



# Knowledge Management in Higher Education

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## Abstract:

*The future of the educational institutions not only depends on the acquisition, storage, publication and retrieval but also on how the knowledge is filtered, organized and shared to achieve their mission and goals. Knowledge networks of the educational organizations should be equipped with the next generation of tools, perspectives, e-knowledge, skilled manpower and practices of knowledge sharing.*

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## 1. Introduction

Knowledge is one of the most important resources in an organization, be it academic, research, business or industrial organization. Social and economic progress is achieved by many countries principally through the advancement and application of knowledge. In educational institutions knowledge is present in individual faculty, researchers, administrators and decision-makers and other published sources such as books, journals, course material, curriculum and research reports, etc. The published sources are knowledge assets of an organization and these traditional knowledge assets are being converted into electronic form which can be easily preserved, accessed and reused to strengthen the community of researchers and organizational performance. Knowledge management with the help of information and communication tools improves the organizational efficiency and offers opportunities to share existing knowledge. One of the most important knowledge management activities of any academic organization is to collect and disseminate knowledge in the organization.

## 2. Knowledge Management & Higher Education

Unlike the corporate world, there is a need to develop systematic and organized knowledge management systems in higher education. Higher education organizations are the reservoirs of knowledge and the potential of knowledge can be utilized if it is organized and managed in a systematic and effective ways. Most of the organizations never give preference to internal knowledge, and most of the past knowledge is lost through attrition and changes in the organization. Much knowledge and knowledgeable resources remain unidentified, unrecorded, unmodified and unutilized in the absence of a system. It is the duty of information manager or knowledge manager to develop mechanisms to identify, map internal expertise, record, store and utilize the internal as well as external resources and share these through Intranets for creating values.

## 3. Sharing of Knowledge in Education

Knowledge management is not a project that begins and ends but an ongoing and evolving change in the way an organization operates. Many times knowledge generated by research activities often stays within a laboratory or research team and rarely crosses disciplinary

boundaries. In most academic settings, knowledge resides in archipelagos of individual knowledge clusters, unavailable for systematic sharing. Yet such defiance of the networked world will soon be unsustainable. Organizations thus must identify key approaches to share the existing knowledge across the organization to achieve the desired goals. Some approaches to sharing knowledge have been discussed below.

#### **4. Talks and Discussions**

Organizations must arrange talks and discussions on the latest developments and complex issues to generate new ideas and collaboration. Weekly talks and discussions among faculty and intellectuals in the organizations create a knowledge sharing culture in the organization. Organizations should take an initiative to create an environment to refine, reinvent and interpret knowledge and develop sharing and open exchange of ideas, emotions and behavior.

#### **5. Lectures, Debates and Conversations**

Lectures in the classrooms and training programmes give a new direction to generate the knowledge. Knowledge can be created by asking questions and watching the responses that provoke an environment of conversations, responses and interactions. During classroom lectures sometimes new ideas are created and developed through interaction between the teacher and students and these become the issues of debates, discussions and create knowledge.

Access of knowledge can be enhanced from the heads of few intellectuals to the other workers of the organization through better interaction and sharing and it is widely diffused around the organization through debates and conversation on the complex issues. Tacit knowledge remains in the minds, expertise and experience the people and it is communicated and shared through conversations and debates on complex issues.

#### **6. Conferences, Workshops and Seminars**

Conferences and workshops offer good result to solve the real world issues. Besides they offers an opportunity to discuss the issues through face to face conversation. In addition to conference and seminars, sharing knowledge through exhibitions, demonstration and training sessions can also be carried out effectively.

#### **7. Appreciate the talents at**

Knowledgeable persons are instinctively reluctant, unwilling and hesitate to share there knowledge with others. They must be encouraged to contribute more information and knowledge to knowledge management pool of the organization. It will not only enable recognition of their expertise in respective fields but will enhance their respect and recognition among juniors, counterparts and employers.

#### **8. Knowledge Sharing**

Web space collaboration applications are new tools which enhance the communication and knowledge sharing capabilities for intellectual works. Other collaboration tools such as e-mail, web conferencing, discussion groups, alerts, workflow and document sharing are essential components of knowledge management. This approach assists to preserve, leverage and share the tacit knowledge easily and effectively. Web space eliminates the geographic boundaries by providing online workplace to the team of faculty, research scholars, planners and intellectuals working in the organization.

#### **9. Intranet, Extranet and Internet**

Major goal of any knowledge management system is to structure the unstructured information scattered in the organizational units in such fashion that can be easily accessed and shared in the

organization. Lot of full-text information that is available in the organization can be made available on the Intranet and Internet. All kinds of forms used in the organization should be made available in HTML and Portable Document Format (PDF) on Intranet. These forms can be updated and reviewed by the administrators and decision makers on Intranet before uploading on the Web. Other full-text online Indian and foreign databases, current contents of periodicals subscribed by the library, indexing databases, national and international reports can be linked with the Intranet. The main purpose of the Intranet is to create one-stop-pool for knowledge rather than having to go to several places for the information needed. Outdated, irrelevant and inaccurate data and information should be removed from the Intranet on the feedback of users. Moreover, other information which cannot be uploaded on the Web site is accessible and shared on Intranet, e.g. online databases and information about official circulation. Sharing of ideas on Intranet radically improve an organization's development and breaks communication barrier across the organization.

## 10. Conclusion

Educational and research institutions are reservoirs of knowledge and there is great scope to apply knowledge management practices in these organizations to facilitate sharing of knowledge across the organization. The future of these institutions not only depends on the acquisition, storage, publication and retrieval but also on how the knowledge is filtered, organized and shared to achieve their mission and goals. Knowledge networks of the educational organizations should be equipped with the next generation of tools, perspectives, e-knowledge, skilled manpower and practices of knowledge sharing.

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