# KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

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**Abstract** *In the current climate of rapid change, whether political, economical, social, or technological, the importance of knowledge cannot be ignored. Knowledge is seen to play a crucial role in the development of the society. The development of society is based on the development of the individual person of that society. Once society is developed automatically, the nation will develop. In the present scenario, knowledge has become an essence. It represents power. Developed countries have already realized the importance of knowledge and accordingly collected and organized properly. The developing countries like India are now realizing its importance. It has been felt that without knowledge, society and the nation cannot be developed. In this backdrop someone has to come forward and act as a mediator between those who have knowledge and those who may use it. No doubt, knowledge cannot be well managed until some organization or a professional takes the clear responsibility of it. Library professionals are the right persons to shoulder this responsibility. Knowledge is action. It is a value-added behavior and activity. It provides the ability to respond to a novel situation. The person having knowledge can take right decision at right time in any critical situation. Such decisions will definitely get fruitful results. Therefore it should not be neglected. It must be focused and shared.*

**Keywords:** *Knowledge Management, ICT, and Artificial Intelligence.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Information Technology is a tool for Knowledge Management in Libraries. The effects of Information Technology are revolutionizing almost every sector of society, education, and training is not the exception. Many major steps have been taken in the recent years in these regards. Indian Government is utilizing its maximum efficiency to make available the all sorts of information for this. They include the ambitious "*Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*" and the 86$^{th}$ constitutional amendment to make education a fundamental right.

## 2. TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE

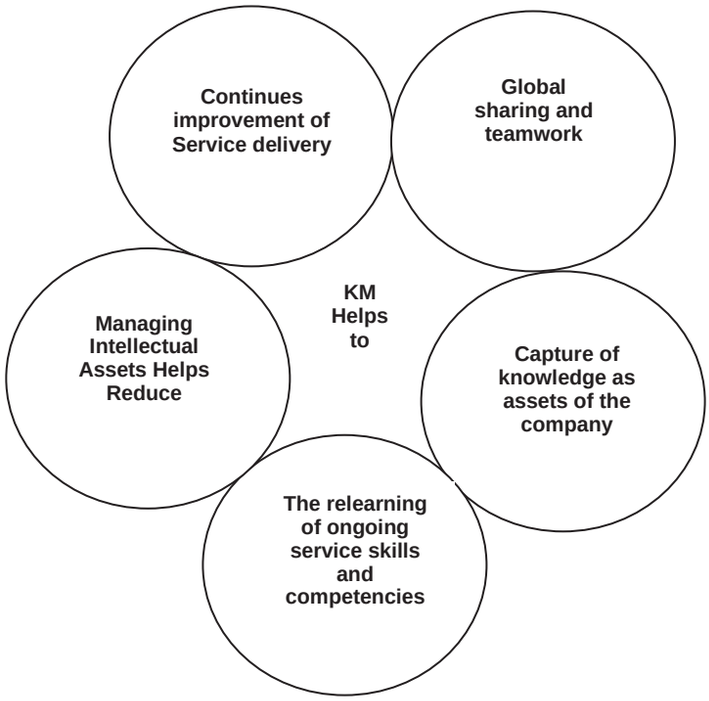
Available knowledge in the universe is of the two types, viz., explicit and implicit or tacit. Explicit knowledge is traditional form of knowledge and is available in the documented form. It is formal, systematic, and easily disseminated or communicated as and when required. It can also freely and easily be shared amongst its users. Realizing the value of this knowledge, the Librarians and Information professionals have already been engaged in the collection, organization, and discrimination of it. Library is a place where knowledge is managing. On the other hand the implicit knowledge is available with the individuals. It is personal knowledge based on the individual experience. It is a personal asset. Such knowledge vanishes with the person. It is also known as tacit knowledge. It is not something that is easily visible or expressible.

## 3. TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS

Tough technology is not the do-all of knowledge management; it offers powerful tools for the same. The technologies that enable knowledge management are:

- Internet, Intranet, and Extranet
- Data Mining
- Data Warehousing
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Expert systems
- Push and pull technologies
- Electronic publishing
- DBMS
- Groupware

**Figure 1: Showing the Potential Benefits that can be Derived from Knowledge Management**




## 4. INTERNET, INTRANET, AND EXTRANET

Internet provides a strong collaborative platform for knowledge management. Intranets and extranets help to efficiently share resources. There can be efficient document transfer, exchange, conversations, and discussions.

## 5. DATA MINING

Data mining finds correlation within data without human intervention or effort. It uses artificial intelligence tools, neural networks, and fuzzy logic in which data is automatically analyzed and explored.

## 6. DATA WAREHOUSING

Data Warehousing is a subject-oriented, integrated, time-variant, non-volatile collection of data in support of management's decision-making process. It stores the information required for decision-making in an organization.

## 7. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) & EXPERT SYSTEMS

Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Expert systems add value to knowledge management. They make knowledge management function like search information retrieval and filtering very fast and easy.

## 8. PUSH AND PULL TECHNOLOGIES

Push and pull technologies are useful for the librarians to make their searches more efficient and effective. They help in sending the right information to the right reader at the right time Pull technology provides tools for navigation like directories search engine or web browsers. They locate and deliver information very fast. They refine searches and give us focused results. Customized search engines and directories use metadata. Push technology alerts the searcher to information and information sources she is not aware of E-mail and voice mail are two examples of push technology. Thus, push technology helps in information capture, whereas pull technology helps in navigation.

## 9. ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

Electronically publishing the material and providing hyperlinks for the same helps in sharing knowledge. The blogs published through intranet or internet help in publishing experiences and thoughts of the persons and thus help in Knowledge Management.

## 10. GROUPWARE

Groupware helps knowledge workers share their expertise.

This is a hypertext system having e-mail, computer conferencing, and shared screen editing. It allows users to use bulletin board, and going to the file, the user can add one's own notes. Lotus Notes is an ideal example of a groupware product.

## 11. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PACKAGES

Several readymade Knowledge Management packages like IBM Domino, Hummingbird, Novell Group Wise are available in the market today. There are also portals for development of knowledge management tools.

## 12. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Many Librarians claim that they already perform Knowledge Management activities for a long time, but KM (1999) said that:

Knowledge Management is not about managing or organizing books or journals, searching the internet for clients or arranging for the circulation of materials. However, each of these activities can in some way be part of Knowledge Management spectrum and processes. Knowledge Management is about enhancing the use of organization knowledge through sound practices of knowledge management and organizational learning. Thus, Knowledge Management is a combination of information management, communication, and human resources.

How to manage knowledge will become an important subject that libraries will grapple with in the near future. Knowledge Management in libraries should focused on effective research and development of knowledge, creation of knowledge base, exchange, and sharing of knowledge between library staffs (including its users), training of library staff, speeding up explicit processing of the implicit knowledge and realizing the importance of its sharing (Shanhong, 2000). In many ways knowledge management incorporates principles that academic librarians have developed and used with scholarly information for many years. It then applies these principles, and others, to organizational information in ways that create new knowledge to improve organizational effectiveness (Hirshon, 1999). With the help of the knowledge management processes, libraries convert data and information stored in various sources into knowledge and deliver only relevant knowledge to users.

Knowledge Management within libraries involves organizing and providing access to intangible resources that help librarians and administrators carry out their tasks more effectively and efficiently (Jantz, 2001). Knowledge Management is one way to develop and apply the organizational knowledge needed to improve library operations, and ultimately, library effectiveness. It also enables libraries to generate organizational knowledge for higher education institutions (Townely, 2002). Thus Knowledge Management in the academic library is the combination of different processes such as acquisition of knowledge from different sources (print, electronic, and human) and classification, storing, indexing and dissemination of that knowledge using people, process, and technology through which a library could fulfill the mission of the parent organization in terms of user satisfaction. In academic libraries, Knowledge Management is about encouraging library staff and users to communicate their knowledge and experience by creating environments and systems for capturing, organizing, learning, enhancing, and sharing knowledge throughout the library for the benefit of the organization and its users. The libraries are moving from collection management to knowledge management, and digital technologies are offering new information services and products.

## 13. LOCATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Every library has internal and external knowledge resources for their users. Internal knowledge resources can include Librarian and staff, books and journals in house developed database, CD-ROMs, encyclopedias, projects. External knowledge resources can include experts and librarians of other libraries, online journals and books, users, suppliers, membership of other library and information centers.

## 14. ROLL OF THE LIBRARIANS IN KM AND LIBRARIES

Role of librarians in KM is not a new role but a continuation of many of the roles that the librarians have played already with the help of information technologies. Reardon (1998) has stated that "there is a need for significant changes in thinking, attitudes, education and training before we can confidently face the knowledge management future that awaits in many important areas of the information and library professions."

The Librarians should have the following types of knowledge:

1. Knowledge about library's information sources or assets, products and services.
2. Knowledge about where these sources are stored and what its uses are.
3. Knowledge about users including teaching staff and researcher, and who is using these information sources.
4. What are the current usage of these sources and how to increase its uses?

5. Knowledge about the library's own competencies and capabilities.
6. Knowledge about the emerging library trends and technologies.

(TPFL, 1999) has described the following personality attributes for Knowledge Manager:

- Creativity
- Ability to learn and adapt
- Will and ability to create, share, harness, and utilize knowledge
- Understanding of knowledge creation processes
- Understanding of the impact of knowledge
- Information literacy skills – creating, finding, sharing, and using
- Understanding of the knowledge process
- Understanding of the principles of the "organization of knowledge" is the key.

Anyone working in the field of knowledge and information management will require a range of skills, some of which can be grouped in the following categories, which are related to knowledge and information management (Webb, 1998):

- Knowledge of sources: print/electronic, internal/external, whom to ask, how to look, evaluation.
- Subject knowledge and understanding.
- Information and records management: indexing methods, database development, thesaurus construction, retrieval/delivery methods, electronics storage, retention policy, structuring records, legislation, standards, and controls.
- Internal and external networks.
- Users/patterns of usage: needs analysis, satisfaction measures.
- Current awareness services: monitoring/updating, abstracting new services.
- User advice and training.
- Contribution to knowledge and information strategy.

## 15. CONCLUSION

The concept of Knowledge Management is as old as the library. Though the terminology is new, previously this activity was so simple to perform. However, with the emergence of this interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary knowledge it is not possible to accomplish this activity manually. In the process of retrieving and disseminating the knowledge from the well-organized knowledge, at certain places the manual techniques fail to satisfy the demands of seekers of Information Technology and they fail do this job effectively and efficiently. Therefore the Knowledge Manager must be an expert in both the fields, i.e., Library and Information Science, and Computer Science.

As mentioned earlier, development of a nation is based on the richness of the knowledge bank it possesses. Moreover this knowledge bank should be well organized so that the knowledge stored in it can be transmitted to the customers in time without wasting their valuable time. Today's Library Professionals/Knowledge Managers are capable of managing it. We have realized the importance of knowledge. In the 21st century, if we have to become predominant in the world, then we should process the well organized knowledge. And therefore, Knowledge Management is the need in present circumstance.

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