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A CONCEPTUAL STRUCTURE FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT MODEL IN HIERARCHICAL DISTRIBUTED ENVIRONMENT: CASE STUDY OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING AMONG DIFFERENT GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION WORKING FOR PLANNING AND FACILITATING WATER RESOURCES IN UTTARAKHAND STATE

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge management is the process of transforming information and intellectual assets into enduring value and Knowledge sharing is a social action involving the collective behavior of a group of people. However, prior research on knowledge predominately focused on individual behavior. Furthermore, previous studies did not capture the multiple facets of this group behavior. In this paper we proposed a conceptual structure for knowledge sharing model in distributed environment. Furthermore there is a brief discussion on how a mature process of knowledge sharing in ad-hoc system of government departments can improve efficiency of planning and policy making with case study of water departments in Uttarakhand. Attention is drawn to the need of an integrated model of knowledge sharing among different government departments as well as other organization dealing with water sources.

KEYWORDS

Knowledge Management, Group Behavior, ad-hoc System, Uttarakhand, Water Sources.

INTRODUCTION

nowledge is increasingly recognized as the basic requirement for organization to gain working potential. Organizational knowledge is the collective sum of tacit and explicit knowledge within an organization. Acquiring knowledge and managing knowledge is an emerging requirement of electronic world. In order to manage the knowledge it is required to define it. The definition of knowledge adopted here is "information combined with experience, context, interpretation, and reflection. It is a high-value form of information that is ready to apply to decisions and actions" [Albert and Bradley, 1997] . Knowledge management is the process of continually managing knowledge of all kinds to meet existing and emerging needs, to identify and exploit existing and acquired knowledge assets and to develop new opportunities. It is a systematic process of analysis, capture, defining and optimization of organization's knowledge economics. Its overall purpose is to maximize the organization's knowledge related effectiveness and returns from its knowledge assets and to renew them constantly. Alavi [4] suggests that one of the biggest reasons for focusing on knowledge sharing is that knowledge creation by itself cannot lead to superior performance for the organization. Rather, companies have to create value by using that knowledge, and knowledge sharing may be challenging due to a number of factors, including the type of knowledge, and an inability to locate and access the required knowledge source [4]. We argue that this sharing process must be boosted among different organizations sharing same knowledge domains. Exploring knowledge management systems are powerful tools for this purpose. Different sources are analyzed. The findings resulted in a framework for KM (Figure 2). The four main building blocks of the framework are presented in the following diagram.

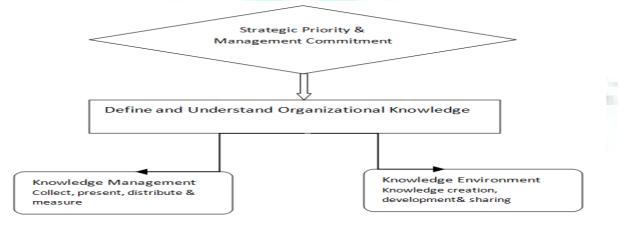


Figure 1: Knowledge Management System

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research described in this paper aims to concentrate on knowledge definition, branches and degree of usage in inter-organization. To achieve our main research goal, we employed a two phase research strategy in this paper. At first, we used knowledge derived from an analysis of KM Literature in order to propose our conceptual model for inter-organization knowledge management system. The model covers aspects referring to knowledge "for", "from" and "about" in depth. Therefore, the phase provides us with suitable framework for our case study in the second phase. This second phase consist of an explanatory case study of different government organizations dealing with water resources in Uttarakhand.

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RESEARCH FINDINGS

Nonaka [1] proposes that new organizational knowledge can be created through four conversion processes that involve tacit and explicit knowledge: socialization, externalization, combination and internalization. Knowledge is an important asset that allows obtaining and retaining competitive advantage. For this reason knowledge sharing has become a strategic priority for most organizations. Knowledge sharing is extremely important because organizations have to continually learn and innovate to remain competitive. According to several authors, the interplay between the individual and collective knowledge is an important aspect of organizational knowledge creation, amplification, and sharing.

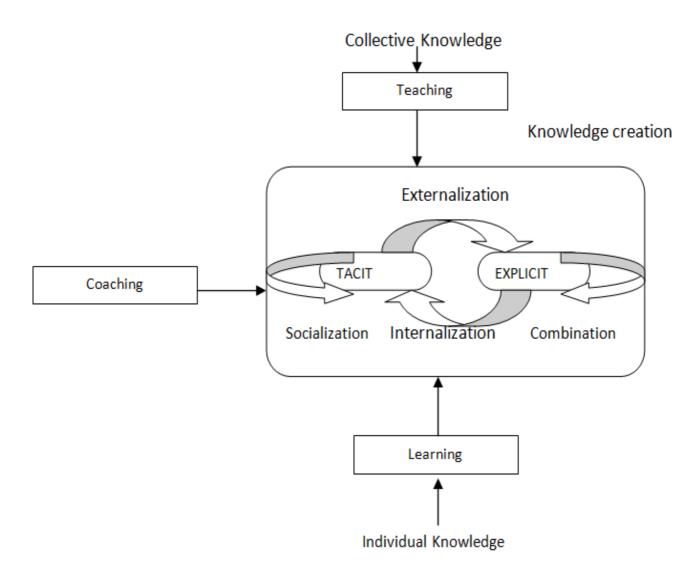


Figure 2: Knowledge Creation

Information systems literature makes a difference between data, information and knowledge [3] elaborated on the disparities:

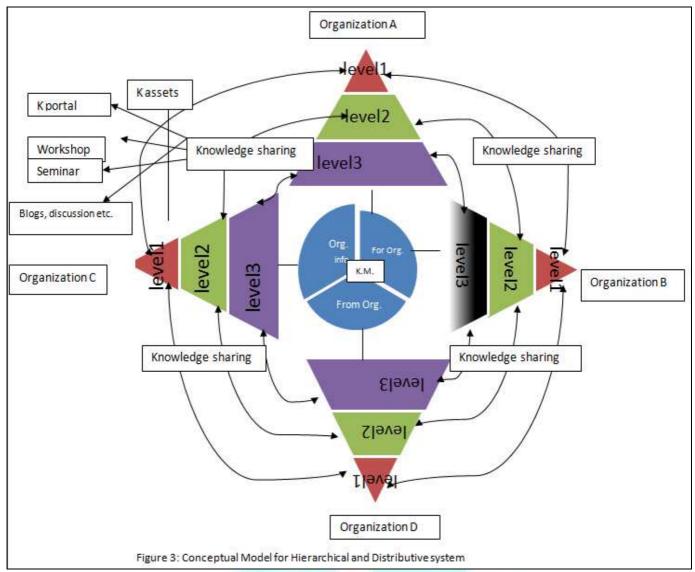
"Data is a set of discrete, objective facts about events. In an organization context, data is described as structured records of transactions. Information is data endowed with relevance and purpose. It is a message with a sender and a receiver. Information is meant to change the way the receiver perceives something, to have an impact on his judgment and behavior. It must inform. Knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information."[2].

We argue that knowledge which plays an important role in organizations growth is distributive and hierarchical in nature and interplay of knowledge management in inter-organization system is modeling of concepts, expertise's, experiences of individuals and groups of experts at different levels of organization. E-Gov. can play a vital role in knowledge sharing in government organization.

CONCEPTUAL MODELING FOR HIERARCHICAL AND DISTRIBUTIVE SYSTEM

Conceptual modeling is a technique that helps to clarify the structure of a knowledge-intensive business task. The knowledge model of an application provides a specification of the data and knowledge structures required for the application. The model is developed as part of the analysis process. The knowledge model does not contain any implementation-specific terms. These are left for the design and implementation phase. In this section we are going to explain an important part of this study- theoretical conceptual model we created through literature. In our conceptual model we divided Domain knowledge (what aspect of knowledge) experts according to organization's hierarchies and modeled task/inference knowledge (how aspect of model) interplay in distributed inter-organization system. We grouped individuals with experiences and expertise with different aspects related to same domain in same level of organizations hierarchy and knowledge sharing between different organization is will be done at corresponding levels of organizational hierarchy . We believe that knowledge about organization involves basic info like name of department, no. of resources, information about resources, authorities of department and policies of deptt. . Knowledge from organization is most important part as it will consist task knowledge or inference knowledge about domain. Knowledge for organization is domain specific knowledge which will be internal as well as external. Internal knowledge is tactic and explicit knowledge both. While external knowledge will be gathered through different knowledge assets as well as interplay of knowledge among organization about common knowledge domain.

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CASE STUDY

The following case demonstrates utilization of conceptual model for hierarchical distributed system. There are six departments in Uttarakhand at present dealing with water resources but working under different administrative control in the government and as well despite of all e-government practices there is no common knowledge base related to water resources of state. Due to this reason, the water resource planning for different purposes falls mostly into the abyss of dispute causing bottlenecks in the pace of development. To establish synchronization, information and knowledge base all the water resource agencies irrigation department, watershed management directorate, Jal Vidyut Nigam, Peyjal Nigam and Jal Sansathan should be brought under single umbrella knowledge management system.

We propose inter and intra department both type of knowledge sharing. Intra department knowledge sharing can be in same level as well as groups at different levels of organizational hierarchy while inter department KT will be at corresponding levels of hierarchy i.e. village to village level, tahsil to tahsil, district to district level. Now, next question about management of shared knowledge of experts from different organizations? E- Gov. efforts can play a vital role for this purpose. Knowledge shared among different level i.e. block, Tahsil, District and state level through different knowledge assets will be managed under a common KMS. Uttarakhand currently faces huge water scarcity mainly due to unsystematic distribution of water as well as poor management of water resources and such efforts can help to get by situations.

CONCLUSION

The success of an organization lies more in its intellectual and systems capabilities than in its physical assets. The importance of KM application in real world problems will continue being increased in the coming years. As a result of the research effort, we proposed our theory of combining knowledge management concept with E-Gov. efforts for increasing efficiency of distributed environments

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