

Knowledge Management and the Role of Academic Libraries

Himanish Roy

Ex-Student, MLIS, DLIS, University of North Bengal, Darjeeling, West Bengal

himanishroy20@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In the present information and knowledge age, knowledge has become a key resource in our society. The academic zone need to improve information units based on the advanced information tools and standards needed to facilitate efficient information management, flow, and exchange. A well established library is necessary for any academic organization. As a focal point for teaching, learning and research, it is expected to provide standard information resources. Today, academic libraries are struggling to keep their place as the major source of investigation in the face of rising digital technology. KM helps academic libraries and information professionals in improving the services being rendered to their users. In this paper deals with KM and the role of KM in academic libraries and also examine the use of IT in Knowledge Management.

Keywords: Academic Library, Data, Knowledge Management, Information Management, Information Technology

1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge Management (KM) is a concept that emerged explosively in the business community over the last few years. It is a relatively recent phenomenon and as a key component of the strategic planning process which developed in the mid-1990s. Day by day all types of libraries are undergoing to drastic changes, they are becoming as an information centre. Because in our modern society is based on new knowledge economy and digital era. As a focal point for teaching, learning and research, it is expected to provide standard information resources. Today, academic libraries are struggling to keep their place as the major source of investigation in the face of rising digital technology. The new role of academic libraries in the 21st century needs to be as a

learning and knowledge centre for their users as well as the intellectual commons for their individual communities where, to use the phrase from the Keystone Principles, people and ideas interact in both the real and virtual environments to expand learning and facilitate the creation of new knowledge.

2. Types of Knowledge:

In 1991 Ikujiro Nonaka raised the conception of “tacit” knowledge and “explicit” knowledge as well as the theory of “spiral of knowledge”.

2.1 Tacit Knowledge: Tacit knowledge remains in the minds of people. The acquisition of tacit knowledge is usually improved through a process of trial and error during practical experience.

2.2 Explicit Knowledge: Explicit knowledge easy to communicate to others and it is the knowledge of unity.

3. Information Management:

Information management tries to make the right information available to the right person at the right time though a variety of database driven information applications. Before we discuss about knowledge management it is essential to clear the concept of information management. According to Wikipedia, Information management is the collection and management of information from one or more sources and the distribution of that information to one or more audiences.

4. Knowledge Management (KM):

Knowledge Management (KM) means management of knowledge. It is the systematic management of an organization’s knowledge assets for the purpose of creating value and meeting considered and strategic requirements. KM deals with creating, securing, capturing coordinating, and combining, retrieving and disseminating knowledge.

5. Difference between Information Management and Knowledge Management:

The significant difference between knowledge management and information management are given below-

- Information management is "the provision of the right information to the right people at the right time". On the other hand Knowledge management goes beyond this, and provides not just information, but insight, guidance, experience and know-how, for the purpose of decision support and effective action.
- Information management maintain information as an object and it's easier to recognize information while the other side knowledge management maintain knowledge as an object though it is not easy to identify since it is not codified.
- Information management is mainly concerned with people managing information sources, while Knowledge management involves people in creating, capturing, sharing and using knowledge in an organisation in better manner.

6. Role of KM in Academic Libraries:

An academic library is a library which provides an institution of higher education, such as a college, university or a school and it also serves two complementary purposes to support the school's curriculum and the research of the university faculty and students.

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 KM enhances the traditional functions of academic library. The changing role of academic librarians as knowledge managers emphasises the need to continuously update or gain new skills and knowledge to remain appropriate to the modern library's environment. KM helps academic libraries and information professionals in improving the services being rendered to their users. The academic libraries are the spine of any organization or institution to information dissemination and the different services offered by the libraries are mainly designed to fulfil the goals of the organization. The main aim of library is to provide right information to the right user at the right time. So in

academic libraries the knowledge management cannot be underemphasized, as it helps to enlarging the traditional function in digital age.

7. Objectives of Knowledge Management in Academic Libraries:

The fundamental objective of academic libraries is to assemble the need of users demand. Generation of information is increasing day by day. For the huge amount of information, is producing information pollution. It is very necessary to manage the essential information's to generate knowledge. The objectives are as follows:

- KM provides the relationship between library and their users.
- KM deals with creations, acquisitions, retrieves and distributes the knowledge in academic library.
- KM promotes earlier and easier recovery of data and disseminates the information.
- KM practitioners maintain that knowledge must be shared and serve as the foundation for collaboration.
- KM requires development of knowledge managers.
- KM creates knowledge repositories and manages knowledge as an asset.

8. Information Technology used in Knowledge Management:

Information technology is a broad term that covers all forms of technology used to create, store, exchange and use information in different forms. It is a very important tool for knowledge management. Information Technology (IT) provides tools to support management of explicit knowledge and also to support communities of practice. Since most practical situations involve a combination of explicit and tacit knowledge, only an integrated set of information technology tools can provide effective and efficient support to knowledge management. Advancement of Information Technology (IT) and its applications in Libraries and Information Centres, the concept of document management has been changed to information management and again the entire situation of information management has started its change to knowledge management (KM). In recent years, many of the recently developed information technology for databases and information/document

management can be utilized in knowledge management such as data warehousing, data mining, text mining etc.

In academic library information acquisition, storage, management and disseminating have been tremendously and positively affected by computer technology. All routine activities involved in collection development, readers services (circulation and reference services), serials management and technical services are being accomplished by computer and related technology. Computer and IT application have notable benefits to academic libraries. Due to impact of globalization, economic competition and revolution of ICT, the libraries are undergoing great change in its environment. ICT tools and techniques, knowledge management systems, internet, web resources, digital libraries have made a important 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 price.

9. Advantage of Knowledge Management in Academic Libraries:

- Promote innovation by encourage the Opening channel of communication ideas and Improving quality and efficiency of decision-making
- Continuous improvement and learning from others
- Selection and use of information and data
- Makes it possible for you to support new technologies easily and capture new knowledge for future use
- Improves staff engagement and communication
- Employee training/education/development programme

10. Disadvantage of Knowledge Management in Academic Libraries:

- Searching for new source of information
- Adapting knowledge to users need
- Sharp and analytical mind
- Creating/disseminating new knowledge and embedding it in new technologies and products
- Information Technology Literacy
- Enables knowledge creation, flow and communication within the organization.

11. Conclusion:

Knowledge and knowledge management (KM) are playing a very vital role in academic libraries. In the present scenario KM is a powerful tool for promoting innovation, realizing and re-engineering the various aspects of day to day actions of an institution. Knowledge in academic libraries can be acquired through: **a)** Establishing knowledge links or networking with other libraries and with institutions of all kinds, **b)** Attending training programmes, conferences, seminars and workshops, **c)** Subscribing to list serves and online or virtual communities of practice, **d)** Developed their internal knowledge, **e)** Taxonomy, controlled vocabulary development, **f)** Indexing and Abstracting services, **g)** Developed their roles and everyday jobs and **h)** Buying knowledge products or resources in the form of manuals, blueprints, reports and research reports, etc. Day by day academic libraries are rapidly changes, they are becoming as an information centre. Academic libraries have always facilitated information exchange, so they are well placed to take on knowledge management functions. KM helps libraries and the other hand KM helps library professionals in improving the services being performed to their users. Information professionals have to reformation their roles as knowledge professionals. At the present time Library professionals have responsibilities to equip themselves with a new technology of knowledge management. The traditional role of library professionals was information collect, process, disseminate store and make use of information to provide multi-disciplinary services to the personal and professional needs of the library users. But with the advent of ICT, they also play major role in knowledge management programmes and identifying, acquiring, developing, resolving, storing and sharing of knowledge.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Dhiman, A. K. (2011). Knowledge Discovery in Database and Libraries. *DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology*, 31, 446-45.
- [2.] Hunter, J. (2005). The Role of Information Technologies in Indigenous Knowledge Management. *Australian Academic & Research Libraries*, 36(2), 109-124.
- [3] Khan, M. H. (2008). Knowledge Management: A New Challenge for Libraries & Information Centres. -, 2(2), 53
- [4] Knowledge Management. Retrieved on June 25, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KM>
- [5] Lee, H.W. (2005). Knowledge Management and the Role of Libraries. Asian Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, U.S.A.
- [6] Townley, C. T. (2001). Knowledge Management and Academic Libraries.