# Literature Review on Knowledge Management: A critical study

1Dr. Ani Smriti, 2Mr. Rajesh Kumar
1Ph. D. in Commerce and Business Administration, 2F.O.
1Tilka Manjhi Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur, (Bihar), India,
2Bihar Agricultural University, Sabour, Bhagalpur (Bihar), India

*Abstract* - **Nowadays we are in the era of knowledge. Knowledge refers to a theoretical or practical understanding of the subject. Knowledge transfer is an important process of knowledge management and refers to the transfer of knowledge to locations where it is needed and can be used. Knowledge sharing can be defined as "the exchange of knowledge between and among individuals." Knowledge management (KM) has become the most important topic to study for any researchers and scholars. There is an abundance of literature on knowledge management, and the literature covers various topics. KM is one of the most broadly researched topics in the area of organizational behaviour and human resource management. Knowledge management is an emerging discipline in the recent literature. It has become the centre of gravity of human activities. KM as "one of the major driving forces of organizational change and value creation since the early 1990", which has become more complex as a result of a managerial concept evolution. Based on the literature stated that knowledge management is a process of creating, disseminating, and applying organizational knowledge. The process of creating knowledge means that organizations have to trigger all the people to realize that they have knowledge. This paper presents a review of past literature on knowledge management in organizations. The purpose of the review is to identify research gaps and concepts of knowledge management. This literature review offers a synthesis of the past and contemporary studies about knowledge management.**

*keywords* - **Knowledge, knowledge management, knowledge sharing, organizational knowledge, innovation, literature review.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge management (KM) has become the most important topic to study for any researcher and scholar. There is an abundance of literature on knowledge management, and the literature covers various topics. While there are some studies that analyze knowledge management literature, providing frameworks for organizing this literature and discussing future research directions and research agenda of knowledge management, there has been no comprehensive review of knowledge management studies except one: Schultze & Leidner, (2002), which involved a comprehensive review of knowledge management studies in information systems journals. Most of the current knowledge management review studies have only looked at certain aspects of knowledge management.

According to Alazmi and Zairi, (2003), in line with this trend, it has been explored that as life-cycles of different products are shortening day by day and technologies are becoming ever more imitable, the basis of sustainable competitive advantage is now organizational knowledge which is basically tacit in nature and hard to imitate by competitors.

The role of knowledge in achieving a competitive advantage is explained in different ways in the literature. Internalization and effective utilization of knowledge through knowledge management (KM) initiatives can lead organizations to achieve improved innovation and overall performance. It is argued that if knowledge management (KM) concepts are effectively integrated into the organizational processes, they can trigger the effectiveness of the quality management process which will result in quality improvement and increased productivity (Zhao and Bryar, 2001).

In recent years, knowledge has been widely recognized as the most crucial competitive asset (Palacios and Garrigos, 2006). According to Shannak, (2009). Knowledge refers to a theoretical or practical understanding of a subject. Knowledge management (KM) has become a very common term in the twenty-first century, as it has been applied to a wide spectrum of activities and areas with the purpose of managing, creating, and enhancing intellectual assets.

Mihalca, et al., (2008). It has become enriched with a huge wealth of contributions from many scholars and an extensive accumulation of experiences. From a deeper point of view, KM should be a kind of working method and philosophy. KM is a part of the field of management studies, but it is also closely integrated with information and communication technologies.

Kakabadse, et al., (2003). In fact, KM can be observed from several perspectives, as there are a number of fields that contribute to it. Prominent among them are the fields of philosophy, cognitive science, social science, management science, information science, knowledge engineering, artificial intelligence, and economics.

### 1.1 Definition and Concept of Knowledge Management

There are a number of approaches to the conception of knowledge, as it is both a complex and abstract term. Actually, the definition of knowledge is a matter of ongoing debate among philosophers in the field of epistemology.

One of the most accepted definitions of knowledge is that knowledge is a dynamic human resource of justification of the personal beliefs to obtain the truth (Nonaka, 1994). It can then be stated that knowledge is an invisible or intangible asset, in which its acquisition involves complex cognitive processes of perception, learning, communication, association, and reasoning (Epetimehin and Ekundayo, 2011). Knowledge is the concept, skill, experience, and vision that provides a framework for creating, evaluating, and using the information (Soltani and Navimipour, 2016). Generally, knowledge can be divided into two types, tacit and explicit (Hubert, 1996). Tacit knowledge is the personal and context-specific knowledge of a person that resides in the human mind, behaviour, and perception (Duffy, 2000). Koenig, (2012) suggested that explicit knowledge means information or knowledge that is set out in the tangible form.

Along with the development of research on knowledge management, and more widespread definitions. Understanding knowledge management is defined with various points of view. Associated with the definition of knowledge management, some authors give their views to describe into two syllables that are by defining knowledge and management.

According to Schwartz, (2006) cited in the book Davenport and Prusak entitled Working Knowledge defines the following knowledge: "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. It originates and is applied in the minds of knowers. In organizations, it often becomes embedded not only in documents and repositories but also in organizational routines, processes, practices, and norms".

KM can be defined as an umbrella term for a wide variety of interdependent and interlocking functions consisting of knowledge creation, storing, sharing, and improving (Gloet and Terziovski, 2004). Organizational culture is built on shared ideals and beliefs (Hofstede, 1990) affecting the way an organization operates, and these norms are propagated to new employees (Schein, 1985). Another stream of literature explored the interrelationship of KM and TQM (Asif, et al., 2013; Sanz-Valle et al., 2011; Hung et al., 2010; Hsu and Shen 2005; Linderman, et al., 2004).

Recent research is being conducted on the interrelationships of KM and innovation. It is interesting to see whether proper management of knowledge creates innovation in the organization or innovation helps to create and manage organizational knowledge (Hung, et al., 2010). The growing need for organizational knowledge is due to its tacit and inimitable nature and its crucial role in achieving organizational innovation (Gloet and Terziovski, 2004; Carneiro, 2000).

Emerging literature is digging out these dimensions (Seidler-deAlwis and Hartmann, 2008; Du Plessis, 2007) but empirical studies on the relationship of innovation and knowledge management (KM) are still scant (Donate and Guadamillas, 2011; Darroch, 2005).

## II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The major objectives of the review are:-
- To know the concept of knowledge management.
- To evaluate the kind of research undertaken and available in the field of knowledge management in the organizations.
- To identify the gaps in the current literature.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for the research paper is based on secondary information. The data is collected from journals, books, research papers, and websites. For this purpose, articles were listed in the databases have been reviewed.

## IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Several methods and techniques related to knowledge management are discussed in books, technical papers, and articles. In this review, the research team has looked closely at the development of knowledge management as well as conceptual approaches and experiences that have occurred in this field of expertise.

Knowledge has emerged as a significant organizational intellectual resource in the past few years. To deal with this intellectual resource, the Knowledge Management term has been introduced in the organizations. To avail all the associated benefits, it is essential to differentiate knowledge from data and information.

Michael Polanyi (1967) observed that first distinguished the two types of knowledge: tacit and explicit knowledge.

Ikujiro, Nonaka (1994), used these terms and as a result, the most recent Knowledge management (KM) literature seems to be influenced by this distinction.

Schuring, (1996); Marx, (2010); Sacomano Neto; Escrivão Filho, et al., (2000). In contrast, they also mention a self-managing or autonomous work team, which involves employees in making decisions. Many authors have stated that team members' autonomy is one of the main drivers of successful knowledge management on the shop floor level.

Cohen and Bailey (1997) put that work teams normally are directed by a supervisor who makes the most of the decisions, including how things are done and who does each of these things.

Brand, (1998). To sustain a competitive advantage, it is of crucial importance to make sure the timely availability of knowledge to the right people and at the right time. Due to intense competitive conditions, it is important for a company to know "what it knows". This means it should be well aware of all data sources to extract required information at right time.

Lim, et al. (1999). Explicit knowledge can be collected through written manuals, instructions, and standard operating procedures, so it can be easily transferred to others. It can take the form of tangible organizational knowledge in the form of the company's vision, mission, and policy in black and white.

Carneiro, (2000). The real strength of organizations lies in their distinctive resources and the effective utilization of these resources. Any organization can hold two types of resources: Physical and Intellectual. Physical resources can include organization facilities, equipment, building, materials, and office furniture, etc. whereas intellectual resources include all informational resources including human capital.

Johannsen, (2000). Knowledge storage refers to the process of recording knowledge and storing it in the repositories such as archives, databases, and filing systems. And it aims to transfer the knowledge to the individual, groups, or units that need to apply it.

Grover & Davenport, (2001). Various organizations in western countries are creating knowledge repository projects that are used to capture knowledge and facilitate the dissemination of knowledge within the organization.

Alavi, & Leidner, (2001). Knowledge management is a recent concept discussed more fully from the 1990s and on, defined as a process of promoting the flow of knowledge between individuals and groups within the organization.

Lytras, et al. (2002) stated that knowledge management is a systematic, explicit and application of knowledge that will help organizations maximize the organizations' knowledge-related effectiveness and returns from the knowledge assets. It also creates new capabilities, encourages innovation and performance as well as increases customer value.

Bergeron, (2003). Knowledge management is a management approach to the management of intellectual assets and other information to support the achievement of the company's competitive advantage.

Lee and Choi, (2003). The knowledge transfer process has been the subject of many types of research whereas knowledge creation or utilization processes have been relatively neglected areas. Specifically, it is argued that knowledge creation can play a very crucial role to improve organizational innovation performance.

Glazer, et al., (2004) observed that made cross-cultural comparisons, collecting data from workers from different countries such as Hungary, Italy, the UK, and the USA.
Gloet and Terziovski, (2004). Knowledge Management (KM) is defined as a term or approach for the creation, storage/retrieval, sharing, and application of knowledge.

Newell, et al., (2004). Knowledge application refers to the actualizing of knowledge. This process can be used to adjust strategic direction, solve new problems, improve efficiency and reduce costs. And this stage is used to make good use of the created knowledge such as implementing a best practice.

Chen and Chen, (2005). While quantitative analysis is always used to measure explicit knowledge with a series of indicators which include both financial and non-financial.

Jetter, et al., (2006) mentioned that knowledge is divided into three parts, there are explicit knowledge, tacit knowledge, and latent knowledge.

Dayan and Evans, (2006). The reason for the increased importance of knowledge lies in the fact that effective management of knowledge brings many positive outcomes to improve learning efficiency. And we implement KM initiatives with the expectation that it will result in increased competitive advantage. KM is used to capture, document, retrieve and reuse knowledge, as well as to create, transfer and exchange it.

McNabb, (2007). The existence of a person's ability in acting and activities is considered as important things to know together so that the idea of knowledge management is defined as follows: "knowledge management is about managing information to make the most of the knowledge in an organization in order to benefit from finding and applying innovative answers to old and new questions".

Du Plessis, (2007). Knowledge management provides the required tools, techniques, processes, and platforms to ensure the timely availability and accessibility of knowledge. In order to improve organizational performance (Donate and Guadamillas 2011).

Liew, (2008). Derived from the evolution of industries from intensive data processing operations to information-based operations to knowledge-based businesses, there is an imperative need to understand knowledge management (KM). This call becomes evident in the context of the supply chain (SC). Since a SC can be viewed as an inherently complex and dynamic system of flows, which encompasses material flow and capital flow driven by an information flow and a knowledge flow.

Liew, (2008), recognized KM as "one of the major driving forces of organizational change and value creation since the early 1990", which has become more complex as a result of a managerial concept evolution.

Matzler, et al., (2008) conducted an empirical study on which it was identified that an individual's consciousness levels impact knowledge sharing performance.

Staples, & Webster, (2008). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation influences workers' intention to share knowledge, but also, results and job oriented cultures have positive impacts on employees' intention in the knowledge management process. Some studies showed the importance of a trusting environment in order for workers to want to share their knowledge and their own experiences with their teams. A strong positive relationship was found between trust and knowledge sharing for all types of teams, but the relationship was stronger when task interdependence was low, supporting the position that trust is more critical than autonomy as a driver of knowledge sharing and creation.

Young, 2008; as cited in Mostofa & Sultana, (2019). KM is the practice of enabling individuals, teams, and whole societies to mutually and consistently develop exchange, and apply information in order to attain their goals in a better way.

Tseng, (2008) proposed a categorization matrix that classifies the performance indicators for potential use in KM performance measurements. And the evaluation criteria of this method include process, human, and IT.

Wu, et al., (2009) developed an evaluation method of KM performance based on the principal component analysis. And the measure index consists of knowledge stocks, maturity degree of the learning organizations, information management, and marketing capability.

Wang and Zheng, (2010) proposed a KM performance evaluation method that includes knowledge system, structure capital, human capital, mental capital, and market capital.

Zhang, (2010) applied the Balanced Scorecard into the performance assessment of KM on the basis of the analysis of the Balanced Scorecard and KM and carried out the detailed analysis to measure the performance of KM tools from four aspects – financial, customer, internal processes and learning and growth.

Tohidinia and Mosakhani, (2010) evaluated the influence of a series of potential factors on knowledge-sharing behaviour and suggested a systematic effort to improve knowledge-sharing behaviour in organizations, an effort in which relevant factors from different perspectives are considered.

Wang and Zheng, (2010). KM performance evaluation includes the design of KM performance evaluation criteria and the selection of the evaluation methods.

Ma and Yuen, (2011) proposed an online knowledge-sharing model and tested it among undergraduate students using an online learning environment. And this model introduces two new constructs – perceived online attachment motivation and perceived online relationship commitment.

Hung, et al., (2011) investigated the effects of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation on knowledge sharing in a group meeting. Results of their experiment showed that the KM system with built-in reputation feedback is crucial to support successful knowledge sharing.

Donate and Guadamillas, (2011). All these functions are interdependent and interlinked under the umbrella of Knowledge Management (KM). The objective of Knowledge Management (KM) is to make the best effective use of the existing resources and capabilities of an organization.

Tseng, et al., (2012). There is no limit to where KM can be applied, ranging from individual learning, small enterprises to large multinational corporations: KM has become increasingly more important for individuals to understand what information is essential, how to administer this essential information, and how to transform essential information into permanent knowledge.

Makhsousi, et al., (2013) reviewed recent advances on the implementation of KM in different areas and discussed why some KM implementations fail and how they could turn into successful ones.

Arisha and Ragab (2013) provided a literature review and categorized the analysis of the rapidly growing number of KM publications, and they offered a comprehensive reference for newcomers embarking on research in the field.

Pirkkalainen and Pawlowski, (2013). Knowledge transfer is an important process of KM and refers to the transfer of knowledge to locations where it is needed and can be used.

Yong (2013) provided new findings of the respective impacts of organizational rewards, reciprocity, enjoyment, and social capital on individuals' knowledge sharing intentions, which prior research has ignored so far. Their new findings will be very useful to deepening and widening our understanding of the respective role of individual motivations and social capital in individuals' knowledge-sharing intentions.

Chuang, Liao, and Lin, (2013) define: "a specific, systemic and organizational process, to create, transfer, integrate and leverage the associated knowledge, that knowledge of a particular functional unit is applied across other functional units that differ in competitive advantage."

Anita Cucovic and Osman Cucovic, (2014) found that knowledge and efficient organizational KM encourage the creativity of the employees, which is realized through different innovations. KM is an essential element of the information economy and is the focus of artificial intelligence technology.

Liu, et al. (2014) described the development of a semantic-based KM platform for Web-enabled environments featuring intelligence and insight capabilities.

Wzorek and Cordeiro (2014). In contrast, some qualitative studies, such as one conducted by the author, propose that autonomy alone cannot be associated with more effective Knowledge management on the shop floor.

Israilidis, et. al, (2015). Workers' lack of consciousness may negatively affect the intention to share knowledge, consequently guiding to weak decision-making and communication in organizations. Also, it limits the organization in some aspects like the ability to refuse external risks, implement innovation, and manage risks.

Wang, et al., (2015). Performance measurement is a crucial part of KM. By this process of measure, we can assess the effectiveness of KM practices and judge whether the current knowledge process can meet our learning needs and whether it can provide feedback of information on KM to carry out continuous improvement on KM.

Cob, et al., (2015) discussed the application of SLN to enhance the KM and proposed a semantic KM model to support a collaborative learning environment.

Swacha, (2015). One of the major challenges in KM is how to promote sharing knowledge with others. In fact, effective KM relies on successful knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing can be defined as "the exchange of knowledge between and among individuals."

Al-Husseini, Elbeltagi, & Dosa, (2015). Based on the literature stated that knowledge management is a process of creating, disseminating, and applying organizational knowledge. The process of creating knowledge means that organization have to trigger all the people to realize that they have knowledge. The process of disseminating means that organization have to make a program to make sure that knowledge in the knowers can be distributed to others and also accessible. Applying knowledge means that people in the organization use the knowledge to the efficiency of work daily activity.

Wang, et al. (2015) categorized the performance measures into three categories: knowledge resources, KM processes, and the factors that affect KM.

Wang, et al. (2016) proposed an index system of KM, which includes four components: the KM process, the organizational knowledge structure, the economic benefits and the efficiency.

Xiao, et al. (2016) proposed a new model for knowledge semantic representation (KSR) to produce semantic interpretable representations, which is used for explicitly representing knowledge.

Asrar-ul-Haq and Anwar, (2016) reviewed the attempts to provide the evidence base concerning knowledge sharing and KMin organizational settings.

Castrogiovanni, et al., (2016). KM plays a fundamental role in the success of an organization's activities and strategies. Therefore managing and using knowledge effectively is vital for both individuals and organizations to take full advantage of the value of knowledge.

Salwa & Susanty (2016), one of an organization benchmark to have the ability to compete from its opponent is take more attention to its knowledge. In this case, the knowledge possessed by an individual in an organization is one of the most important sources to be managed further.

Susanty, et al. (2016) noted that the classic view of knowledge indicates that knowledge is the process or action of knowing an experience or something associated with an experience through an individual's participation, while the modern view of knowledge is associated with competitiveness and power.

Xue, (2017) also explained that the world business is starting to grow now, which once used a lot of utilizing the use of natural resources, now widely utilize the knowledge resources. In other words, the existence of knowledge is the strength of organizations now to compete in the era of globalization.

Dorton, Tupper, & Maryeski, (2017). Knowledge elicitation facilitated at educational institutions offers an effective way of managing brainstorming sessions and innovative ideas along with consensus – building exercises.

Kravchenko, et al. (2017) designed a new approach for semantic similarity estimation to solve some problems about KM. They developed the genetic algorithm for semantic similarity estimation in accordance with the knowledge graph model.

Walch, Morita, Karagiannis, & Yamaguchi, (2019). KM is fundamentally about people – how they develop, exchange and use information, so KM programmes should include both dimensions of gathering and communication. The gathering dimensions involve linking people to knowledge and it is related to capturing and disseminating specific information. The communicating dimension involves linking people to people – specifically people who know – and thus improves the flow of tacit knowledge through superior human interaction and communication progressions. Trends include an alignment of tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge coded through technology.

Chujfi & Meinel, (2020). Design Thinking (DT) has an influential impact on enhancing individual and institutional learning. Educational institutions established cognitive perceptions leading towards intelligent communications who understand problems and propose solutions.

## V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study addresses this gap by looking at the knowledge management literature from multiple perspectives and from different disciplines, including place of publication, frequency of publication, research approach and method of study, focused level of knowledge management, and research areas and topics. This paper is organized as follows. The following section presents the method of this study, which is followed by a detailed review and analysis of selected articles. Some suggestions for future research directions are then presented.

This article includes a literature review of books, research papers, related articles, organizational reports, dissertations and literature available on the internet pertaining to knowledge management in the organization. This paper includes the perspectives of various researchers pertaining to knowledge management. According to the literature review not only knowledge, knowledge management is also important predictor of organizational success. The review of the literature also shows that a lot of research has been done on knowledge management.

The majority of the research has been made on the knowledge sharing in the organizations. Some of the authors studied knowledge management applied in various fields viz. Philosophy, Cognitive Science, Social Science, Management Science, Information Science, Knowledge Engineering, Artificial Intelligence, Epistemology, Economics, etc. Some of the studies focused on organizational knowledge, organizational culture, organizational performance, organizational change as well as value creation. Some studies explained to transfer the knowledge to the individual, groups or units, promoting the flow of knowledge between individuals and groups, dissemination of knowledge within the organization especially in Western Ccountries, knowledge-related effectiveness as knowledge assets as well as Intellectual assets.

Some of the studies also focused on Knowledge resources, KM programmes for dimension involves linking people to knowledge as well as involves linking people to people, knowledge creation for improve the organizational innovation performance, Availability of knowledge to the right people and at the right time, self-managing or autonomous work team involves employees in making decisions for successful knowledge management as well as Design Thinking (DT) for enhancing individual and institutional learning.

Some of the studies related to knowledge sharing behaviour, knowledge sharing in a group meeting, transform essential information into permanent knowledge, implementation of KM, knowledge-sharing intentions, knowledge sharing, and KM in organizational settings, knowledge possessed by an individual in an organization, modern view of knowledge,

A few were related to the explore the interrelationship of KM & TQM; KM & Innovation as well as the relationship of Innovation & KM. Some of the studies pertaining to knowledge creation, storing, sharing & improving as well as tacit, explicit and latent knowledge as well as capture, document, retrieve & reuse knowledge; encompasses material flow and capital flow driven by an information flow and a knowledge flow.

Some of the studies also pertain to KM performance measurements, KM performance based on the principal component analysis, KM performance evaluation method, analysis to measure the performance of KM tools, KM performance evaluation criteria, semantic-based KM platform as well as knowledge graph model.

There were a lot of gaps in the literature in relation to sample size, population and tools used to assess these factors affecting knowledge management. So some more large-scale uniform studies are needed in this area to share knowledge in Govt. or Pvt. Universities and Colleges. Finally, it was quite not possible to identify a study aimed at the analysis of the impact of team member values on different teams' designs effectiveness in terms of knowledge sharing and creation, which represents an important literature gap to be explored in subsequent researches.

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