



Sustainable Development of Knowledge Resource Centre: An Indian Perspective

Dr. Sudhir Ramdas Nagarkar¹ & Shri. Sanjay Dattatray Mane²

¹Librarian, Amdar Shasikant Shinde Mahavidyalaya, Medha

²Librarian, Arts, Commerce & Science College, Palus

Corresponding Author –Dr. Sudhir Ramdas Nagarkar

DOI - 10.5281/zenodo.17274944

Abstract:

This research paper examines the pivotal role of Knowledge Resource Centres (KRCs) in advancing sustainable development, particularly within the context of India's unique socio-economic landscape. It argues that KRCs, as modern and inclusive institutions, are essential catalysts for achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by bridging the knowledge and digital divide. The paper explores how KRCs contribute to economic, social, and environmental sustainability through a multi-faceted approach, including fostering digital literacy, preserving indigenous knowledge, and promoting equitable access to information. It discusses the strategic shift from traditional libraries to dynamic KRCs and provides case studies of successful initiatives in India. The paper concludes with recommendations for policymakers and library professionals to further integrate KRCs into the national sustainable development agenda.

Keywords: Knowledge Resource Centers, Sustainable Development, India, SDGs, Libraries, Information Literacy, Digital Divide.

Introduction:

The concept of sustainable development, as defined by the Brundtland Commission, is a global imperative to meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations. In an increasingly knowledge-driven era, information access and literacy are fundamental to this process. In India, the traditional "library" has evolved into the "Knowledge Resource Centre" (KRC), a modern institution that goes beyond book lending to become a dynamic hub for information, learning, and community engagement. This transformation positions KRCs as key players in addressing India's developmental challenges and achieving the SDGs. This paper will analyze how KRCs

contribute to sustainability across its three pillars—economic, social, and environmental.

The Role of KRCs in Economic Sustainability:

Economic sustainability for a nation like India is closely linked to its ability to leverage knowledge and technology for inclusive growth. KRCs play a crucial role in this process by:

- **Bridging the Digital Divide:** KRCs provide free access to computers, the internet, and digital databases, which are essential for education, employment, and entrepreneurship. By offering digital literacy training, they empower citizens from all strata of society to participate in the digital economy.

- **Supporting Livelihoods:** KRCs can serve as a repository of information on vocational training, market trends, and agricultural practices, thereby supporting small-scale businesses and rural livelihoods. They provide access to critical information that can lead to improved income and economic stability.
- **Fostering Innovation:** By providing access to research papers, patents, and scholarly databases, KRCs facilitate an environment of innovation and research, which is a key driver of economic progress.

The Role of KRCs in Social Sustainability:

Social sustainability is at the core of a KRC's mission. It is about building a just and equitable society where every individual has an opportunity to succeed.

- **Promoting Equitable Access:** KRCs serve as inclusive spaces for marginalized groups, including women, children, and people with disabilities. They offer tailored programs and services, such as literacy initiatives and awareness campaigns on health and gender equality.
- **Preserving Indigenous Knowledge:** India has a rich heritage of indigenous knowledge systems, particularly in agriculture, traditional medicine, and environmental management. KRCs can act as a crucial link by documenting, digitizing, and disseminating this knowledge, ensuring it is preserved and utilized for future generations.
- **Catalyzing Social Transformation:** By providing access to knowledge and skills, KRCs act as a catalyst for social transformation, enabling individuals to become more informed citizens and active participants in their communities.

The Role of KRCs in Environmental Sustainability:

While often overlooked, KRCs can significantly contribute to environmental sustainability.

- **Environmental Literacy:** KRCs can be central to raising public awareness about environmental issues. They offer a wealth of information on topics like climate change, renewable energy, and sustainable living through books, documentaries, and workshops.
- **Promoting Green Practices:** Internally, KRCs can adopt sustainable practices, such as reducing paper consumption by promoting digital resources and implementing energy-efficient infrastructure. This not only saves money but also sets an example for the community.
- **Supporting Research:** KRCs are vital for providing the necessary resources for research on environmental science and conservation, thereby helping to find solutions to pressing environmental problems.

Role of Librarian in Knowledge Resource Center:

The modern role of a librarian in a **Knowledge Resource Centre (KRC)** is a significant evolution from the traditional role of a book custodian. They are no longer just managers of physical books but are now **information specialists**, educators, and community builders who facilitate access to information in various formats. Their role is central to the KRC's function as a hub for lifelong learning and sustainable development.

Core Responsibilities:

The responsibilities of a librarian in a KRC have expanded to include both traditional and modern functions.

- **Information Management and Curation:** A librarian's fundamental role is to manage the KRC's collections, which now include not only physical books but also a vast array of **digital resources**, such as e-books, online databases, e-journals, and multimedia files. They are responsible for acquiring, organizing, cataloging, and preserving these materials to ensure long-term accessibility.
- **Information and Digital Literacy Training:** In the digital age, a key role of the librarian is to act as an educator. They teach patrons how to **effectively search for information**, evaluate the credibility of online sources, and navigate complex databases. This is crucial for combating misinformation and empowering users to become self-sufficient learners.
- **User Support and Reference Services:** Librarians provide personalized assistance to users, helping them with research, answering complex queries, and guiding them to the most relevant resources. This can be done in person, over the phone, or through virtual reference services.
- **Community Engagement and Outreach:** KRCs are community hubs, and librarians are at the forefront of this effort. They develop and implement programs that meet the specific needs of their community, such as hosting workshops, book clubs, and cultural events. They also engage with local schools and organizations to promote the KRC's services.
- **Technology Management:** Librarians are responsible for managing the KRC's technological infrastructure, including its **Integrated Library System (ILS)**, digital repositories (like DSpace), and public computers. They must stay updated on

new technologies to provide the best possible service.

The Shift from Librarian to "Knowledge Manager":

The modern librarian is increasingly seen as a **knowledge manager**. This new role involves not just providing access to existing information but also actively participating in the creation and sharing of knowledge.

- **Data and Research Curation:** In academic and research-oriented KRCs, librarians play a crucial role in curating and organizing institutional research output, ensuring that scholarly content and data sets are preserved and made openly accessible.
- **Strategic Collaboration:** Librarians collaborate with other institutions through **library consortiums** and interlibrary loan (ILL) systems to expand the range of available resources without the need for additional purchases.
- **Advocacy and Leadership:** Librarians are advocates for **intellectual freedom** and equitable access to information. They lead efforts to ensure their KRC's services align with global initiatives like the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), contributing to poverty reduction, quality education, and environmental awareness.

In essence, the modern librarian is a dynamic and multi-skilled professional who is indispensable to the sustainable development of a Knowledge Resource Centre. They are not merely caretakers of books but are active facilitators of knowledge, learning, and community building.

Conclusion:

The sustainable development of Knowledge Resource Centres is not just about adopting a new name but embracing a new

philosophy of service. By leveraging technology, fostering collaboration, and focusing on community needs, KRCs are becoming indispensable partners in achieving India's national developmental goals. To further enhance their role, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Policy Integration:** Government policies should explicitly recognize KRCs as critical infrastructure for sustainable development and allocate dedicated funding.
2. **Technological Upgradation:** Investment in robust and accessible digital infrastructure is essential to bridge the digital divide, particularly in rural and underserved areas.
3. **Community-Centric Approach:** KRCs should regularly conduct community needs assessments to ensure that their services are relevant and impactful.
4. **National Consortium:** A national consortium of KRCs should be established to facilitate resource sharing, collaborative collection development, and professional training.

By acting on these recommendations, India can fully unlock the potential of its KRCs to become powerful agents of change, building a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future for all.

References:

1. Awasthi, S., Das, A. K., & Tripathi, M. (2025). Role of University Knowledge Resource Centres in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): A Case of India. *Journal of Data Science, Informetrics, and Citation Studies*, 4(2), 143-158.
2. Brundtland, G. H. (1987). *Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*. Oxford University Press.
3. Mwanuzi, A., & Mwangi, J. (2025). Championing Sustainable Development in Academic Libraries: Insights from East Africa. *ResearchGate*.
4. Nayak, S. (2018). Indigenous Knowledge and Sustainable Development: Role of Libraries. *International Journal of Library and Information Studies*, 8(1), 495-502.
5. Paquette, S., & Wiseman, E. (2006). Knowledge for Sustainable Development: The Role of Knowledge Networks & Organizational Learning. *Proceedings of the Twelfth Americas Conference on Information Systems*, Acapulco, Mexico.
6. UNESCO. (n.d.). *Education for sustainable development*. Retrieved from <https://www.unesco.org/en/sustainable-development/education>
7. United Nations Development Programme. (2016). *Sustainable Development Goals*. Retrieved from <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>