Proposed Plan for Developing Knowledge Management Practices in the Libraries and Information Centers of Bangladesh

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Abstract

In Bangladesh libraries and information centers (L/IC) have been facing serious obstacles for a successful implementation of knowledge management (KM) system [1]. Both the staff users and end users of these L/IC are also not conscious regarding the impact of knowledge management. As a result, they are not actively participating to make a successful knowledge management based platform [2]. The present study was designed to reveal problems of L/IC in relating to KM based activities and service in L/IC of Bangladesh. Finally, the study proposes a model with working plans for running the KM-based activities in L/IC successfully.

Keywords: Knowledge Management (KM); Knowledge Management Model; ICT; Libraries and Information Centers (L/IC).

Introduction

Information plays an intermediary link between knowledge and the observed phenomenon. Despite having some fundamental misunderstanding regarding knowledge and information, both have some sorts of complex conceptual relation like information supports knowledge, and bears 'useful knowledge'. While Stonier treat knowledge as organized information always keeps in human's head (as cited in Loughridge, 1999) information is the expression of knowledge and also called "useful knowledge" [3]. The acquisition, processing, sharing, and use of information within the organization is called Knowledge Management [4]. The processing of knowledge incorporates creating, gathering, organizing, diffusion, use, and exploitation of vital knowledge [5]. It adds values for the organization by utilizing knowledge and intellectual-based assets. It ensures the right information to the right people which makes the right decision [6,7].

In recent years libraries have been facing several challenges such as the expansion of the Internet may reduce the utilization of libraries, lack of recent information, inertia to use modern technology. As a result, Knowledge Management has come to an aid by capturing, storing, and disseminating needed knowledge for the getting competitive advantages of the libraries. Knowledge management has a good number of benefits for the librariessuch as ensures a free flow of concepts, encourages innovation, produce new products, services, and activities, increase user efficiency, minimizes the cost of operations, assist to take right decisions by escalating productivity [8].

Research Objectives

The main intention of this research is to chalk-out a model for KM based activities in libraries and information centers. In order to achieve this there are also some other objectives listed below:

- To find out shortcomings faced by libraries and information centers in rendering effective KM based activities and services;

- To devise a working plan for successful KM activities in L/IC of developing countries like Bangladesh.

Materials and Methods

The present study is basically based on the appraisal of different primary and secondary literature including thesis, reports, books, journal articles, conference proceedingsetc. Relevant literature was also collected through the Internet. For comprehending the real scenario of KM based activities in L/IC of Bangladesh, the authors have also visited few libraries and information centers in Bangladesh. The working experiences and suggestions of library professionals in relating to KM based activities have also assisted indirectly to figure out the problems they faced for fostering successful KM based activities in libraries and information centers (L/IC).

Results and Discussion

Problems of Knowledge Management Practices in the Libraries and Information Centers of Bangladesh

In the libraries and information centers of Bangladesh, the concept of knowledge management is not a newer one yet maximum libraries in this part of the worlddon't introduce to put knowledge management based activities and services into practice. The reasons for this backwardness are manifolds such as unawareness, negligence to use modern technology, lacking and cooperation, financial and other administrative problems. However, in this section we will try to find out some more realistic problems that obstruct the library professionals to initiate knowledge management practice in the libraries and information centers of Bangladesh:

1. For the purpose of getting greater throughput, it is very much essential to implement various linkage programs in libraries like the connection of information with information, information with activities and information with human resources. Maximum libraries and information centers think that these types of linkage program don't bear any sort of productivity for their libraries.

2. Staff motivation can boost higher productive forces in any organization. To get a maximum output from staff, libraries and information centers are not interested to introduce talent competition such as increasing incentives, remuneration for better performance, training opportunity, awarding prize/certificate etc. Maximum libraries think that these are the ineffective tools for library staff to become higher productive forces.

3. Despite the utmost importance of knowledge sharing culture in library and information center, it has not been developed likewise. Sharing tacit knowledge as well as explicit knowledge among staffs or users or both can play an active role in problem-solving and decision making also. Maximum library professionals can't play role in creating knowledge sharing culture in their libraries.

4. Libraries and information centers of Bangladesh doesn't support scientific knowledge level and ability among staff and users. Most of the libraries don't arrange lifelong education, training program, guidance service relating to knowledge resources, orientation program, seminars, workshop and symposium for increasing staff ability and level of their performance.

5. Most of the libraries are not aware in fostering various knowledge management activities like promoting knowledge exchange and sharing program, increasing staff and user eagerness and skills for learning, application of knowledge into operational activities of libraries, making library into a learning organization, developing ICT based library facilities and services etc.

6. Libraries and information centers of Bangladesh don't play better role for innovating new knowledge by carrying out various knowledge innovation-based activities like arranging group discussion and internal meeting, taking part scientific research process and productivity, organizing evidence-based library activities, application of diffusion and conversion of knowledge etc.

7. In most of the cases, libraries and information centers are not interested to offer knowledge management based activities using various ICT tools, components, and applications.

A Proposed Plan for Launching Successful KM Practices in the L/IC

The development of KM practices in libraries and information centers comprises six indicators as follows:
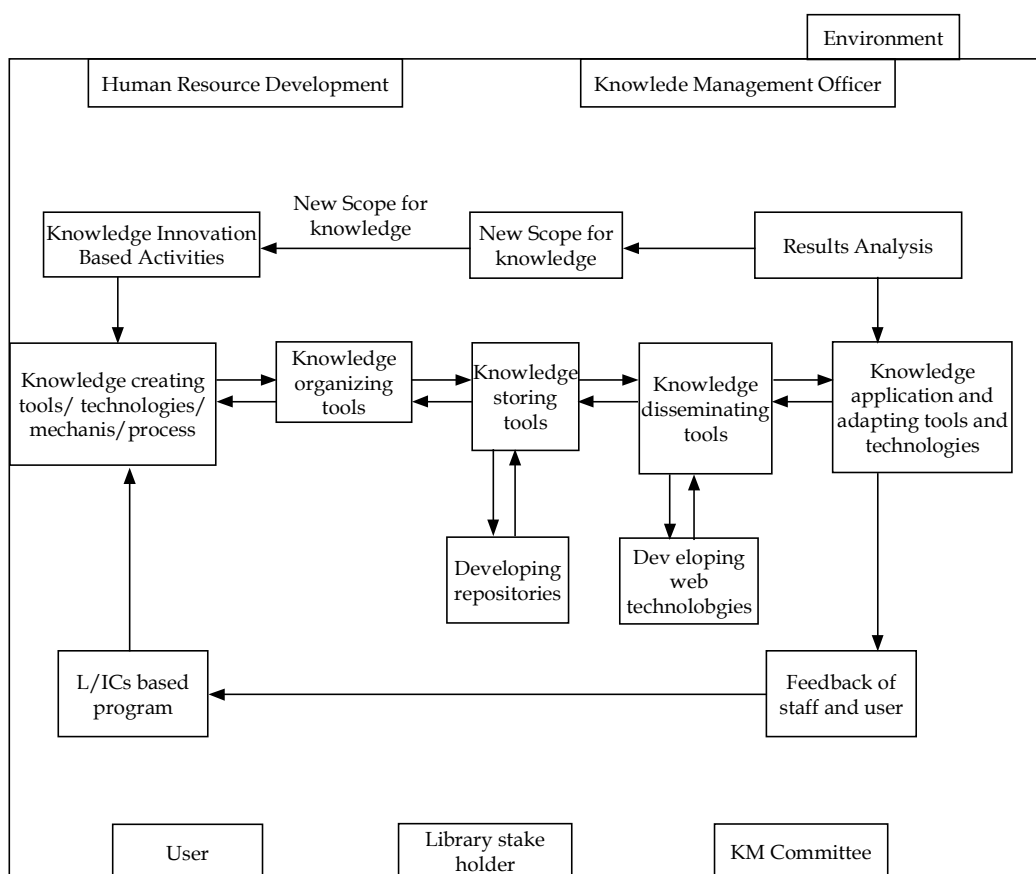
A. Human resource development

B. Creation of KM post and KM committee relating to KM activities

C. Creating an environment for innovation, exchange, study and application of knowledge

D. Organize libraries and information based program relating to KM activities

E. Coordinate knowledge innovation-based activities

F. Development of ICT based activities and services relating to KM

A. Human Resource Development

Human resource development is the process by which staffs' skills and working performance may be maximized. As a part of human resource development staffs should be given proper encouragement, guidance, and assistance etc. Encouragement program, the Efficiency-enhancing program for staffs, and Development of culture for the sharing of knowledge among staff and users are to be considered as three pillars for human resource development.

1.   Encouragement Program

• The incentive for a good job done;

• Remuneration for extra work;

• Promotion yearly (Routine);

• Promotion based on ACR yearly;

• Promotion based on Actual performance.

2.   Staff efficiency enhancing program

• Training program;

• Lifelong education;

• Working as a unit/team to a field;

• Developing knowledge resource;

• Proper guidance services;

• Staff quality improvement incentives.

Fig. 1: Proposed model for the development of KM practices in the L/IC

3. Development of culture for the sharing of knowledge among staff and users

- Sharing tacit knowledge culture between staffs; staff and users; users

- Sharing explicit knowledge culture between staffs; staff and users; users

B. Creation of KM post and KM committee relating to KM activities

L/IC should create KM post and KM committee who will help in taking quick decision and solve the problem as and when arises. This section includes following two tasks:

- Creating a position for KM officer;

- Creating a committee relating to the activities of KM.

C. Creating an environment for innovation, exchange, study and application of knowledge

L/IC should create an environment that can ensure the practices for knowledge innovation, exchange, study, and proper application. This environment may be created in the following ways:

- Developing the sharing attitudes of staffs and users;

- Mapping the total process of knowledge generation, systematic management, storage and dissemination;

- Who will be the stakeholder should be pre-defined;

- Who will be the ultimate user of created knowledge should be well defined;

- Who will take the decision or how will it be minimized when any problem arises;

- Ensure the free flow of knowledge;

- Determine the chain of command, working capacity/ activities;

- Ensure the use of the latest technologies in L/IC;

- Make the positive impact of the sharing, learning, working and expectations habit of staff and user;

- Make a reciprocal bonding in work among staff;

- Inspire in using and getting the benefit of

communities of practice, blog etc. sharing technology;

- Modernize information support;

- Exploration of existing knowledge structures, and recognition of how those structures relate to new information;

- Make proper communication with users and staffs and transfer knowledge.

D. Organize Libraries and information based program relating to KM activities

- Arrange an orientation program for beginners and make sure of its regular follow-up;

- Make the regular plans for organizing seminar/workshop/symposium and training etc. on the different contemporary issue and implement accordingly;

- Arrange various programs that relate to linking information with information, information with activities, and information with the man.

E. Coordinate knowledge innovation-based activities

L/IC should coordinate the knowledge innovation-based activities in the following ways:

- By carrying out research;

- By conducting the training program;

- By arranging a seminar, symposium, and workshop;

- By guiding research students, scholar, teacher etc;

- By synthesizing scientific literature preserved in repositories;

- By conducting a collaborative program;

- By conducting a group discussion/internal meeting;

- By consulting with specialists;

- By taking part in the scientific research process;

- By paying attention to diffusion and conversion to knowledge;

- By publishing journal/article,research report, newsletter etc;

- By conducting the bibliometric/scientomet-

ric study of literature;

• By citation analysis/indexing;

• By taking part resource sharing, networking or consortium, exchange program.

L/IC should coordinate knowledge innovation-based activities in the following areas:

• Knowledge internetworking;

• Quick knowledge flow;

• Digital collections, process, storage and dissemination of knowledge/information;

• Development and application of information resources;

• Construction of the digital /virtual library;

• Research and publication;

• Virtual reference service;

F. Development of ICT based activities and services relating to KM

ICT based activities and services can be developed by the following of ICT tools and applications:

1. Storing tools

• Data Acquisition/ Gathering Technologies;

• Institutional repositories;

• Database and archival management system.

2. Retrieval and Dissemination tools

• Virtual union catalog/OPAC;

• Dissemination/Retrieval Technologies;

• Internet;

• Online information discovery System;

• Federated Search System;

3. Creating Tools

• Metadata;

• Mentoring technologies;

• Citing Tools;

• Mentoring and apprentice technologies;

4. Organizing Tools

• Database Management System;

• Web content Management;

• Tagging and bookmarks;

5. Sharing & Guidance Tools

• Communities of Practices (CoPs) e.g. koha community;

• Groupware or mail group;

• Wikis;

• Library blog;

• Social Networking Sites;

• Electronic Research Guide;

• Web-based Reference Tool (e.g. virtual reference service).

Conclusion

The libraries and information centers (L/IC) of today's world is in a competitive position due to the rapidly growing information, diversified nature of the users' need and their satisfaction pattern. The libraries of all types have a common goal to satisfy users' need by providing different available services. For this, they have to manage their knowledge resources, human resources and application of ICT in providing library services successfully.

In some cases, the pattern of providing services, managing knowledge resources, knowledge innovation practices and application of ICT varies library to library irrespective of their nature, types, and sizes. As there is no standard to follow among the libraries of Bangladesh the scenario of KM practice is not at a satisfactory level. Therefore the present study was designed to reveal the problematic situation of KM practices and devised a successful KM model follow through.

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