ABSTRACT

(Abstract of the thesis titled, ‘A Study of Knowledge Management Applications and Consequent Advantages to Business Schools by Amita Arun Shiroor)

‘Knowledge’ is presently the key critical competitiveness factor for any type of organization. Since learning is unique to individuals, organizational Knowledge is unique and endows an organization with its distinctive competitive edge. As a resource and as an asset Knowledge has gained the greatest prominence since the 2000s due to increase in the speed, capabilities, compatibility and low cost of computer technology (Tiwana, 2000).

The fulcrum of the business world has shifted eastward, the competition that India faces, given both its advantageous population age-composition and challenging population size, point to the fact that India stands at an interesting make or break cross roads in its history. India has a large young population of which only 8% is educated at tertiary level (www.knowledgecommission.gov.in). Even the educated young are not immediately employable and industry has to spend time and money on training, to make them employable. The relevance of education poses a problem as does the paucity of quality academic institutions and teachers. The only way for India to reap the population dividend is through Knowledge and education.
‘A country is as good as the quality of intellectuals it produces (Murthy, 2009)’. How India creates, disseminates and leverages Knowledge, in essence ‘Manages its Knowledge’, will determine the destiny of future generations.

Industry and Services contribute 82% to India’s GDP (www.cia.gov). Business schools ultimately service these segments through the talent they create. It is clearly imperative that business schools must manage Knowledge in order to provide further superior talent which will contribute to industry and hence to the development and competitiveness of the economy.

The researcher felt from personal observation that if business schools could develop a culture of documentation and shared learning it would be possible for the business schools to leverage the captured Knowledge to advantage.

Thus from the current principal role of teaching MBA students, it might be feasible to extend the role of business schools to that of Knowledge storehouses and innovation centers offering consulting services, research, writing and publishing. The matter was discussed with learned colleagues and managers from industry who had expertise in Knowledge Management by virtue of their own experience.

In the context of business schools, Knowledge refers to all the Knowledge—tacit and explicit, resident in the business school or outside the business
school that makes a critical difference to what the business school does. It includes lectures, methodologies, examination systems, library information, bulletins, best practices, papers presented and published and much more. Administrative domain is left out in this study.

Knowledge Management (KM) is the planned documentation, creation and sharing of Knowledge for definite organizational benefit enabled by Information Technology.

Knowledge Management is both an ideology and a process that has been in existence before its current heightened importance and will always be practiced in future.

Business School models have in recent times come under much criticism for falling short of their expected roles and Knowledge Management principles could provide a plausible solution.

This thesis explores the possibility of defining a better role and specific benefits for Business Schools through the management of Knowledge. It examines how Knowledge Management practices applied to Business Schools can help develop an advanced model more in line with the needs and expectations of user populations today. It further examines the changes that business schools will have to undertake. The questions sought be answered are-Is Knowledge Management perceived as a feasible concept for B schools? How can Knowledge Management be applied to
academic institutions? What would be the outcomes of Knowledge Management practices?; What are the definite advantages of implementation of Knowledge Management?

The study posits that Business Schools are occupied only with preparing students for MBA programs, Knowledge Management (KM) is not being used in academic institutions as effectively as it could be used, KM will help business schools to respond more adequately to the needs of organizations, it is possible to identify and list out the specific advantages of the implementation of Knowledge Management it is necessary to bring in a change in the culture to facilitate the creation, documentation and sharing of Knowledge.

The research is Qualitative. It involves survey, fact finding enquiries and a description of the state of affairs as it exists. The research is concerned with the subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behavior of the business school stakeholder population.

The population sought to be surveyed were 100 faculty members, 100 students and 100 alumni of 61 business schools which have an MBA program and are located in Pune. The chosen business schools were All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) recognized. This provided equivalence, adherence to standard norms and an assured quality standard.

Information regarding success with KM and best practices was sought from 100 industry and organizational respondents. 50 industry respondents were chosen
from 5 different sectors. Other organizations like SMEs, NGOs, SHGs and GOs were selected from Pune. These 50 respondents were asked if they felt that business schools could offer them any service by way of training, research or consulting.

The 5 Phases of Research were literature review, architecting the research design and methodology, data collection, data organization, data analysis, drawing conclusions, making recommendations and constructing a new business school model. The results of the survey are presented in a tabular format.

It has been possible through this research to list out the possible applications of Knowledge management and consequent advantages to business schools. The hypothesis was validated. From the enhanced roles of the business school to wealth creation and serving society and many stakeholders, Knowledge management plays a crucial role not only in these times but will play an enhanced role in the future. It is sincerely hoped by this researcher that the findings, suggestions and models will be of some use to future researchers in this topic and stakeholders of business schools.