

ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR: TOOL FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract : During the past decades, higher education sector in India has been facing many pressures and challenges from external forces. These elementary challenges has made it pertinent for various universities and institutions to comprehend and bring a constructive, synchronized, controlled, and well-defined action plan in their education system and research process. This has changed the roles of universities and institutions to cope up with the ever changing needs of the society.

Knowledge Management in higher education sector is a culmination of good insight, practical expertise, and a set of emerging theories focusing on the efficient and effective management of knowledge in educational institutions.

Against this background, this paper aims to bring forward the various issues faced by universities and to deliberate and discuss the needs and importance of knowledge management in these universities, which will serve as a tool for skill development and economic prosperity.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Higher Education, Skill Development, E-learning, Opportunities.

INTRODUCTION

The higher Education sector in India has witnessed a remarkable growth; it is being heralded as one of the largest system of its kind in the world. It has witnessed a consistently high rate of economic growth during this period. India has now become a hub of global knowledge and it has witnessed rise in growth due to rampant increase in skill based or talent based activities. These activities depend on pool of qualified manpower that is created by the higher education sector.

In these days, the expression 'Knowledge Management' is perhaps the most commonly used term in higher education sector. It is regarded as one of the most important asset of this sector. Although it is interesting that the management of knowledge and the role of knowledge work in connection with higher education, they are mentioned comparatively lesser. Thus, the system of higher education is not only the training ground for potentially future knowledge workers but also the place where they are present as professors (Kende et al, 2007).

Objectives of the study

- To identify the concepts of knowledge that relates to the implementation of KM practices in education industry
- To understand the notion of KM in education and its collaborative efforts towards the new trends of education.
- To study KM as a tool for skill development and economic prosperity.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Knowledge Management is thus considered as a fluid mix of conceptual information values, experience, and expert insight that provides a frame work for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information (Davenport and Prusak, 2000). It has been described in a broader sense as a range of strategies and practices that are used in an organization to identify, create, organize, represent, store, share, disseminate, search, analyse and improve its insights and experiences. Such insights and experiences include knowledge, either embodied in individuals or embedded in organizational process or practices. These strategies of knowledge management also comprises of methods and software tools which help to gather and to organize knowledge, in terms of resources materials.

Information practices and learning strategies known as knowledge management are gaining acceptance in the field of education. At the most basic level, it is described as a set of practices that helps to improve the use and sharing of data and information in decision making. It is this process of transforming information and intellectual assets into enduring value. It connects people with knowledge that they need to take action when they need it.

Further knowledge management also consist various dimensions such as:

1. Tacit knowledge representing internalized knowledge that an individual may not be consciously aware of such as how he or she accomplishes a particular task. It is highly personal, difficult to formalize and communicate.

2. Explicit knowledge represents knowledge that the individual holds consciously in mental focus, in a form that can easily be communicated to others. It is documented information and can be easily expressed in formal language. It is easily codified and communicated.

3. Embedded knowledge of a system outside of a human individual. For ex. An information system may have knowledge embedded into its design.

4. Embodied knowledge representing a learned capability of a human body's nervous and endocrine systems.

5. New knowledge i.e. innovation

6. Established knowledge that comes from a group, organization, or community.

Thus, effective knowledge management programs and dimensions identify and leverage the know-how-embedded in work, with a focus on how it will be applied. Therefore challenge of knowledge management in an education sector is to make the right knowledge at the right time **Tripathi, et. al., (2012)**.

The field of knowledge management has grown over years. Several trends in the knowledge management field have been witnessed which help in building up its future such as:

1. Emerging technology solutions
2. Shift from limited knowledge management projects to more enterprise wide projects
3. Increased use of knowledge management to enhance innovation and
4. Increased use of tacit knowledge rather than explicit knowledge.

Thus, all these developments and trends in knowledge management will perk up the standards of all the institutions develop the performance of students.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND UNIVERSITIES BASED KNOWLEDGE

Most organizations also have realized that 'knowledge' is a strategic resource that gives them sustainable competitive advantage (Drucker, 1993). With this realization, they are now attempting to manage knowledge in a more systematic and effective way. Knowledge management (KM) is also used by organizations to encourage creation and sharing of knowledge which results in enhancement in productivity, new innovations, better competitiveness, and improved relationships among people in those organizations.

Education today is subject to the same pressures of the marketplace. According to **Brown, et. al., (2000)**, profound changes in competition has made universities and higher education institutions think like

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business. They have been metamorphosed from being Education University to Entrepreneur University.

The educational markets are becoming global as universities attempt to internationalise their curriculum and offer higher quality programs to their students regardless of location. Universities also need to adjust themselves and develop strategies to respond rapidly to the changes in technologies and increasing demands of stakeholders.

The main problem that persists in today's milieu is degrading higher education. In reality higher education in India is faced with deteriorating conditions resulting from expansion and worsened by affiliation system and shrinking resources. Also despite numerous committees having produced reports to this effect nothing significant seems to come out. Therefore it is also necessary to achieve excellence in education that can generate quality professionals and executives.

REASONS FOR APPLYING KM PRINCIPLES IN EDUCATION:

All management Institutes have a state of the art modern infrastructure of information.

1. Knowledge sharing among staff, faculty, students, various courses and programs, placements, and administration is usually done in all management institutes.
2. The academic environment in general is considered trustful in the sense that no one is hesitating nor being afraid of publishing knowledge.
3. Any management institute will look forward for its abreast strategic position in their continuous ratings by newspapers and business magazines for competitive advantage.
4. Every institute requires internal documentation management and the level of information and knowledge sharing to improve.
5. There is an increased demand for new management strategies.
6. Institutions meet internal and external demands.

Thus higher education institutions and universities have significant opportunities to apply knowledge management practices to support every part of their mission. Kidwell, et. al., (2001). It is the process of fruitfully using the information and knowledge that is intrinsic to any organization – be it a school university or multinational company. This is a process of learning to know what is known as 'knowing - doing', is one that has brought great benefits in education industry.

NEED OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR:

Knowledge Management is all about linking knowledge in and for an organization to accomplish its mission, competition, performances and attitude towards changes. Educational institutions are the sole subjects to empower the information with meaning and share the knowledge produced with society by linking research to teaching/educational programmes.

Knowledge Management in education is the album of process that governs the knowledge creation, process of knowledge dissemination, and optimum utilisation of knowledge. It comprises of a range of practices used by organisations to identify, create, represent and distribute. Using Knowledge Management techniques and technologies in higher education is as imperative as it is in the corporate sector Oblinger, et. al., (1997). If completed effectively, it can escort to better decision- making capabilities, compact "product" development cycle time (for example, curriculum development and research), improved academic services and efficient administrative services, and reduced costs Liataud, et. al., (2001).

Thus, there is a need of Knowledge Management in number of universities and institutions for changing its services and processes of doing work such as change in the research process, curriculum development process, student and alumni services, administrative services, and strategic planning.

NEED OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN RESEARCH PROCESS:

Knowledge Management is a repository of research interests within an institution or at affiliated institutions. If applied properly in the organisation will result in easy search capabilities to facilitate interdisciplinary opportunities and will also lead to reduced turnaround time for research. Further, it can also increase competitiveness and responsiveness of an institution for various contracts, research grants, and commercial opportunities.

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NEED OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS:

The new demands on education systems take different forms. Schools, colleges, and universities are now expected to teach their clients more effectively and more efficiently. Knowledge Management thus helps an institution in creating a storeroom for curriculum revision efforts that includes research culture, effective measures, lessons learned, and best practices. This helps in enhancing the quality of curriculum and programs by identifying and leveraging best practices and monitoring outcomes.

NEED OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN TRAINING THE TEACHERS:

Knowledge about teaching is obscure and disputed; there is no consensus about how teachers should be trained or about the role of educational research. It is perhaps one of the great ironies of the teaching profession. Knowledge Management is thus a portal of information related to teaching and learning with the aid of technology, including faculty development programmes, tracking of outcomes lessons learned, best practices done, technology overviews.etc. It also helps the new faculties with guides for curriculum development, establishing effective teaching styles working with senior faculty, playing role of an advisor, guiding PhD students and so forth.

NEED OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT FOR STUDENTS AND ALUMNI SERVICES:

There has been a need of Knowledge Management for both the students and the faculties at the institutions for providing systematic information's to the students regarding the policies and procedures including admissions, financial aid, registration, degree audit, billing, payment process, advising and tutoring, housing, dining, and other services.

NEED OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES:

Knowledge Management can be applied for enhancing efficiency and improving overall effectiveness of the organization. It is a pool of information that helps in formulating accounting procedures and practices, budgeting, inventory management. It enables development of better recruitment procedures, payroll, training which results in efficient human resource management. Thus Knowledge Management helps in improving compliance with administrative policies and practices.

NEED OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING:

Strategic planning is very essential for every organization and has become the need of the hour. Large pool of information is needed to formulate up- to- date and market focussed plans and this information gap is filled with the help of knowledge management. It is hub for internal and external sources of information and improves sharing of knowledge which minimizes redundant efforts and helps create a learning organization, Telem, (1996).

CONCLUSION:

With the proper application of Knowledge Management tools and techniques, desired outcome can be achieved in all the aspects of educational institutions. It just requires sound awareness of such tools and practices at all levels in the organisations. The time has come when one has to rely on such practices in order to have a competitive edge in this world. Knowledge management is becoming increasingly important to organizations. Effective knowledge management system helps sharing of knowledge, improve retention, increase productivity, and promote innovation. Knowledge management systems should try to implement a two-part approach to collect explicit knowledge, and connecting colleagues to enable sharing of tacit knowledge. Therefore, implementing Knowledge Management practices effectively is a prudent solution for skill development and economic prosperity.

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