, & application of Knowledge. Customer oriented services or meeting the demand of the users is the focal point of all libraries. Hence applications of Knowledge Management sharpen the existing resources to meet these demands more promptly.

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