

# Research on Knowledge Ecology Models to Promote Knowledge Management

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Posted on: 2014-02-20

Degree: Doctor

Type: Dissertation

Country: China

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GTID: 1228330395496854 Subject: Information Science

## Abstract/Summary

This study explores the knowledge management promotion and organizational change strategies pioneered by Knowledge Ecology based Human, Knowledge, Resources, Environment and Technology (HKRET) program of the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies in Sri Lanka. The program seeks to model a way of doing knowledge management promotion through knowledge ecology development. Conceptually, the model was meant to draw together a number of knowledge managing stakeholders operating at various levels of the organization to undergo the same program to promote knowledge management. The program participants, who included Knowledge Managers, Information Officers, Information Analysts, Content Writers, Web Developers, System Designers and Developers, District Officers, and Members of the top Management teams, were to enroll as teams. They would work on knowledge managing tasks that were both academic and practical in nature, with an emphasis on experiential learning that leads to the collection of information on humanitarian issues and concerns in Sri Lanka and to collate, analyze, share and store to use by district and community networks of partners, develop teams or forums and communities of practice, as well as the protection and implementation of rules and policies on the development plans of Humanitarian issues. Informed by this conceptual position, the study was structured by two underlying questions. First, whether the HKRET was re-inventing knowledge management promotion beyond the traditional concepts of knowledge management towards one that is inclusive of other knowledge management components. Second, how the knowledge ecology promotes knowledge management as a vehicle for organizational change can be carried out. Therefore, the research process was guided by a multi-paradigm perspective which drew heavily on the empirical orientations. This led to the crafting of research methods that looked for data that would assist in to understand of what was happening in the program, as well as what power dynamics were at play and with what consequences for innovation. The evidence emanating from the study suggests a number of possibilities for consideration by future knowledge management promotion program designers. First, the HKRET program delivery design shows what can be done to draw participants from various levels of the knowledge management processes, humans, knowledge, resources, environment and technology for knowledge management together in a mode that mobilizes them for a change. Second, how components of the knowledge ecology are separating different levels of the knowledge management hierarchy and status consciousness may disappear gradually as people are brought together to work on tasks of mutual concern. Third, after a year of engagement with HKRET ideas and approach, the

participants of the program appeared to have started a journey of self-transformation of knowledge towards becoming qualitatively different people who saw themselves as teams capable of tackling knowledge management and managing knowledge and promotion problems in their departments or units and working communities at the end. These participants had begun to forge working networks, but the extent to which these could be characterized as knowledge ecologies and communities of practice remains a question to explore. Fourth, that the current knowledge management accreditation policies and practices do not accommodate innovative knowledge management approaches of the kind that the HKRET is developing. In this regard, the HKRET experienced difficulties in coming up with an assessment policy and practices which meet the academic as well as the practical developmental concerns of the program. Fifth, program instrumentalities and mandates that are put in place do not, in themselves, bring about change. The actual change comes about through the actions of knowledge ecology components that capable of navigating between structural enablers and constraints.

Keywords/Search Tags: Knowledge Management, Knowledge Ecology, Knowledge Economy, Knowledge Sharing, Case Study, Sri Lanka