



# ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Submitted by

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**ABSTRACT:** “Environment sustainability” has become very important because of the increase in awareness of people and the problems which have resulted by the conduct of other human beings.. The” UN Agenda 2030”and the 17 sustainable development goals have furthered the cause of “sustainable development”. Sustainability has become a massive part for organisations seeking a competitive edge, in addition to their growth with respect to the society.(“Streimekeine et al 2021”)

“Knowledge Management” is the practice of coordinating knowledge and using and structuring it in a manner to add value to the institutions and the society at large. (“DONATE & PABLO, 2015”; “ANDREEVA & KIANTO, 2012”). It also deals with infrastructure that is Information and Communication Technologies, cultural factors, local skills, management know-how and skills (“ALEGRE et al., 2013”) which improves the overall functioning of the firm.. To conclude it refers to the practices and initiatives which are used by the managers for applying it to the firm. Its importance is well known but there are no structured practices that have been recognised and used. Companies would gain advantage by having a good “knowledge management system” and includes principles of “sustainable development”.

**Key words:** Knowledge management, Sustainable development

## LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the “World Commission on Environment and Development” (“WCED, 1987”), “ sustainable development” is the “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” It includes three key dimensions: “economic, environmental, and social.” “Economic sustainable development” refers to the development where economic development is possible in the long run. Environmental is when the natural resources are used keeping in mind the future generations..

“It involves conservation, drop in wastage and efficient organisational practices” (“Soliman, 2018”).

“Social sustainability” is the process that creates a healthy environment that enhances the wellbeing, by keeping in mind the needs of the people from where they live and work.

“Social sustainability” refers to the life quality which can enhance the health of the people especially the elderly people. (“Ajmal, 2018”).

It means that the needs of the individuals must be met and a fruitful life is created (“Streimikienė, Vasiljevičienė, 2004”; “Mikalauskiene and Streimikiene, 2018”).

“Sustainable development” can be seen as a learning process seen in research that creates knowledge which is applying externally (“Stiglitz, 1999”; “Norden and Anderberg, 2012”). To learn from the past mistakes and correcting them by applying the lessons learnt results in better performance.

For assessing the impact that “knowledge management” has on “sustainable development”, intellectual capital has been given significance and the term of “cognitive sustainable development” and the link with “knowledge” is also highlighted. .

Knowledge management processes have been mentioned as the “fundamental actions that an organization performs in processing and manipulating its knowledge resources” (“Holsapple and Joshi, 2000”). The entire process has several stages, that is “knowledge acquisition, knowledge creation, knowledge capture, knowledge storage and retrieval, knowledge sharing and knowledge utilization” (“McAdam and Reid, 2000; Lawson, 2003; Lee and Choi, 2003”).

1. Knowledge acquisition- This process involves gaining of knowledge. (“Gold et al., 2001”). It creates a better understanding and firm may improve its competitive positioning if it gains the information on their competitors. (“Bloodgood, 2019”). The firm must pay attention to the relevant information (“Yli-Renko et al., 2001”). It means to collect information on the best internal and external measures , as well as those practices which have gained success and those which failed. (“Yli-Renko et al., 2001”).
2. Knowledge creation process- It looks at the capability of the firm to create ideas which are not thought of (“Marakas, 1999”) from the start and also to connect the information that exists for generating new knowledge.(“Gold et al., 2001; Lynn et al., 1996”). Similarly, “Dermol (2013)” has also stated that people working in firms need to be pushed to the idea of experimenting with new concepts.
3. Knowledge capture- The latest data has mentioned that creation of new knowledge may not create storage. (“Argote et al., 1990”). It is important make the knowledge accessible for the future. (“Stein and Zwass, 1995”). It incorporates a systematic process of reviewing the experiences (“Shafia et al., 2011”). “Lawson (2003)” has talked about

the importance of having a mechanism for patent and copyrighting novel knowledge.. Also there must be reports of the firm, time of the meeting, manuals, handbooks. (“White and Cohan, 2016”)

4. Knowledge storage and retrieval- There have been studies which mention that even if the information is captured there is no guarantee for future use. (“Stein and Zwass, 1995”). Such knowledge has to be kept in a manner to be incorporated with existing material. With technological growth, the material can be codified and digitalised and it can be stored. (“Alavi and Leidner, 2001; Lee and Wong, 2015”).
5. Knowledge sharing- The firm has the capability to transfer the information to other people and firms. (“Lee, 2001”). It includes the sharing of both tacit and explicit knowledge. “Gore and Gore (1999)” mentioned that the employee must interact and work as a team such as solving problems which gives a good place for the inclusion of tacit knowledge. Organisations must share reports to the people who are working there. (“Lawson, 2003”)
6. Knowledge utilization- It means how well the firm can use the knowledge for a given objective that is for decision making. . Firms need to motivate people to use the information and apply what they know and incorporate organisation information to solve issues and be innovative with new products and services to make the organisation better than the others. (“Chan and Chao, 2008”). “Reagans et al. (2016)” have also stated the significance of giving the right tasks to the people as per their capability.

“Knowledge management” wants to to create and add onto and modify the “structural, human, and social knowledge” resulting in creation of capital. It motivates individuals to connect their perception to the existing circumstances. “Sustainability”in light of “knowledge management” means the creation of “knowledge goals”, the obsolete data is rejected and relevant information is to be kept and people who have such information must be preserved and knowledge must be utilised in the organisations. In this context, we need to ask that whether there exists “sustainable knowledge”. The employees are remunerated for their services in creation of products.(“Davenport, 1999, Davenport, Prusak 1998”).

“Innovation” and “sustainable development” go hand in hand. Firms have to keep reinventing themselves to support their processes and ensure that growth is taking place in their processes. (“Batista &Francisco, 2018”). There have been studies that show that, “knowledge management practices” play a significant influence on advancement of the firm by way of “knowledge transformation” into “knowledge asset”. (“Akram, et al., 2011”). Some examples that the information can be lost is through turnover, competition and retirement. As per “Stewart (2000)”, the most efficient way of retaining information is by recognising the “intellectual assets” and ensuring that it is kept in a manner so that it can be used easily.

The “public sector” has to showcase that it trustworthy to promote sustainable development to achieve success in its policies which the public will support. (“OECD, 2018”). Also, the “integrity” is key for ensuring a good sector and it also makes the people feel secure that the present government keeps the interest of public at large in mind (“OECD, 2018”). When there is a change being made towards a “sustainable future”, the process of knowledge management will have to be linked to the firms objective.. The learning structures need to be made to allow people to ask questions and address the way people think about their association with the “natural environment” (“Stead and Stead 2000”). First, the firm has to make its overall objective and then there can a clear picture about the “management processes” to be implemented in the future. (“Chou 2011”).

## SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION

The role of knowledge management in sustainable development has been discussed with reference to firms and public sector. The firms must follow the stages of knowledge management that include “knowledge acquisition, knowledge creation, knowledge capture, knowledge storage and retrieval, knowledge sharing and knowledge utilization” to effectively transfer knowledge to their employees. Sustainable development supplements knowledge management by helping people to retain useful knowledge and rejects outdated practices. In this paper, the knowledge of sustainable development being shared to other organization poses an ethical dilemma as it is an obligation but at the same it could give the competitors an edge over all the other players that needs to be explored. Moreover, the evaluation of sustainable development practices in an organization is lacking which can be explored by the future researcher. Research must be done to devise the correct methods of assessment. More research also needs to be done on how to utilize the sustainable knowledge to promote sustainability in the organization.

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