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# AN OVERVIEW OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Gajendara Y Patil [1], Aniket K Shahade [2]
[1] *Associate Professor, Department of Information Technology, SSGMCE, Shegaon*
[2]*Assistant Professor, Department of Information Technology, SSGMCE, Shegaon*
[1] *gajendrapatilgp@yahoo.com*
[2] *aniket.shahade11@gmail.com*

**ABSTARCT:**
**Knowledge management is not one single discipline. Rather, it an integration of numerous endeavors and field of industry. This paper has tried to cover different aspects of Knowledge Management (KM) and its applications. This paper states that Knowledge Management the value of knowledge is a cross-disciplinary domain. In this we have described the general knowledge model in detail. Knowledge creation and knowledge sharing is also described. The knowledge management initiatives in India is mentioned.**

***Keywords:*** *Knowledge Management, Knowledge sharing, Knowledge creation.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge and Knowledge management are concepts, which are debated extensively by managers, analyst and academicians. Managers ask for more information to support decisions. This led to the use of IT (Information Technology) to build transaction support system, management information systems and data warehouses resulting in too much information, which has neither helped the managers nor provided any value to the organizations. Data leads to information, but what organizations were really looking for was knowledge

When we refer to knowledge, most of us mainly tend to think of codified and documented knowledge like patents, databases, manuals, white papers etc. With this “explicit knowledge” is important, what is even more important and value adding from the perspective of competitive advantage is the “ tacit knowledge” which is embedded in the minds of the people. The tacit knowledge is intuitive, contextual, linked to experience, past memories and difficult to codify, document and communicate. It is estimated that this tacit knowledge constitutes between 70 and 80% of all knowledge in an organization and is difficult to identify, quantify, and convert into real value, unless a structured approach is adopted to manage knowledge.

Unfortunately, there is no universal definition of Knowledge Management (KM), just as there’s no agreement as to what constitutes knowledge in the first place. For this reason, it’s best to think of KM in the broadest context. KM is the process through which organizations generate value from their intellectual and knowledge-based assets. It is the practice of harnessing and exploiting intellectual capital to gain competitive advantage and customer commitment through efficiency, innovation and faster and more effective decision-making. Most often, generating value from such assets involves sharing them among employees, departments and even with other companies in an effort to devise best practices. It is important to note that the definition says nothing about technology, while KM is often facilitated by IT; technology by itself is not KM.

Knowledge management is a cross-disciplinary domain. Library professionals are already ushered into knowledge management activities and practices and the paradigm shift that is taking place whereby libraries are getting transformed into knowledge management centers. KM will inject new blood into the library culture. The main contents include: mutual trust, Open exchange, studying, sharing and developing knowledge operations mechanism of libraries, enjoying the KM process. Customer’s delighters, staff’s quality and enrichment as well as an all-round improvement of library starting from house keeping activities to knowledge marketing will become important objectives of KM in Business and Management Libraries.

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Managing this knowledge is a difficult task. Knowledge management (KM) is all about managing organization's knowledge effectively by sharing and having a systematic activity for creation of knowledge and exploiting it for the market and benefit of the organization. KM techniques and processes provide such a structured approach to explicate a significant part of this tactic knowledge document in knowledge repositories and also share in teams, through intensive dialogue and discussions. KM refers to the critical issues of organizational adaptation, survival and competence against discontinuous environmental change.[ 5]

## 2. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MODEL

Knowledge flows comprise the set of processes, events and activities through which data, information, knowledge and meta-knowledge are transformed from one state to another.
The General Knowledge model is shown as;

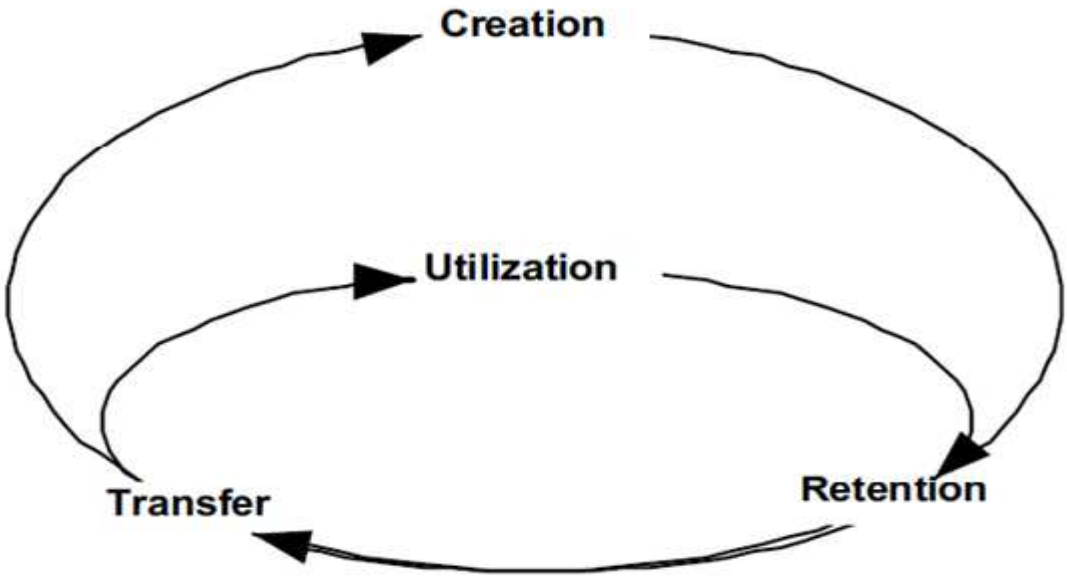


**Fig. General Knowledge Model**

**Knowledge Creation:** This comprises activities associated with the entry of new knowledge into the system, and includes knowledge development, discovery and capture.

**Knowledge Retention**: This includes all activities that preserve knowledge and allow it to remain in the system once introduced. It also includes those activities that maintain the viability of knowledge within the system.

**Knowledge Transfer**: This refers to activities associated with the flow of knowledge from one party to another. This includes communication, translation, conversion, filtering and rendering.

**Knowledge Utilization**: This includes the activities and events connected with the application of knowledge to business processes.

The General Knowledge Model sequences the activity areas in a deterministic fashion. In reality, though, all but the most rigorously automated knowledge flows comprise complex systems that are built mostly from asynchronous processes. The model is valuable precisely because it relates the individual, highly dynamic

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behaviors and processes to general activity areas and, by association, to each other. Various theories of learning, problem solving and cognition may imply specific activity patterns, but they are usually not required to organize the key relationships and dependencies among the activity areas. The model allows analysts to trace individual knowledge flows by helping them to examine and understand how knowledge enables specific actions and decisions.

Within each activity phase exists other, smaller knowledge flows and cycles. These layers span a wide range of macro- and micro-behaviors, ranging from broad organizational and multi-organizational processes to discrete actions and decisions, and include all the various intervening layers: activities, tasks, workflows, systems, interfaces and transformations.

## 3. WHAT IS KM

Knowledge management is about using the brain power of an organization in a systematic and organized manner in order to achieve efficiencies, ensure competitive advantage, and spur innovation. [8]

Knowledge management is essentially about facilitating the processes by which knowledge is created, shared and used in organisations. It is not about setting up a new department or getting in a new computer system. It is about making small changes to the way everyone in the organisation works. There are many ways of looking at knowledge management and different organisations will take different approaches. Generally speaking, creating a knowledge environment usually requires changing organisational values and culture, changing people's behaviors and work patterns, and providing people with easy access to each other and to relevant information resources.

In terms of how that is done, the processes of knowledge management are many and varied. As knowledge management is a relatively new concept, organisations are still finding their way and so there is no single agreed way forward or best practice. This is a time of much trial and error. Similarly, to simply copy the practices of another organisation would probably not work because each organisation faces a different set of knowledge management problems and challenges. Knowledge management is essentially about people – how they create, share and use knowledge, and so no knowledge management tool will work if it is not applied in a manner that is sensitive to the ways people think and behave. [8]

## 4. NEED OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Knowledge management is based on the idea that an organisation's most valuable resource is the knowledge of its people. This is not a new idea – organisations have been managing "human resources" for years. What is new is the focus on knowledge. This focus is being driven by the accelerated rate of change in today's organisations and in society as a whole. Knowledge management recognizes that today nearly all jobs involve "knowledge work" and so all staff are "knowledge workers" to some degree or another – meaning that their job depends more on their knowledge than their manual skills. This means that creating, sharing and using knowledge are among the most important activities of nearly every person in every organisation.

It is easy to see the importance of knowledge in the health sector. As clinicians, managers and other practitioners, we all rely on what we know to do our jobs effectively.
Do we know everything we need to know or are there gaps in our knowledge? Of course there are. Medical advances are being made all the time so there is always new knowledge to be learned. Government policies are constantly evolving, as are management practices. The current modernization programme requires us to let go of what we knew and to learn and apply new knowledge. Changing doctor-patient relationships are requiring us to revisit our whole approach to the provision of health care. And of course, every new patient that comes through our door brings a potential new learning opportunity. [8]

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There is sufficient evidence of many companies who have benefited from KM initiatives. Based on these experiences, KM experts argue that, for organizations and institutes to be successful and competitive today, they need to continually engage in 2 activities:

A. Find effective way to translate the institution's ongoing experience to knowledge
B. Transferring and leveraging companies and institutions knowledge across time and space (Thru Internet technologies) while transferring knowledge for better leverage, it is necessary to consider the following key issues:-

- Find a method for transferring the knowledge to a group or individual who can reuse it.
- Translate what has been learned into a form that others can use.
- The receiving team or individual adapts the knowledge for use in a particular context.
- The iterative process where the receiving team or individual takes action on a new task by using the organizational or the institutional knowledge, and again this experience goes into KM as afuture learning [7]

## 5. KNOWLEDGE CREATION

Knowledge creation involves the activities which result in conversion of knowledge. The process of conversion exists tacit knowledge creation, moving from tacit to explicit knowledge and using explicit knowledge to create new tacit knowledge through sharing and thinking.

## 6. KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Sharing knowledge requires a different kind of environment a unique combination of information system and human to reduce the knowledge between gap. Knowledge sharing requires different sets of tools and mind-set that appreciates the following:

1. Knowledge/ Learning is by people i.e., it is a human activity
2. Thinking creates knowledge
3. Knowledge is created as it gets used and is dynamic. It moves through Organization and Communities in many ways.[5]

## 7. WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE

Academics have debated the meaning of "knowledge" since the word was invented, but let's not get into that here. A dictionary definition is "the facts, feelings or experiences known by a person or group of people" (Collins English Dictionary). Knowledge is derived from information but it is richer and more meaningful than information. It includes familiarity, awareness and understanding gained through experience or study, and results from making comparisons, identifying consequences, and making connections. Some experts include wisdom and insight in their definitions of knowledge. In organisational terms, knowledge is generally thought of as being "know how", or "applied action". The last point is an important one. Today's organisations contain a vast amount of knowledge and the NHS is certainly no exception. However, in applying knowledge management principles and practices in our organisation, knowledge is not our end, but the means for further action. What we are trying to do is to use our knowledge to get better at doing what we do, i.e. health care and health care improvement. [8]

## 8. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES IN INDIA

The KM Initiatives has started in different sectors of the economy. They may be categorized as follows:

(i) Initiatives at the Corporate level;
(ii) Initiatives at the R& D level;
(iii) Initiatives at the NGO level;
(iv) Financial Institution level initiatives
(v) Initiatives at the Academic Institution level

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## 9. CONCLUSION

This paper has tried to cover different aspects of Knowledge Management. It has been observed that KM for corporate is mainly for getting competitive advantages over the rival companies. In developed countries this culture is running for quite some time where as in developing countries especially in India it is slowly picking up. A KM initiative in different sectors of the economy in India is mentioned.

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### AUTHOR(S) PROFILE

**Prof. Gajendra Y Patil,** has received his M.E degree in Computer Science and Engineering from PRMIT&R, Badnera, Amravati, India and pursuing his PhD from Dr. K N Modi University, Rajasthan. His area of research includes Knowledge Management, Image Processing and Software Engineering. Currently he is working as an Associate Professor in Department of Information Technology at Shri Sant Gajanan Maharaj College of Engineering, Shegaon.

**Prof. Aniket K. Shahade**, has received his B.E. degree in Information Technology from IBSS College of Engineering, Amravati, India in 2012. His area of research includes Image processing, Embedded System Design and Network Security. Currently he is working as an Assistant Professor in Department of Information Technology at Shri Sant Gajanan Maharaj College of Engineering, Shegaon.