Knowledge Management for Excellence in Indian Public Sector

Neeta Baporikar, Namibia University of Science & Technology, Namibia & University of Pune, Pune, India

ABSTRACT

Organizations can build a new kind of relationship with citizens, putting skills and resources directly at their disposal and enabling them to play a much greater role in public policy. They can also harness the “power of us” and pull people together to create public value in new ways if the knowledge is put to use in an effective manner (Baporikar, 2004). Knowledge creation, generation, and application are a continuous process. Although Knowledge Management (KM) has gained global attention, its adoption in public sector is still embryonic. Hence, it is vital for organizations to comprehend KM; so that KM strategy and organizational strategy can be well aligned. This is all the more important for public sector because the impact is not only high but directly affecting the common man. Based on in depth literature review and content analysis of secondary data this paper aims to develop comprehensive understanding of KM application in public sector. It also provides cases of Indian public sector organizations that by adoption of KM have excelled.

KEYWORDS

Efficiency, Government, Impact, Implicit, Knowledge, Learning, Manage, Organizations, Repositories, Tacit, Value

INTRODUCTION

KM is a key strategy central to information sharing and access to the Public Sector by the government’s partners. There is opportunity for developing nations to use KM as a key driver towards increasing Public Sector productivity and building trust in government. Globalization and liberalization may have brought to the forefront the issue of a pervasive declining trust in Public Sector by citizens. This statement is not to imply any cause and effect relationship, but merely to suggest that through globalization, the public’s awareness of the worldwide phenomenon of a declining trust in government has increased. It is also instructive to note that GDP growth is high when people trust in one another. Knowledge is the new “commodity” to be captured and exploited. Changing a culture that has long been prevailing is not an easy task. Moreover, KM is not a cure all for the development but it can play a significant supporting role.

Managing and leveraging knowledge within and across has become a critical skill for Public Sector in the 21st century if they have to be viable and excel.

KM concepts and tools have been tried and tested in the private sector and today, KM is also becoming a key enabler of competitiveness in Public Sector. Since Public Sector organizations are knowledge based organizations, KM could enable better formulation of policies with increased transparency, trust and can also deliver effective services by maximizing productivity in terms of process, time and cost. Creating a culture that supports the sharing of knowledge and citizenship participation in policy making is also important in bringing resources together to deliver services to
the citizens. Introduction of incentives to share information across organization boundaries could be one example. Executive involvement and strong inter-organizational collaborative skills are also key success factors. Although knowledge management (KM) is not purely -- nor even primarily, a matter of technology, the increasingly digital environment within which the Public Sector must operate and adapt, is central to the financing of KM strategies and mechanisms. Large scale information technology projects are often costly and notoriously difficult to implement and manage (OECD 2001). Measuring their payback in terms of direct and indirect impacts on results can be equally complex. Thus, a basic premise exists then, that KM must be properly understood and situated in public sector if it has to be an enabler of improved governance. The paper of the structure is after a brief introduction, literature review and research method is given. Then both the case studies are given which is followed by discussion, implications and solutions. The last part is the conclusion, which includes future research areas along with recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowledge management is the process of creating value from an organization’s tangible and intangible assets (Baporikar, 2004). Many organizations in the private or Public Sectors across the globe have started to realize the importance of knowledge management in streamlining their operations. The importance of the term Knowledge and its management can be gauzed from the fact that the age old notion of “Industrial economy and industrial nations” has taken a back-seat and is being replaced by more enticing notion of “Knowledge economy.” Public Sector has lagged behind a bit in realizing the importance of knowledge management, but with the tremendous investment in KM in private enterprises leading to innumerable benefits, this sector too has started to appreciate the benefits of embracing KM.

Before delving deep in to management of knowledge, it is important to understand what we want to manage – The Knowledge. The term “knowledge” is one of the more confusing aspects of KM. The terms “information” and “data” are often used interchangeably with the term “knowledge”. In fact, they have different meanings and understanding the differences is essential to doing knowledge work successfully. Knowledge is derived from information. It results from making comparisons, identifying consequences, and making connections. Knowledge also includes judgment and “rules of thumb” developed over time through trial and error. Here is a working definition of Knowledge suggested by Thomas Davenport and Laurence Prusak (Tiwana, 2000).

“Knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, expert insight and grounded intuition that provides an environment and framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. It originates and is applied in the minds of knowers. In organizations, it often becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories but also in organizational routines, processes, practices and norms.

The knowledge pyramid with data at the base evolves into wisdom at the apex, where intelligent action emerges. The further understanding of Knowledge can be built using “DIKW hierarchy” (Jonathan Hey, 2004). The hierarchy is often referred as Knowledge hierarchy or Knowledge pyramid where DIKW represents:

**Data:** There are numerous definitions of Data largely depending upon the context of use. Information science professional defines “Data” as unprocessed information. Despite the possibility of data manipulation, there is limited amount of actions that we can perform on Data.

**Information:** When some context is added to the data, it becomes information. The five processes of Calculation, Condensation, Contextualization, Correction and Categorization when applied to data lead to Information (Tiwana, 2000).

**Knowledge:** The knowledge can be described as capability to act on information. Knowledge is an understanding, and one gains knowledge through experience, reasoning, intuition and learning.
Related Content

[www.igi-global.com/article/compromise-theory-transnational-operation-chinese/69956?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/article/compromise-theory-transnational-operation-chinese/69956?camid=4v1a)

Prospect and Potential of Green Jobs towards Green Economy in Bangladesh: A Situation Analysis and Way Forward
Design for Child-Friendly Environment in Primary and Secondary Schools
Aims at Safe Society
www.igi-global.com/chapter/design-for-child-friendly-environment-in-primary-and-secondary-schools-aims-at-safe-society/206928?camid=4v1a

Methods and Models for Surveying Using the Internet
www.igi-global.com/article/methods-models-surveying-using-internet/75190?camid=4v1a