Preface

Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) is one of the largest steel conglomerates in the country. Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP) is its pride unit. BSP has consistently given profits to the company since inception. It is seven times Prime Minister’s Trophy award winner and has many such accolades to its credit. It always took lead in all innovative activities and fields. Sensing the need and importance of Knowledge Management (KM), in the present day market scenario it undertook the task of introducing and implementation of Knowledge Management.

A perspective study of Knowledge Management Practices at Bhilai Steel Plant, Bhilai was undertaken with a view to identify the factors that are responsible for its successful implementation of Knowledge Management Practices. Once these are identified, the same could be tried in other sister plants of SAIL also, as at the moment apart from BSP, Tata Steel (formerly known as Tata Iron & Steel Company) and Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, no other steel plant has embarked on KM implementation in the country.

The thesis consisted of following chapters, namely,
1. Introduction and Overview of Knowledge Management;
2. Literature Review;
3. Research Methodology;
4. Profile of BSP and KM practices in the plant;
5. Data collection and data analysis and
6. Results of the study, summary and conclusions.

In the first chapter, aim of the study, relevance, importance and need of KM at BSP, and a short overview of KM with definitions, life cycle, road map and KM status in steel industry were introduced.

In the second chapter literature review was done with a view to identify gaps.

In the third chapter, research methodology was discussed along with the objectives, survey instruments, design of study, determination of data source, sampling plan, size, framing of questionnaire, development of hypotheses.
In the 4th chapter, the profile of BSP along with its achievements in various fields has been depicted. Also included were details of activities of BSP in connection with KM implementation, the road map that they framed and followed, the domains they created, creation of KM intranet portal, creation of CoPs and all such related things.

In the 5th chapter, data collection, subjecting the data to statistical tools analyzing the results was done.

In the 6th and final chapter, summary of the findings, conclusions and contribution of the study were written.

The research study was carried out in two phases:

The first phase dealt with developing an appropriate research framework by collecting facts and figures from theories accessed from literature survey on Knowledge Management.

In the second phase of the study, people from various departments of BSP have been approached with two sets of framed questionnaire to find and evaluate the knowledge management performance and practices adopted at Bhilai Steel Plant with a view to ascertain the sufficiency, identify factors for the success of KM which could be applied in other sister steel plants.

The study identified following five factors through application of factor analysis to the 2nd set of questions:

1. Information Exchange among employees,
2. Ability of Employees to learn from failures,
3. IT support provided by the organization,
4. Availability of information to all the employees and
5. The support provided by the management for practicing knowledge management.

An attempt was made to relate these identified factors through regression analysis to two indicators of success of KM, namely, Value of KM to employees and time spent by employees on KM. These two dependent variables were taken from the 1st set of questions.

The study also identified that there is no significant difference in understanding the subject KM between senior executives, executives and non-executives. This was
arrived at through application of ANOVA test for the first set questions. It displays
the dedication, culture, habit and sense of belongingness of the BSP collective.

Also, through application of simple statistical analysis to 2nd set of questions, such as
use of Likert scale, the responses in weighted %s were calculated and these indicated
high levels of awareness of the subject in the minds of BSP collective.

Finally it is concluded that BSP's culture, dedication and habits garnered over
decades have made the plant to undertake any challenge that involves innovation and
champion spirit and strive collectively for the success.

The practices followed by BSP for the success of KM, factors identified in the study,
if also applied in other sister steel plants of SAIL they could affect a turnaround
change in those plants as well.