Knowledge Management in Indian Higher Education – Issues and Challenges

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Abstract

Purpose : The current research focused on knowledge management in Indian higher education. Knowledge management is an important aspect of higher education, as it helps institutions to effectively manage and share knowledge to enhance teaching, learning, and research outcomes. In the context of Indian higher education, there are several policy implications that can help to improve the effectiveness of knowledge management.

Methodology : The research paper was prepared based on secondary data. These include creating a comprehensive knowledge management framework, encouraging collaboration among institutions, investing in technology infrastructure, fostering a culture of knowledge sharing, and supporting open access to research publications and educational resources.

Findings : I found that knowledge management in Indian higher education requires a multi-faceted approach that involves policy support, technological investments, and a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing. As the Government of India welcomes foreign universities, the significance of knowledge management becomes even more vital. Implementing these policy implications can help to improve the effectiveness of KM in Indian higher education and support the development of a more robust knowledge-based economy.

Practical Implications : It is recommended that the government framework should also include guidelines for the development and implementation of knowledge management systems in higher education institutions. Collaboration among institutions is essential for effective knowledge management. The government should encourage institutions to collaborate with each other to share knowledge and resources. This can be done by creating networks or consortia of institutions that work together on specific projects or initiatives.

Originality : Unlike prior research on knowledge management, the current work is to provide a comprehensive understanding of KM in higher education across various mediums.

Keywords : **knowledge, management, Indian, higher education, scenario**

JEL Classification Codes : A21, A22, I2, I23, I28, G41

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The quality and sustainability of higher education relies heavily on the foundation of knowledge. This includes a theoretical and practical understanding of a subject, which is a valuable asset for any organization. The ability of individuals to create knowledge is essential for meeting new opportunities and challenges. Over the past century, there has been an explosion of knowledge and advancements in information technology, which has led to the development of knowledge management (KM) as a discipline of study since 1991 (Nonaka, 1991). Given the significance of knowledge in higher education, KM has emerged as a contemporary

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concept within the scope of higher education. The potential of a university is directly linked to the knowledge pool, which is determined by the experience of the people working in the organization. The advent of the internet and other digital technologies has played a significant role in the evolution of knowledge management, making it easier to store, share, and access information (Arun Kumar & Shekhar, 2017).

There has been a shift towards a more collaborative and open work culture, with organizations recognizing the importance of breaking down silos and encouraging knowledge-sharing. The growing importance of data and analytics has led to a renewed focus on knowledge management as organizations look to leverage their collective knowledge to make better decisions in higher education. A combination of technological advancements, cultural changes, and a growing recognition of the importance of knowledge as a strategic asset has shaped the evolution of knowledge management (Arun Kumar & Shekhar, 2020). In the late 20th century, organizations began recognizing the value of managing knowledge as a strategic asset. In the early days of knowledge management, the focus was on capturing and storing knowledge in databases and other digital formats (Nonaka & Peltokorpi, 2006). In the 1990s, the concept of knowledge management gained further traction as organizations realized the benefits of leveraging their collective knowledge to improve decision-making and drive innovation (Serenko, 2021). This period saw the emergence of social media, web 2.0 technologies, and collaboration platforms, which have since become key tools for supporting knowledge sharing and collaboration (Hislop et al., 2018).

Today, the focus is on creating a culture of knowledge sharing, leveraging advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, and using metrics and analytics to measure the impact of knowledge management initiatives. In the early days of higher education, knowledge management was largely limited to storing and retrieving books, journals, and other printed materials in libraries. The development of new technologies, such as computers, the internet, and online databases, has enabled universities to store and share knowledge in new ways (Arun Kumar, 2021). In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, universities have come to recognize the importance of knowledge management in supporting their goals, including research, teaching, and service. This has led to the development of new knowledge management practices, such as establishing research centers and creating online learning platforms (Joshi & Bisht, 2019).

In higher education, knowledge management has expanded recently as universities seek to leverage their collective knowledge assets to improve teaching and learning, research, and overall performance. Here are a few key areas where knowledge management can play a role in higher education. KM can support the development of teaching and learning resources, such as online courses, multimedia content, and digital libraries, that students and faculty members can use to access information and build new knowledge (Gupta & Chopra, 2018). KM can help researchers to manage and share information, data, and other research outputs, as well as to collaborate more effectively with other researchers both within and outside their institutions. Higher education institutions can improve their overall performance and effectiveness by capturing and sharing best practices, policies, and institutional knowledge. It can also play a role in building stronger relationships with alumni by providing a platform for alumni to share their knowledge and expertise with current students and faculty members (De la Torre et al., 2021). The future of knowledge management is likely to be shaped by several trends, including the increasing importance of data and analytics, the rise of artificial intelligence, and the growing role of the cloud (Nakano & Muniz Jr., 2018). Another important factor that will shape the future of knowledge management in higher education is the changing demographic of students. As the student body becomes more diverse, with a greater representation of international students, non-traditional students, and students from underrepresented groups, universities will need to find new ways to manage and share knowledge that is accessible and relevant to all students (Hayaeian et al., 2022). The successful management of knowledge will become increasingly important in helping universities to achieve their goals and maintain their position as centers of excellence in research and learning.

KM is crucial in Indian higher education for several reasons. Firstly, India has a large and diverse higher

education sector encompassing many institutions and disciplines. The Indian higher education sector is facing significant challenges, including limited resources, infrastructure, and capacity. KM can help institutions to optimize their resources and infrastructure by leveraging existing knowledge and expertise, leading to more efficient and effective operations. India has a growing knowledge-based economy that requires a skilled workforce with high levels of knowledge and expertise. Effective KM in higher education can help develop this workforce by enhancing the quality of education and research and facilitating the transfer of knowledge from academia to industry. Effective KM can help to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in Indian higher education by creating a culture of collaboration, creativity, and knowledge sharing. This can lead to the development of new ideas that can benefit society as a whole and contribute to the development of a knowledge-based economy.

Methodology

Knowledge management is essential to any organization, including higher education institutions. This paper aims to understand KM in higher education across various mediums comprehensively. This study relies solely on secondary data sources, including information gathered from institutional websites, periodicals, journal articles, and relevant literature. The data were collected from December 2022 – February 2023.

Discussion

Knowledge management is an essential aspect of higher education institutions. Higher education institutions face several issues and challenges in implementing effective knowledge management practices in India. Some of the key issues and challenges are as follows :

Lack of a Comprehensive Knowledge Management Strategy

Many higher education institutions in India do not have a comprehensive strategy for knowledge management. Effective knowledge management (KM) has become essential to organizational success in today's knowledge-driven economy. A comprehensive knowledge management strategy is critical for organizations to harness, share, and leverage their collective knowledge. However, many organizations still lack a well-defined KM strategy, which can lead to various issues and challenges. One of the significant problems with the lack of a comprehensive KM strategy is that organizations struggle to manage their knowledge effectively. This often leads to a siloed approach to knowledge management, where individual departments hoard knowledge and fail to share it with others in higher education institutions. This siloed approach can lead to inefficiencies, duplication of effort, and missed opportunities for innovation and growth. Without a comprehensive KM strategy, organizations face the risk of knowledge loss. Numerous universities worldwide are presently engaged in conducting research and implementing knowledge management practices (Masete & Mafini, 2018). In higher education institutions (HEIs), effective knowledge management (KM) plays a crucial role in planning, organizing, monitoring, and managing intellectual capital assets. KM can enhance knowledge exchange and overall performance (Horban, 2021; Masete & Mafini, 2018; Migdadi, 2021; Pereira et al., 2021; Terán-Bustamante et al., 2021). Additionally, organizations without a comprehensive KM strategy may struggle to capture and share knowledge effectively; organizations may miss opportunities to innovate and create new ideas that meet changing market demands.

Inadequate IT Infrastructure

Inadequate IT infrastructure is a significant challenge faced by higher education institutions in India. Despite the

growing importance of technology in education, many universities in India lack the necessary IT infrastructure to support modern teaching and learning practices. This has several negative impacts on the quality of education and the competitiveness of Indian higher education institutions. Inadequate IT infrastructure is that it can hinder the adoption of modern teaching and learning practices (Guzman & Trivelato, 2011). This can result in a less engaging and effective learning experience for students, which can negatively impact their academic performance and future career prospects. It can hinder the development of digital literacy skills among students. In today's digital age, it is essential for students to have the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate and use digital tools effectively. However, without adequate IT infrastructure, students may not have access to the latest software and applications to develop their digital skills, putting them at a disadvantage in the job market. Inadequate IT infrastructure can also impact research and innovation in higher education institutions. Research and innovation require access to advanced computing resources, high-speed internet, and cutting-edge software and applications (Aggarwal, 2017). By improving IT infrastructure, Indian higher education institutions can support modern teaching and learning practices, develop students' digital literacy skills, drive research and innovation, and improve the accessibility of education for students in remote and underprivileged areas.

Resistance to Change

Resistance to change is a significant challenge that has hindered the progress of Indian higher education. Change is necessary for growth and development, and it is critical for educational institutions to adapt to changing times and needs. However, resistance to change can prevent institutions from embracing new ideas and technologies, impacting education quality and hindering competitiveness. The primary reason for resistance to change in Indian higher education is the traditional nature of the education system. The Indian higher education system is rooted in traditional values, beliefs, and practices, challenging and adopting new ideas and approaches. Another factor contributing to resistance to change is the bureaucratic nature of Indian higher education institutions. With complex hierarchies and decision-making processes, it can be challenging to implement new ideas and technologies quickly (Galgotia & Lakshmi, 2022). To overcome resistance to change in Indian higher education, there needs to be a shift in mindset and culture. Institutions must promote a culture of innovation and continuous improvement, where change is necessary for growth and development.

Limited Collaboration and Sharing

Limited collaboration and sharing in Indian higher education is a significant challenge hindering educational institutions' growth and development. Collaboration and sharing are essential for creating a community of learners, promoting innovation and creativity, and ensuring the quality of education. The limited collaboration and sharing in Indian higher education is the competitive nature of the education system (Bagga et al., 2016). Institutions often compete for resources, funding, and students, creating a secrete and protectionism culture. This can result in limited collaboration between institutions, departments, and even among faculty members within the same institution. To overcome limited collaboration and sharing in Indian higher education, there is a need to promote a culture of collaboration, communication, and sharing. This can be achieved by creating opportunities for stakeholders to connect, share knowledge and ideas, and build meaningful relationships (Malik, 2022).

Research and Professional Development

Research provides a platform for creating and disseminating new knowledge, and professional development enables faculty and staff to enhance their skills and knowledge, ultimately leading to better student outcomes. Many institutions struggle to secure adequate funding for research and professional development activities,

resulting in limited opportunities for faculty and staff to engage in these activities. This can lead to a lack of innovation, creativity, and professional growth, ultimately impacting the quality of education (Hansen et al., 1999). There is often a lack of incentives, recognition, and support for research, making it challenging to attract and retain talented researchers. To overcome the challenges that hinder research and professional development, institutions should create a supportive research culture, promote collaboration and sharing between institutions, and promote awareness and understanding of the importance of research and professional development among stakeholders (Dhamdhere, 2015).

Policy Implications

Knowledge management is an important aspect of higher education in India, and several policy implications can help to improve the effectiveness of knowledge management in this sector. The government should create a comprehensive framework for knowledge management in higher education that outlines the objectives, strategies, and policies for effective knowledge management. This framework should also include guidelines for developing and implementing knowledge management systems in higher education institutions. Collaboration among institutions is essential for effective knowledge management. The government should encourage institutions to collaborate with each other to share knowledge and resources. This can be done by creating networks or consortia of institutions that work together on specific projects or initiatives. This can be done by mandating institutions to make their research publications and data freely available online and supporting initiatives that provide open access to educational resources.

Theoretical Implications

Effective knowledge management practices can promote the creation and dissemination of new knowledge within Indian higher education institutions. Encouraging research, fostering interdisciplinary collaborations, and providing platforms for knowledge sharing can lead to innovation and the advancement of knowledge in various fields. It facilitates sharing of information and expertise among faculty members, researchers, and students. It promotes collaborative learning, encourages critical thinking, and enhances problem-solving skills. Effective KM practices ensure that institutional knowledge is preserved and transferred across generations. Documenting best practices, creating repositories, and establishing mentorship programs can facilitate knowledge transfer from experienced faculty to young researchers and students.

Conclusion

Knowledge management in Indian higher education refers to the systematic process of capturing, distributing, and effectively using knowledge within educational institutions in India. The adoption of knowledge management practices in Indian higher education has gained momentum in recent years due to the increasing importance of knowledge and information in a rapidly changing and competitive educational landscape. There is a growing recognition of the need for Indian higher education institutions to improve their knowledge management capabilities in order to enhance the quality of education, improve research and innovation, and achieve greater organizational efficiency. This is particularly important as the Indian higher education sector is rapidly expanding and facing increasing pressure to improve its competitiveness on a global scale. Knowledge management initiatives in Indian higher education are typically focused on improving the sharing of knowledge and information between faculty members, students, and staff and using technology to support knowledge management activities. As the Government of India welcomes foreign universities, the significance of knowledge

management becomes even more vital. Despite the growing importance of knowledge management in Indian higher education, many challenges remain to be addressed. There is also a need to understand better the impact of knowledge management on the quality of education and to develop evidence-based best practices for knowledge management in higher education.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

The study is solely based on secondary data, and it may not capture the full range of experiences and perspectives of stakeholders. Also, the study may not be able to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of knowledge management practices in Indian higher education due to the dynamic nature of the field. Further research can be built by adopting a mixed-methods approach that includes primary data. This can help to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perspectives of stakeholders and allow for the validation of the findings of this study. Future research can explore the potential of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and blockchain for knowledge management in Indian higher education.

Author's Contribution

This review paper is solely prepared by A. Arun Kumar based on the literature readings.

Conflict of Interest

The author certifies that he has no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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