

# CHANGING DIMENSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

*Kamal Kumar Chaurasia\**

## **Abstract**

*Knowledge is the result of learning which provides the only sustainable competitive advantage to the organization. Knowledge is all about action, focused innovation, pooled expertise, special relationship and alliances. Thus the accumulated wealth of knowledge and wisdom are used for the betterment of organization in particular the society and nation in general. Knowledge is the ability to turn information and data into effective action. Knowledge is an asset, or a resource has several characteristics, which make it distinct from other resources, first of all, it is reusable, as well as capable of being used by more than one person at a time. This paper throws light over the present day role of knowledge managers, and expected role in knowledge economy based society. It sketches the factors responsible for emergence of knowledge managers in an organization with special emphasis in libraries. Finally it counts the various benefits of knowledge management in library and information centers and emphasis the implementation of knowledge management tools in libraries for optimum performance.*

## **Introduction**

Today the Knowledge Management is emerging as a dominant force in the society for the better survival and optimum utilization of its resources. Knowledge Management deals with using information, which creates value. Knowledge is present in ideas, judgments, talents, root causes, relationships, perspectives and concepts of every individual. Knowledge resides in an individual brain or is encoded in organizational processes, documents, products, services, facilities and systems. The role of knowledge management in an organization especially in libraries will become more and more important along with the development of knowledge based society. Knowledge is the result of learning which provides the only sustainable competitive advantage to the library and information centers. Knowledge is all about action, focused innovation, pooled expertise, special relationships and alliances. Thus the accumulated wealth of knowledge and wisdom are used for the betterment of organization in particular the society and nation in general.

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- Librarian, Motilal Rastogi School of Management, Lucknow-226008  
Email: klib\_522@yahoo.com

## **Knowledge is Power**

Knowledge is the ability to turn information and data into effective action. Knowledge as an asset, or a resource, has several characteristics, which make it distinct from other resources, first of all, it is reusable, as well as capable of being used by more than one person at a time. The whole of a pool of knowledge, or a knowledge base, is greater than the sum of its part. Despite the fact that much knowledge often has a short 'shelf life', and that its component is information. Knowledge assets and resources are growing and increasing rather than diminishing, overtime.

These characteristics are part of what makes knowledge so powerful. Knowledge is of two types; one is tacit knowledge, which can be considered as personal knowledge- it is what a person knows, another is explicit knowledge, which has been recorded either in book form or in other document form or embedded (e.g. in software). Librarians are very much familiar with the explicit knowledge, as it is precisely the material that they have been purchasing, organizing, housing and supplying to users since their existence. The management of tacit knowledge is still a challenge for library and information professionals.

## **Today the Libraries Can Manage Knowledge...**

Knowledge deals with knowledge and the mission of the libraries is the knowledge management. Knowledge can be divided in two categories, tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is the 'know-how' acquired by persons. It is usually intuitive and generally demonstrated as how an individual makes accomplishment in his work, even though this knowledge is not recorded anywhere. But one of the goals of the knowledge management is to make tacit knowledge more widely available. Knowledge needs to be managed because it is so valuable and shows that what an organization knows and what it owns. Managing knowledge goes much further than capturing data and manipulating it to obtain information. The aim of knowledge management is for libraries to become more competitive through the capacities of library and information professionals to be more flexible and innovative.

The basis of how libraries compete in this challenging environment--increasingly center on managing knowledge and knowledge workers. Where a library and information center's performance is heavily reliant on knowledge work then knowledge management is pivotal. There is a lot of knowledge within the libraries, this knowledge is diffused and mostly unrecognized, there

is a need of Knowledge management system to allow them to identify and access workers skill and expertise. Knowledge work emphasizes the use of professional intellect in regular activities, which uses individual and external knowledge to produce outputs characterized by information content.

## **Importance of Knowledge Management**

Knowledge and Information Management is important only to the extent that it enhances an organization's ability and capacity to deal with various situations that emerges during various operations. An organization has to 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 we deal with change?

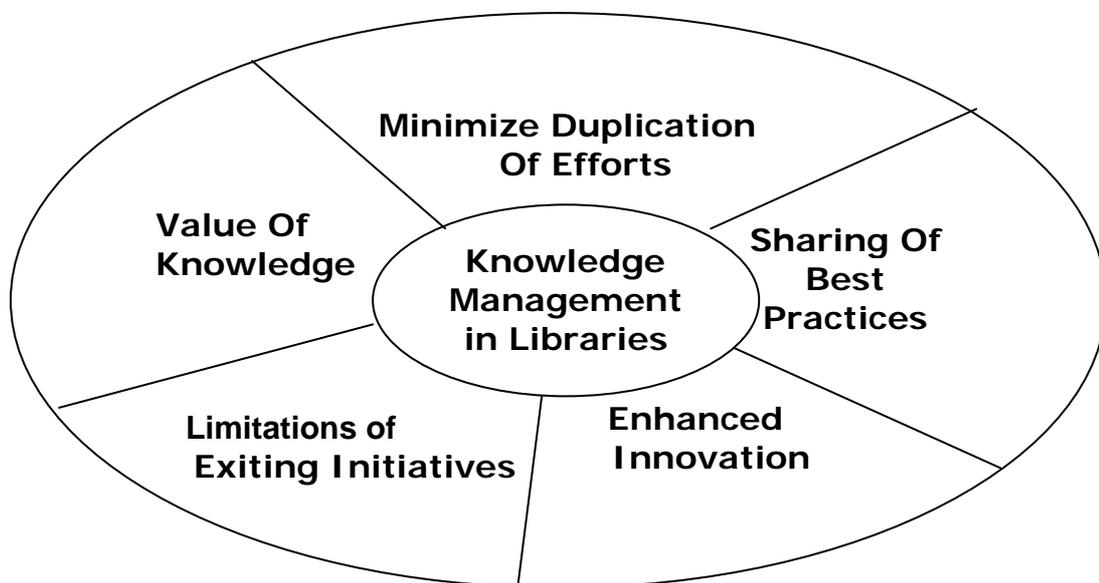
Knowledge management provides innovative and cost effective solution to the library users. Information technology, especially the cyber technology drives the way of knowledge management. Use of cyber technologies accelerates the rate of quality, quantity and cost effectiveness with improved productivity and suitability in services. It decreases costs and harnesses the human intelligence very efficiently. Knowledge Management involves enhancing organizational knowledge through sound practices of information management and organizational learning.

## **Present Day Knowledge Managers & their functions**

- They collate and correlate raw facts with the information available to obtain an insight or knowledge that is further stored in the knowledge base as a valuable knowledge asset.
- They mix information with regular activities & operations and get the result in the form of knowledge-based product as an output.
- They assimilates the information with men so as to provide raw material for generation of newer information that further turns into valuable knowledge, which is kept in written as well as in tangible form.
- They explore and utilize the personal knowledge of men in the society thus spreading the sharing and cooperation among people in knowledge based society.

## Why Knowledge Management in Libraries?

The reasons for application of Knowledge Management in Libraries can be analyzed on the basis of following factors:



### ➤ **Limitations of Exiting Initiatives**

TQM, Performance Appraisal of Employees and other such 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 centers can save costly mistakes or reinventing the wheel.

### ➤ **Sharing of Best Practices**

Library and information centers can save millions a year by taking the knowledge from their best performers and applying it in similar situations elsewhere. The applied know-how of the

best performing library and information centers may be adopted as a model.

➤ **Enhanced Innovation**

The developments like Internet has revolutionized the concept of global village, this may be helpful to Library and Information Centers 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.

## **Planning Knowledge Management**

While planning the application of knowledge management in libraries, we need to check out the certain predefined goals and objectives. We also need to follow certain guidelines and some procedures so as to successfully harness the all-available intangible assets of an organization via exploiting its policies, strategies, techniques, methodologies and tactics used in routine. The order of actions and their major constituents are as following:

- **To define the vision and value of knowledge management in the organization.**
- **Determining the critical elements of successful Knowledge Management Initiatives in the organization.**
- **Developing the Library as a knowledge management resource center having following major amenities and facilities in the library:**
  - ✓ Establishment of Remote User
  - ✓ Multimedia  
(e.g., collaborative workstations with video and two-way audio)
  - ✓ Designing and Development of Information Databases
    - In-House
    - Campus Wide
    - Consortia Based and

- Internet
- ✓ Designing and Development of Help and tutorial systems
  - Developing training instructions
  - Developing e-learning modules
- ✓ Network services
  - Developing LAN- Local Area Networks
  - Developing WAN- Wide Area Networks
- ✓ Developing User interface
  - In-house user interface
  - Specific user interface
  - Interface for general public
- ✓ To Provide data manipulation Facilities  
(e.g., research, end-user Projects)
- **Configuration of Network Access Grid to facilitate easy and convenient browsing and sharing of resources and expertise among all the existing knowledge domains within the organization.**
- **Student / Research Centered Facilities**
  - ✓ Promoting Trends research - latest technologies and systems that support knowledge management services.
  - ✓ To develop training spaces that become part of the effective information organization.

## **Importance of Knowledge Management in Libraries**

### **➤ Optimum Exploitation of LIS Professionals**

The most important and dynamic resource in the library is its professional staff, and by the optimum exploitation of their brain and intrinsic values, libraries can improve a lot. Knowledge Management can uplift the knowledge level and ability of acquiring and innovating knowledge of library staffs. Here basic starting point is to train high quality specialized talents and then revitalize the library undertaking. There should be full attention on diversity and

variation of library staffs' requirements. It can be further strengthened by training of different library staffs by applying contingency management approach. They can develop the knowledge resources in the brains of library staffs as an important way for rising work efficiency. An all-round improvement of library staff's quality and positioning of the human value will be possible only through the implementation of Knowledge Management.

#### ➤ **Promoting Knowledge Innovation**

The libraries are the component of knowledge innovation. They act as bridges 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. In future, the 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 firming the base for knowledge innovation.

#### ➤ **Use of Cyber Technologies**

Knowledge Management can boom the applications of cyber world in libraries by promoting the sharing of knowledge among the professionally qualified library staff. The application of information technologies in cyber environment enlarges the scope of adequate knowledge acquisition, raises knowledge acquisition speed and reduces knowledge acquisition cost. It is impossible to accomplish such important tasks by using man's brains 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 and World Wide Web, thus constructing knowledge networks in libraries based on realization of single-point information repository.

#### ➤ **Globalization: Exploring the 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 e-learning practice, thus accelerating the dimensions of its scope and coverage.

#### ➤ **Disseminating Knowledge**

There is a crowd of knowledge users, although it is very difficult to acquire the knowledge that already exists in the minds of knowledge creators as restricted by various objective and subjective

conditions. Here, libraries may play the part of knowledge expediter using diverse media and channels to disseminate various type of new knowledge among people.

### ➤ **Library is a Social Organization**

Libraries are the social organization and hence their responsibility includes the dissemination of all existing knowledge among the citizens of a country. In the 21st century libraries should also attach importance to provision of services for people to acquire knowledge and achieve maximum functions and efficiency of knowledge. It is difficult and very costly for an enterprise or a social organization to put sufficient manpower, material and financial resources on information gathering, selecting, organizing and storing.

## **Conclusion**

The value of Knowledge Management relates directly to the effectiveness with which the managed knowledge enables the library and information professionals to deal with today's situations and effectively visualize and make their future. Without on-demand access to managed knowledge, every situation is addressed based on what the individual or group brings to the situation with them. With on-demand access to managed knowledge, every situation is addressed with the sum total of everything anyone in the organization has ever learned about a situation of a similar nature.

Today, the implementation of Knowledge Management in Libraries is urgent so as to get better usability and performance from library and information professionals in their services. The biggest challenge before us is to change the culture from knowledge is power to knowledge sharing is power. Here I have tried to assimilate the patterns and principals of new knowledge based society that can help us surviving and prospering in an Information maelstrom. It is not justified to give them latest information technologies and make expectation that rest will be done naturally. We need a proper application of Knowledge Management in libraries, and then the real picture will come out.

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