

Knowledge management: Individual and Institutional

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ABSTRACT: Components of knowledge, the knower and the known should be best coordinated as the best practice of individual knowledge management. This best practice works well in sharing of knowledge with others. Probability of knowledge creation is high when it is shared with many. Keeping knowledge within not made access to any is of no use. Two aspects of the Universe of Knowledge the tacit and explicit correspond to 'knowing how' and 'knowing that'. Creation of new knowledge is possible only by sharing the existing knowledge with others. The forms of expression of knowledge can be verbal or written. Man knows more than expressed. Specifically, the more indigenous cannot be expressed.

Paper is based on brief survey among the academicians with 12 points questionnaire to know the process of knowledge management at individual. The features working at individual KM is discussed on par with the institutional KM. As the every knowledge acquisition is possible through discussions, training programmes, searching the literature to those involved in academic work, it is considered the faculty members are best suited to elicit the desired responses in the present study. A sample of 60 randomly selected academicians working at different levels are administered the 12 point questionnaire. Out of 12 one is the open ended question to extract the individual conceptual framework of knowledge management. The rest are the responses extracted by the method of multiple choice. The data thus collected was analyzed and the results were shown in text as well in graphs.

Keywords: Management; Knowledge Management; Individual Knowledge; Institutional Knowledge; Survey

1. Introduction

The two significant components in the term 'Knowledge' are the 'Knower' and the 'Known'. Knower is the one 'who knows' and the known is 'that which is known'. The best practice of the coordination of these two is the knowledge management. The whole of the information world goes round this practice and there are management schools teaching how best one should coordinate with others but they do not focus on managing one's own knowledge.

Schools or management practitioners hardly think of communication skills which directly focus on creation of new knowledge. Though personality development in management schools stresses on communication power, it does not speak of role of communication in transforming and inculcating new knowledge avenues. Communication though plays vital role in sharing knowledge but certainly is a different role altogether. Power of knowledge becomes more powerful only in a

shared environment. This is the base for knowledge management (KM). Knowledge when shared may give rise to new ideas and open up new channels of thought might sow seeds for new knowledge. The chance of creation of new knowledge is more when knowledge is shared in multiples. The new knowledge when shared again could give way to another avenue in the world of knowledge. This is an ongoing cycle in the universe of knowledge. This is how the power of knowledge is managed. During this process many vital issues are subject for debate to draw clarity of the concept of knowledge management.

From a philosophical point of view, the Universe of Knowledge exists in the individual. It is only the opportunity that makes him identify already existing knowledge. Knowing something is only a status of mind identifying the already existing. A situation is thrown to identify existing knowledge. This is a philosophical perspective.

Edmund Husserl, great phenomenologist claims that the Universe of Knowledge has two aspects in it. One aspect of knowledge is that 'which can be known' and another is that 'which can never be known'. In the realm of knowledge these two forms, the known and the unknown have ocean gap. These two forms are known as tacit and explicit. The corresponding expression is 'knowing how' (Tacit) and 'Knowing that' (explicit)

2. Tacit and Explicit

Tacit is a knowledge form which is too subjective and pre structure of explicit. Even within tacit a part of it cannot be known to the knower as such. The paradox between 'knowing that' and 'knowing how' is explained as knowing something very well and not knowing how that is known. Singer 'knows singing' (knowing that) but does not 'know how' (knowing how) he knows it. The driver knows how to drive but does not know how he knows. These mechanical skills perhaps could be associated with motor nervous system of one's practice in work. But an orator while speaking cannot say how he keeps or rather process of making line of thoughts. This part of tacit knowledge is unknown. The second part of tacit knowledge becomes explicit while teaching singing, teaching driving et. Tacit knowledge when expressed (in any form) becomes explicit. This expression can be verbal or written. Written expression is found in books and documents. For many reasons not specified here, all that knowledge of the knower sometimes might not exactly be documented. This makes us believe that we know more than we express. The charm of the universe of knowledge lies in making the tacit becoming explicit. The second part in the Universe of knowledge is that which is described as unknown and unknowable is called noumenon (singular), which can be identified by the knower alone. But when it is known it is no more noumenon it becomes phenomenon. The flow is from unknown to known as the explicit flows from tacit. Tacit is the presupposition of explicit. Verbal expression of knowledge claims communication skill. This mode of transmission of knowledge in the name of

exchange or sharing is going viral in modern times. ‘Conversation now is integral to discovering and creating knowledge among groups’. (KIKOSKI, 2004)ⁱ

Knowledge when not shared is weak in its status and gets faded away in time. Knower never reveals what he knows is equal to not knowing anything for the simple reason that his knowledge is dumped in waste. Keeping knowledge to oneself never gave any benefit to the world rather than sharing with others. Knowledge not expressed is no knowledge. Knowledge not shared anytime with any individual might perhaps be the inspiration for the outcome of Browning’s famous elegy ‘*Grammarians Funeral*’ in which the hero of the poem ‘the grammarian’ was famous for his life spent reading heap of books throughout his life and died one fine day. His knowledge is dead with him. Never talked to anybody in his life believed that he collected vast knowledge by reading voluminous books. He was placed on *High Mountain* in honour of his vast knowledge. His knowledge though vast and wide is believed left no impression on any. This poem punched the significance of knowledge sharing than keeping within. Hence, sharing is the prime motto of the individual in knowledge management.

3. Institutional knowledge

Sharing at individual level and sharing in the institution appear same in the process of maintenance of knowledge management. But there is a difference between individual sharing and institutional sharing. To manage knowledge in the institution has features of relevance, target and focus. These three aspects play important role in sharing knowledge in institution. For institutional growth exchange and sharing of knowledge of the personnel play important role.

In the institution, knowledge expressed better is viewed and received better. For betterment in expression one needs conversational skill not communication skill. As conversing includes dialogue unlike communication mostly is monologue. One is expected more active in converse with others than in communication. The expression without any ambiguity makes the receiver understand with clarity. At this juncture knowledge managers expressed that conversation plays a vital role in the information world than in industrial world. A study conducted in 1970s concluded that managers spent 78 percent of their time on the job engaged in face-to-face conversation. (Mintzberg, 1973)ⁱⁱ Conversation has been and will continue to be centrally important to transmit knowledge. All said and done a question passes to assess whether managing knowledge at individual level is similar to that of an institution.

Considering the fact that an institution is none other than a group of individuals, brief survey was made to know the opinion of individuals in their task of knowledge management. Generally, it is believed that present academicians are in continuous search of new knowledge online/off line involving themselves in debate, participating in training, organizing conferences, workshops, keep in touch

with searching, acquiring knowledge in their carrier development process, it is found they are the suitable sample for the present brief survey. A questionnaire with 12 points relevant to the topic is administered to 60 randomly selected sample academicians working at different levels. The collected responses were elaborated and analyzed accordingly. This brief study showed how individuals manage knowledge and their role in the process of knowledge management.

3. Objectives:

- To know what people mean by updating knowledge
- To know how people maintain and prefer to manage knowledge
- To understand peoples' opinion about knowledge

4. Methodology:

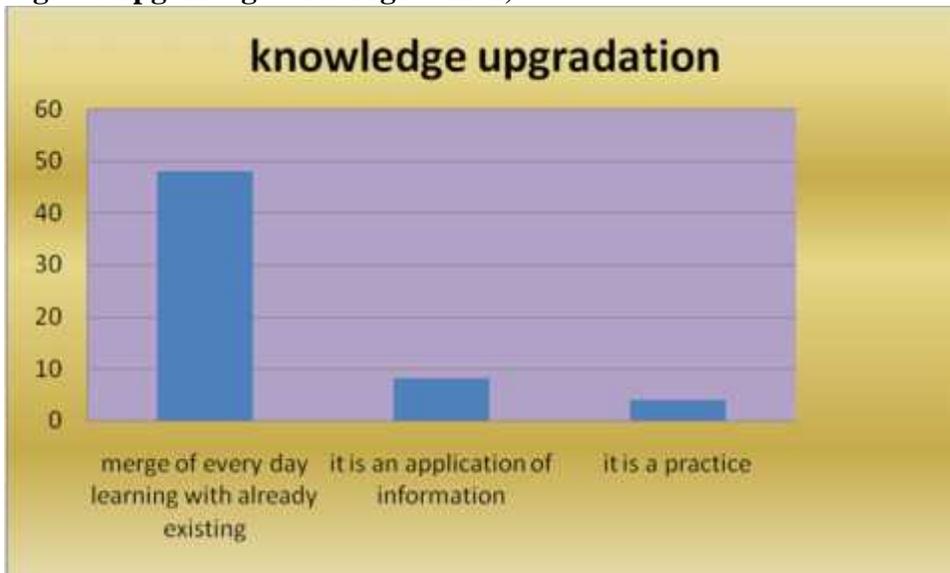
12 point Questionnaire is administered to 60 faculty members working at different levels in one institution and responses received were analyzed and presented the found facts in the form of graphs.

What is found?

Updating knowledge is an essential factor in knowledge management. The conceptual framework of updating knowledge was taken differently by the sample academicians.

80% of the respondents had the feeling that updating is the merge of everyday learning with already existing. Some of them expressed it as an application of information and some more said that that it is a practice.

Fig: 1 : Upgrading knowledge means,

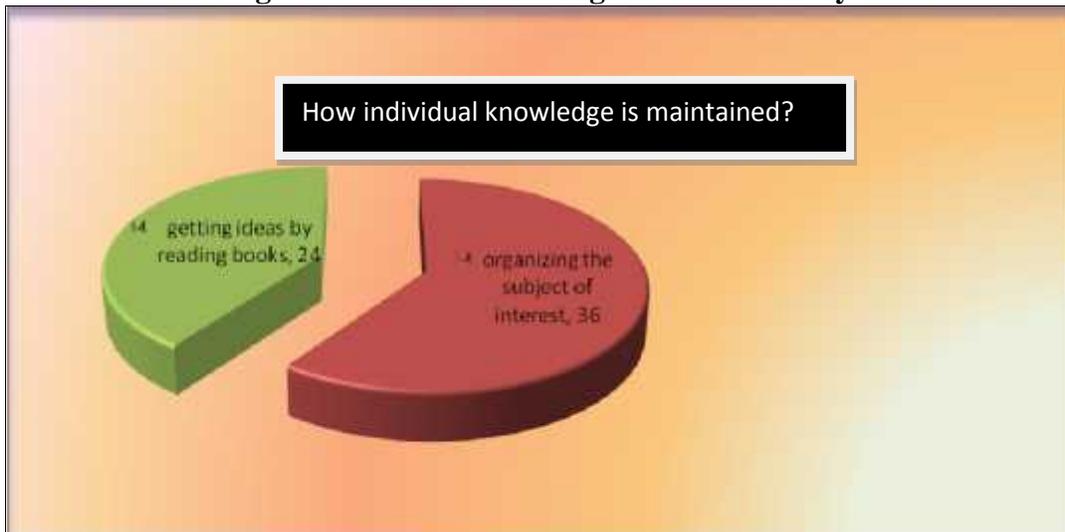


The change of the status of individual from not knowing and knowing are found as change in their behavior by 42 (70%) of the respondents. 18 (30%) of the sample expressed that they get relief when a new knowledge takes place.

Total sample expressed their opinion that they are the carriers of knowledge and so they maintain it well. 36 (60%) of sample believed that knowledge is expressive. But 24 (40%) of them expressed that all knowledge is not expressive. It is assumed that those who said expressive may be thought of 'knowing that' and those who said that all that cannot be expressed may be thought of 'knowing how'.

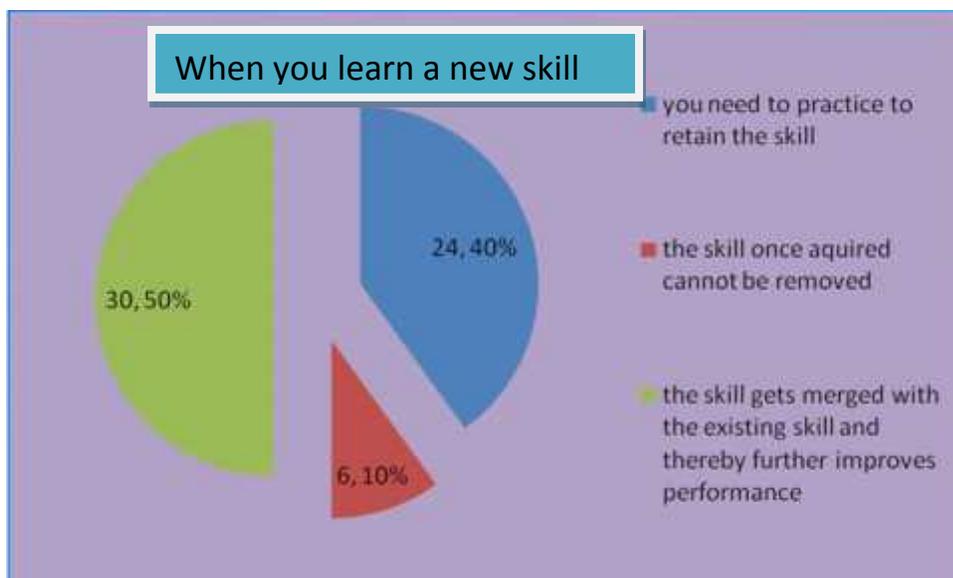
36 percent of sample described that they maintain knowledge by organizing the subject of interest. But 24 (40%) percent of sample claimed that they maintain knowledge by getting ideas in reading books. Graphical presentation of this result is given below.

Fig: 2: Individual knowledge is maintained by



Change in the individual status occurs with an entry of a new skill. But to manage a new skill, 50% are of the opinion that the new skill gets merged with the existing skill and further improves performance. Majority among the rest believed that the newly learnt skill needs to be practiced.

Fig: 3: What happens to the newly learnt skill in KM?



Some of the academicians chose a contrary expression that the knowledge is virtual and also can be weighed. In a case of managing multiple tasks, 24 expressed that they coordinate the works of home and office.

People intend to maintain knowledge well and believed that it would be done with the coordination among multiple tasks. Knowledge though expressive is believed by some that not all knowledge is subject for expression. It may be purely indigenous. This perhaps confirms that one knows more than one expresses. This is because that 'knowing that' can be expressed easily than 'knowing how'.

The conceptual framework of knowledge of sample came with different opinions.

- Knowledge is continuous collection and one has to receive it.
- Knowledge is known as a powerful weapon which solves difficult situations thereby making life comfortable.
- It is also expressed that knowledge comes from all channels and people should be ready to capture.
- Senior academicians' elaborated knowledge is built through experience leading to the improvement in performance.
- It is described as the all encompassing element to lead a successful life.
- If one can apply his heart to understand and get information of what he requires to know of any phenomena on earth one is gaining knowledge.
- Knowledge leads to wisdom when it acquired from the lord.
- Knowledge is linking unknown to known and converting an abstract thing to a concrete and realistic one. Here we can infact speak about unknown and unknowable to known and knowable.
- Knowledge enriches one's experience leading to sustainable endeavors. Knowledge is information, understanding, communicating to others in the process of sharing.

5. Knowledge in individual is in institution

An institution cannot be without individuals. Human resource is the prime source in any institution. 'Involving others in the process of generating new ideas and perspectives may be best accomplished by adopting attitudes of care and respect in the workplace. Only in an environment in which individuals feel valued, respected, and safe will it be possible for them to freely share their inner thoughts, experiences, and perspectives. It is in such a context that new ideas surface and create a holding environment for the tacit knowledge that generates new options and new possibilities. To care is eminently practical, for it is the precondition that enables tacit knowledge to emerge and be expressed...a respectful and caring stance frees individuals to be them, to express their inmost thoughts and to clearly apprehend their reality and those of others. Perhaps, in its simplest and most powerful sense, to respect others is to attend to them. And to attend is simply to listen respectfully.' (Kikoski, 2004)ⁱⁱⁱ Institution is a group of individuals with specified skills for specific tasks. The question of how individual and institution create knowledge is purely based on how they share knowledge. Sharing includes discussions, exchange of opinion, and debate over issues, forums, and conferences in institution resulting in decisions, generally creating a new road ahead. However, the process of managing knowledge at individual level is similar to that of an institutional level. 'KM in general relates to unlocking and leveraging the knowledge of individuals so that it becomes available as an organizational resource independent of particular individuals.' (Shobha, 2013)^{iv} Knowledge managers face the challenge of not only in organizing encoded knowledge resources but also in bringing knowledgeable people together, so that they can share their distinct knowledge and experiences. 'By providing a creative and relaxed atmosphere people can synergize their insight and also update themselves with new and interesting things. Innovations germinate from creative or combination of explicit and implicit knowledge, in addition to developments in ICT.' (Neelam, 2013)^v Collation and collection of knowledge of individuals in any institution generally ought to be made during the time of superannuation. This is the suitable time for anybody to open up and say which might be futuristic in view and very valuable for the institution's development. This needs to encourage in knowledge craving and growth intending institution. Rich experience of senior personnel in institutions goes away with valuable ideas if their knowledge is not recorded. The advantage of recording knowledge of senior personnel avoids duplicate in work and also can take precautionary measures wherever necessary. The hidden wealth of institution resides in the talent and knowledge of working individuals. New skills learnt in the institution and fruits thereof need to be for the institution. Thus collected knowledge and experiences may be made accessible to all others in the institution for ready reference. 'Overall, we need to understand that the actions in institutions may be the result of different kinds of knowledge being practiced. We cannot equate knowledge with the education and experience that organizational participants have had. We cannot regard it as the facts and opinions that people have. We have to establish far more of what lies behind each other's perceptions and actions.' (Sparrow, 1998)^{vi}

6. Conclusion

Sometimes new idea comes as a flash with no sound and light in the mind but generates volumes of thoughts crippled in and around of that idea. To get clarity of over that idea one needs to think deep to get the details to channelize the link thoughts. Knowledge thus generated may be given to others to use, practice and create again new idea. Thus the creation, sharing and generation are continuous. In the present modern technological world, it is felt that mankind knows so much, but the fact is that the unknown remains huge in quantity compared to the known in the universe of knowledge.

ⁱ Kikoski, Catherine Kano and Kikoski, John F. : *Knowledge organization: Tacit knowledge, conversation, and knowledge creation: Skills for 21st Century organizations.*: London, PRAEGER, 2004, 8 .

ⁱⁱ Henry Mintzberg (1973) *The Nature of Managerial Work* (New York: Harper & Row), P.38.

ⁱⁱⁱ Kikoski, *Inquiring Organization...*,99

^{iv} Shobha Kulkarni, “*Knowledge Management: A backbone for libraries in rural development*” in *Knowledge management and rural development* ed. Padmaja Sudhir etal. New Delhi, Concept, 2013,64-75.

^v Neelam Prasad, “ *Framework for knowledge management practices in rural development: The Indian context*” in *Knowledge management and rural development* ed. Padmaja, 88-94.

^{vi} Sparrow, John: *Knowledge in organizations: Access to thinking at work*, New Delhi, Sage, 1998, 26.