

Chapter 5

A Social Knowledge Management Platform for Universal Primary Education Online

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ABSTRACT

Social knowledge management is a framework that allows its users to create and modify content collaboratively using social media and web 2.0 technologies. Social knowledge management can also be defined as the management of social knowledge where it is aimed towards social development. India today is facing a huge rural-urban divide with regard to poor learning achievement at the elementary level in remote rural areas. Remote rural schools are engulfed with problems such as the unavailability of good quality teachers and a poor learning environment. In this context, the chapter seeks to utilize a robust social knowledge management framework to impart universal education in the form of both formal and informal knowledge to the masses in remote rural areas by mobilising free online knowledge resources and the dormant knowledge capital of educated senior citizens. It further illustrates the design and development of a social media based knowledge management platform named OwlshOracle that addresses issues of exclusion and unequal educational attainment through “connecting generations”.

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge management (KM) is the process of applying a systematic approach to capture, structure, manage and disseminate knowledge throughout an organization in order to work faster, reuse best prac-

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tices, and reduce costly rework from project to project (Dalkir, 2005). As Clarke (2001) says, knowledge management, which is often a source of competitive advantage for firms, provides the means to generate, distribute, and use knowledge in ways that add value to business activity and provide new opportunities for enterprise. With the growing popularity of the Social Media and Web 2.0 technologies, the concept of “Knowledge Management 2.0 (KM 2.0)” has evolved to allow individuals to create and modify content collaboratively. This enables improvements in connectivity, resultantly weaving a relationship of trust, improvement in communications and knowledge transfer (Semple, 2012). In this context, *Social Knowledge Management* is defined as a knowledge management framework that allows us to create and modify content collaboratively using social media and web 2.0 technologies.

Social Knowledge Management can also be defined from a social perspective as the management of social knowledge where the aim is more towards social development and not just promoting competitive advantages for companies (Laszlo, 2002, 2006). The issues of disparity in the quality and access of primary education in remote rural areas of developing countries is the primary motivation behind the structure of the *Social Knowledge Management Platform* discussed in this chapter. In our context, social knowledge management is a framework for holistic learning and knowledge dissemination to children in remote rural areas through digital connections and social collaboration using web 2.0 technologies. The framework ensures delivery of holistic education to underprivileged children by mobilizing the vast pool of dormant knowledge capital of educated senior citizens and free digital educational resources available in the cyber-space.

India today is facing huge rural-urban divide with regard to poor learning achievement at the elementary level in remote rural areas. Remote rural schools are mired with problems such as the unavailability of qualified teachers, lack of good teaching-learning materials and a poor learning environment. The objective of this work is to architect a social knowledge management platform that would act as an online learning environment to not only improve access to quality education for underprivileged youth in remote rural areas using effective and interesting on-line teaching-learning methods, but also to improve learning outcomes and students’ well-being. In this research initiative, educated senior citizens who have acquired a lifetime of skills, knowledge and wisdom would share them with younger generations, contributing to the knowledge capital of the society (Bandyopadhyay, 2013; Bardhan, 2014). Our framework addresses the issues of exclusion and inequality in educational attainment through “connecting generations”, where educated senior citizens train underprivileged children using synchronous distance e-learning.

To achieve this, our work proposes a social knowledge management platform, OwlshOracle (www.owlshoracle.com), that captures and disseminates formal and non-formal knowledge and wisdom of the elderly to educate underprivileged youth online by mobilising a group of experienced senior citizens and quality teaching learning materials. This social knowledge management platform is not only a medium of knowledge dissemination but also a facilitator in bringing together educators and learners disregarding geographical boundaries and thus creating a global socio-cultural phenomenon. This is a space where people interact and collaborate with each other, establish community norms and values, share resources and build trustful relationships, which are the core values of social capital: a relational resource composed of a variety of elements, most notably social networks, social norms, values, and trust and shared physical resources (Bourdieu, 1992; Putnam, 2000).

Social capital refers to the network of social relations that may provide individuals and groups with access to resources and supports (Policy Research Initiative, 2005). Social capital is a concept that refers to connectedness within and between social networks. It has been considered by researchers to be an important link between development and education – it has been further seen that open distance educa-

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