

## **Traditional Knowledge Management Practices With Special Reference to Pāli Tipiṭaka Tradition**

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### **Introduction**

Knowledge Management is a process which has been used from the beginning of the human history. During the last two decades, knowledge had become the most demanding and valuable item. As a result, managing knowledge also gaining more attention than earlier. Knowledge management can be defined as using correct knowledge with the correct people at the correct time. There are many theories and models developed on knowledge management recently.

Pāli Tipiṭaka Tradition or Theravāda Tradition is able to maintain its essence of knowledge even after more than two and half millenniums. The best example is how the Theravāda Buddhist tradition including the text and also the practice, maintaining by the clergy community. For two and half millenniums, Theravāda Tradition is maintaining the practices, accepted behaviour, and dress code, continuously from Buddha's living period. It is the only religious tradition in the world which is having a history of more than 2500 years, whom able to continue the tradition without changing. The purpose of this research is to study the Knowledge Management model of Pāli / Theravāda Buddhist tradition.

### **Methodology**

Qualitative approach is used for this reserch. Documentary Study is the method of data collection, Content Analysis and Thematic Analysis was used to analyse the data.

### **Results and Discussion**

Knowledge can be catergarised into main two catergaries as, Explicit Knowledge and Embaded Knowledge. there are other two types of knowledge occur due to the applications of these two type of knowledge, respectively Implicit Knowledge and Tacit Knowledge. Explicit Knowledge can be defined as the knowledge, that is easy to articulate, write down, and share. This type of

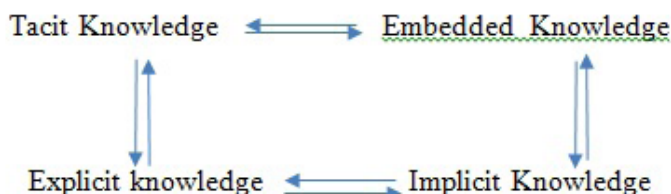
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knowledge can be easily converted into the coded language, and also transferred through formal education. When a person perused the Explicit Knowledge, it will become that person’s knowledge and can be transferred to practical applications. The knowledge one gain by applying Explicit Knowledge is called Implicit Knowledge. The knowledge which is stored in a social culture, such as processes, structures, traditions, rules and regulations, is called Embedded Knowledge. The knowledge one gain through applying the Embedded Knowledge is called Tacit Knowledge. The Implicit Knowledge and Tacit involve personal experience. Because of that, it is difficult to transfer, Implicit Knowledge and Tacit Knowledge than Explicit Knowledge and Embedded Knowledge. However scholars recommending to transferring the all type of knowledge in to corded language or Explicit Knowledge for the continuation of the knowledge. But scholars failed to introduce a method to transfer all four kind of knowledge in to coded language, specially the tacit Knowledge. Therefor there is a knowledge gap between theory and practice in transferring all four kind of knowledge.

As mentioned above, Pāli/Theravāda Buddhist tradition is able to overcome this difficulty and also to continue knowledge transferring over 2500 years. The method used for this is transferring the all four type of knowledge into corded language or Explicit Knowledge while continuing it as an Embedded Knowledge. Tipiṭaka and the regular reciting of Patimokkha is the outcome of that transferring process.

The knowledge transferring process of Buddhist tradition is also unique, as it is having two way porcess. According to it Tacit Knowledge is transfered into eighther Explicit Knoeladge or Embadded Kowladge. Both Explicit Knowledge or Embadded Knowledge is transferring to Implicit Knowledge. As a result, knowledge transferring process of Buddhist tradition can be illustrated as a two way circle as follows (figuer 1).



Figuer 1: Kowladge Transferring Process of Buddhist Tradition

Following steps can be identified in the Knowledge Management Process of Pāli/Theravāda Tradition.

- **Tacit knowledge can be transferred to the individuals who have the capacity to understand it. They only need the guidelines.** -Transferring Tacit knowledge to Explicit knowledge is really difficult. Buddha himself also encounter, the difficulty in transferring Tacit Knowledge to explicit knowledge and decided not to preach the Dhamma as it is difficult to explain to the individuals who do not experience the enlightenment. After finding the individuals, those who are having closest experience, Buddha was able to transfer the Tacit knowledge to Explicit knowledge gradually. Suttas or the guidelines were the first outcome of the transferring tacit knowledge to Explicit Knowledge. It was preached to the individuals, and those who followed it, were become sensible to the Enlightenment process.
- **When the Tacit Knowledge being transferred for a group, it can be identified the misunderstandings and mal practices. According to that can be introduced the procedures, rules and regulation to define the limitations of the process, other than the guidelines.** - Later the members who enrolled to the clergy community without that sensitivity, needed the clear explanation about, what should or should not do. For that, there should be procedures, rules and regulation to define the limitations of the process, other than the guidelines, or Embedded Knowledge should be created and maintained. Patimokkha and other Vinaya rules are fulfilling that need.
- **Embedded Knowledge should be refered periodically as a group, to check whether the members of the community is on the correct track.** Reciting Pāthimokkha in once in two weeks and practicing Vinaya Karmas according to the given guidelines, are helping the community to keep themselves within the track.
- **When the misinterpretations occur core should be kept separately, for reference.** Abhidhamma Pitaka is the outcome of this.
- **All these Explicit and Embedded knowledge should be recorded.** – Ven. Ananda Thero and Ven. Upali Thero did that part.
- **All explicit knowledge and Embedded knowledge, should be gathered and finalized (the guidelines, procedures, rules and regulations) to clarify the framework which the institution will follow.** Saṅghāyanās – or Councils did that part.
- **When finalized all the Explicit and Embedded knowledge, there should be a mechanism to protect and transfer the knowledge.** Bhānakas (the theros who by heart and handed it over to the next generation) of each section of the Tipiṭaka - did that role.

- **All knowledge should be documented for preservation.** – Pāli Tipiṭaka was documented and preserved.
- **Embedded Knowledge should be transferred to next generation as it is.** Clergy community did not agree to add or remove any parts of for Tipiṭaka from the First Council. During the 2500 years of history Pāli Tipiṭaka is keeping as the original text. Further clarifications were added as commentaries separately without mixing it with the original text.
- **Both Explicit and Embedded knowledge should be transferred according to the recorded sources.** – Training the next generation to practice the discipline and preach the Dhamma is the method, using for this aspect.

## Conclusion

Knowledge knowledge-transferring process of the Pāli /Theravāda Tradition is a two-way process. It gives guidelines, on how Tacit Knowledge can be transferred into other three types. The method used for this is transferring all four types of knowledge into the corded language or Explicit Knowledge while continuing it as Embedded Knowledge. The Knowledge Management Process was carefully defined as a common knowledge of the community. Regular reciting and checking, whether the community is on the correct track is giving a positive impact to the Knowledge Management Process.

**Keywords:** Embedded Knowledge, Explicit Knowledge, Implicit Knowledge, Knowledge Transferring, Tacit Knowledge

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