

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE & MANAGEMENT

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**BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY - ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

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**ABSTRACT**

*As EMS are based on self-regulated policies of environment improvement, because of EMS the development of sustainability may take more time to reach its goal. The main problem from applying environmental management system is to fulfil ISO 14001 requirements, for that company require huge financial background because to obtain ISO certificate the management have to upgrade their machinery to new and more eco-friendly which are more expensive. There are internal as well as external benefits for companies which are trying to get ISO certificate. While internal advantages are more for company's employees and suppliers, it is external advantages which greatly justify the reasons to seek ISO certificates and EMS.*

**KEYWORDS**

eco-friendly, environment management system, sustainable development, stockholders.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The idea of being sustainable has helped many companies to get new opportunities to operate in today's globalize market. There are two main reasons, which put pressure or make company responsible for sustainability in business. First, is the availability of resources can effect market process, threaten the environment and even limit the day to day operation of firm. Second reason was the pressure from more environment concern stockholders and customers. Today stockholders are more concern about environment issues like water shortage, global warming and other effects of chemicals on human health. To solve these problems and meet their goals the companies are starting to use Environmental Management System (EMS). EMS is one of most important tool today used by companies to meet the needs of organisation and to implement the environment policies both internally and externally. EMS can be defined as "a systematic method for company to carry environmental consideration in everyday business and decision making. It also forms proper structure for evaluation tracking and reviewing environment performance. EMS makes sure that management finds the major environmental risk and liability, which can greatly impact the natural environment. (Keen & Dyball, 2011)". The development of EMS mainly consists of some main components such as mission statement, setting goals and objectives of firm, setting up proper policies and responsibilities, environment related rules and legal requirements and regular review of management system.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. The pressures on business to become environmentally responsible, including legislation and standards.
2. The impact of the selected business upon the environment, including where and how they source materials.
3. The impact of their products or services and the processes employed; as well as the environmental practices within the workplace itself.
4. The stages of an Environmental Management Strategy (EMS) for the organisation – the 'tools', procedures and techniques they will employ;
5. The difficulties to be anticipated as well as the benefits to be derived in striving for improved environmental performance.

**RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

**Sources of data:** This article is based on secondary sources of data.

**Nature of the study:** This article will try to explain and analyses the EMS in companies. First, we will explain the concept of Environmental Management System and its use in companies strategic planning and daily operations. Second aspect will explain some positive point and negative about EMS into depth. Third aspect will explain the legislation and standards of EMS such as ISO 14001 and ISO 14004 along with benefits and limitations. Lastly will explain the five stages or tools of environmental management strategies and ISO 14001 i.e. Environment policies, Planning, Implementation and operation, Checking action and lastly Management review.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

EMS is organized system or tool, which helps the company to recognize the impact of day to day operation of business on environment, along with setting proper guidelines and policies for improving environmental performance (Nawrocka & Parker, 2009). The main aspects of environment in company are consisting of those procedures, facilities and products which can have bad effect or impact on environment. EMS helps the management to identify such products and services which effect the environment and then classify such aspects into different categories according to bad impact of products in environment. EMS can be also seen as company's guide for checking where improvements and environment control are needed (Hussen, 2011). Along with guidelines, EMS helps the company in planning the steps to be taken for reducing and preventing environment from day to day business operations. For everyday operations, EMS creates well-structured plan to ensure the agreement with environmental regulation and sustainability development (Darnall, Why Firms Mandate ISO 14001 Certification, 2006). EMS provides guidelines for improvement in health and safety of employees so that workers don't face any risk, and this also improve employee's morale by focus all direction on company's goals. EMS also improves the strategic planning of delivery system by generating proper system of improving and concern about identifying and controlling the delivery of services which can raise some environmental issues (Goldberg, 2009). The main problem in implementing the EMS approach is that environmental management system does not guarantee any major improvement in company's environment performance (Iraldo, Testa, & Frey, 2009). The implications of EMS within firm will not necessary raise the environmental standards, and EMS may only report some small compliance issues.

Welford (1993) suggest that, there is one major limitation of EMS i.e. EMS do not provide 'paradigm shift' of companies thinking related to its impact on environment in terms of sustainability and global environmental science. As EMS are based on self-regulated policies of environment improvement, because of EMS the development of sustainability may take more time to reach its goal (Welford, 1993).

#### **THE STANDARDIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

The standards were created because most of the companies were concerned about achieving and demonstrating the environmental performance by controlling the bad impact of operational activities on atmosphere (Fortunski, 2008). Many firms had accepted environmental 'reviews' and 'audits' to check their environmental performance. But these reviews were not sufficient, so to be effective they have to conduct proper management system and create common environment checking standards. The standards such as ISO 14001, ISO 14004 and EMAS are mainly prepared by national and international standard organisations. Most of the international standards are created by International Organisation of Standardization (ISO). It was founded in 1947 and today it have almost 250 standard bodies as regular members (Jones & Prakash, 2011). The ISO has define standard as "the documents which are prepared by consensus and approved by recognised body, that provides common and repeated use, rules, characteristics and guidelines for activities or their goals, which aimed at achievement of optimum degree of order in a given context" (International Organisation for Standardization, 2010).

ISO 14001 is mainly related to management, it is not for reviewing company's performance, profit or product standards. The main goal of ISO 14001 is to help the companies in improving their environmental performance by fulfilling the requirement of ISO 14001 (Toshi, Darnall, & Katayama, 2010). It is set of requirements for maintaining and creating an EMS. By fulfilling the ISO 14001 requirements the companies can show their effective EMS to outside world. The ISO 14001 or EMS is consist of five main steps i.e. Environment policies, planning, implementation, checking and correction and lastly management review (International Organisation for Standardization, 2010).

The ISO had also created another important standard i.e. ISO 14004. This standard is more works as guidance standard for EMS. ISO 14004 also have five-step EMS model which is very similar to ISO 14001 system, but had more additional environment related topics (Feldman, 2012). The ISO 14004 consists of more self-accessed questions and furthermore comprise of chain of practical help section which is generally based on industrial experience of environment management (Curkovic & Sroufe, 2011). This standard delivers valuable guidance for company's who wanted to create EMS which combines with ISO 14001. But ISO 14004 can't be used for certification because it is more of a guidance standard, instead of set of necessities (Feldman, 2012).

#### **INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL BENEFITS OF EMS AND ISO STANDARDS**

By creating an EMS which consist of ISO 14001 certification, companies can significantly save expenses on everyday operations and wastage of resources. The effective EMS covers all parts of organisations so it can also help in improving employee's morale and commitment, along with that its focus on contribution to 'save the earth' (Srinivas & Yashiro, 2007).

Companies can greatly cut the cost from various divisions mainly by regular management review and also ISO standards main goal is to eliminate negative impact of work on nature and combining the effectiveness and efficiency of day to day processes. To get the ISO certificate company need to ensure complete review of their regular business activities and have to understand their bad effect on environment (Heras, Landin, & Molina, Do drivers matter for the benefits of ISO 14001?, 2011). As company need lot of data for reviewing and interlinking the daily operation of business, which may result in development of powerful information system which is more effective and efficient.

With the increase in want of being sustainable by both local and international customers of company, ISO 14001 standard can help the firm to emphasize more on greater environment action on behalf of stockholders and other local bodies (Raines, 2002). A good EMS and ISO certification company can greatly see as role model for other companies and small business. The government can help them in lowering the taxes. The organisation which have acquire ISO certificate and have strong position in market can promote reproduction of ISO certificate from other stakeholders, mainly from private business sector where EMS have long term impact and strategically applied (Darnall, Why Firms Mandate ISO 14001 Certification, 2006).

#### **LIMITATIONS OF ISO AND EMS**

While many companies had adapted the new programmes and initiatives for environmental performance, but it is very difficult to satisfy the requirements of ISO both internally and voluntarily and also it is very difficult to commit with EMS (Ammenberg & Sundin, 2005). As most of the companies have made environment as important goal recently, they still have more higher important goals and targets like attracting new customers, job creation and education (Boiral, 2007). Some big companies are facing administrative and political problems in applying and implementing the ISO 14001 commitments and requirements. This problem occurs because ISO guideline includes centralized planning system which is not flexible as only top management can make plans (Neumayer & Perkins, 2010). The another big problem with ISO is to fulfil ISO 14001 requirements and to implement good EMS, company require huge financial commitment because to obtain ISO certificate the management have to upgrade their machinery to new and more eco-friendly which are more expensive (Bansal & Bogner, 2002). Along with that the companies have to provide more training to their employees to work on new machinery.

#### **EMS AS TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

The improvement in environment performance due to EMS had been considered as one of important tool for sustainability. Korhonen (2010) suggest that adoption of environmental management system can achieve sustainable goal in firm by being creative and positive in solving environmental problem. Baumgartner (2010) also says that EMS should consider not only environment issues but should also add social, culture and employees issues. While some researchers are against EMS as sustainable tool. As EMS is not sustainable because the main aim of EMS is to solving problem for profit of the company and is not concern with impact on sustainable policies and practices on long term global issues (Ammenberg & Sundin, 2005). The supporters of EMS also argue that goals set for sustainability in company are very hard and unachivable. EMS can work towards sustainable development, but it may not guarantee as EMS is more of defensive and voluntary nature (Keen & Dyball, 2011).

#### **CONCLUSION**

After researching on EMS and ISO standards I conclude that adoption of EMS and ISO standards in company is not hard to implement as some managers thinks. The implementation of EMS within the company will not guarantee to solve environmental issues, EMS may only reports some compliance issues. But one common factor which can help EMS to become successful is by integration of environment management policies and responsibilities with existing management system. For this purpose employees must be trained and make aware of environmental policies. EMS can be also seen as company's guide for checking where improvements and environment control are needed (Hussen, 2011). Along with guidelines EMS also help the company in planning the steps to be taken for reducing and preventing environment from day to day business operations. Whether or not environmental management system will be successful or not is mainly depend on external factors on which they don't have any control like government and cusotmers (Arimuraa, Hibikid, & Katayamae, 2008). EMS do not provide 'paradigm shift' of companies thinking related to its impact on environment in terms of sustainability and global ecology.

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