

GREEN HRM PRACTICES FOR ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION – A REVIEW

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Abstract: Today around the world, we are rushing towards the industrialization, urbanization, massive business productions, enhancing technology and various business practices and activities. These has resulted in the enhanced standard of living of the people by providing them the increased convenience but also has depleted the environment and have increased the ecological hazards resulting in serious threat to the lives. Gradually people as well as business were getting concerned with the environmental threat and has taken the initiatives of going green in every aspect of life. Business also has imparted green practices in all their functional areas and one such area is Human Resource which is considered as the ‘Heart’ of the organization. Greening employees from top to bottom is not an easy task, but pro environmental plan and implementing Green human resource management (GHRM) practices practically has produced a positive result toward the Green environment. The paper focuses upon the GHRM, various Green Human Resource Practices and explains the role of green human resource process in going green. Finally, the paper suggests some social implication of Green human resource practices for green organization.

Index Terms - Green HRM, Green HRM practices, Green environment, Green Compensation, Paperless Organizations, Recycling.

I. INTRODUCTION

Everybody is concerned about the environmental issues and increasing pollution around the globe. Each and every sector is working to reduce the environmental issues by formulation the go green policies and procedures. With respect to the business practices also, green initiatives have been adopted in all the functional areas of management. Green policies in the field of human resource management were developed for preserving the resources for future enlargement of the organization as well as of the society. Companies now become conscious that they build up a prevailing social conscience and green sense of dependability where corporate social accountability is not just a brand building tool to have, but it has become a factor crucial tool to business. The HR functions develop into the driver of environment sustainability within the organization by aligning its practices and policies with sustainability goals reflecting an eco-focus. (Deepika & Karpagam, 2016). Sustainable development is concerned with meeting the needs of people today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Companies now realize that they have to develop a powerful social conscience and green sense of responsibility where corporate responsibility is not an altruistic nice to have, but a business imperative. The HR function will become the driver of environmental sustainability within the organization by aligning its practices and policies with sustainability goals reflecting an eco-focus (Mandip, 2012). Nowadays it seems that a considerable number of organizations practice green human resource management practices in the global context (Arulrajah et al., 2015).

The Green HRM is the necessity of the current century as day in and day out, it is described in the newspaper that because of the excess consumption of natural resources as a raw material by the industries and other commercial organization there is tremendous pressure on the natural resources of planet Earth. The situation is so alarming that the scientist and the environmentalist re discussing the issues of ecological imbalances. Green human resources refer to using every employee interface to promote sustainable practices and increase employee awareness and commitments on the issue of sustainability. Lee said green management to be the strategy which is adapted by an organization in order to organize the environmental management strategies for protecting and measuring environmental aspects. The HR function will become the driver of environmental stability within the organization by aligning its practices and policies with sustainability goals reflecting an eco-focus. Green HR is the use of HRM policies to promote the sustainable use of resources within the business organizations. Green initiatives within the HRM form part of wider programs of corporate social responsibility. Green HR involves undertaking environmental friendly HR initiatives resulting in greater efficiencies, lower costs and better employee engagement and retention which in turn help employee carbon footprints by the likes of electronic filing, car sharing, job sharing, teleconferencing and virtual interviews, recycling, telecommuting, online training, energy efficient office spaces. The responsibility of the present generations, HR managers is to create awareness amongst the youngsters and among the employees about the Green HRM, Green Movement, utilization of natural resources and helping the corporate to maintain proper environment, and retain the natural resources for our future generation.

II. GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The term Green HRM has become an important word within the businesses today and has secured its position in research works since the recognition on environmental management and sustainable development has risen all-round the globe. Green HRM not only includes consciousness towards environmental affairs, but also stands for the social as well as economic well-being of both

the organization and the employees within a broader prospect. Authors have specified different definitions for this term such as — “Green HRM is the make use of HRM policies to promote the sustainable use of resources within organizations and more generally promotes the causes of environment sustainability” (Marhatta & Adhikari, 2013).

Green HRM involves undertaking environment friendly HR initiatives resulting in greater effectiveness, lower cost and better employee engagement and retention in turn. The green human resource management comprises of many functions in the human resource department of an organization (Deepika & Karpagam, 2016). GHRM is directly responsible in creating green workforce that understands, appreciates, and practices green initiative and maintains its green objectives all throughout the HRM process of recruiting, hiring, training, compensating, developing, and advancing the firms human capital (Mathapati, 2013). It refers to the policies, practices, and systems with the intention to make employees of the association green for the benefit of the individual, society, natural environment, and the business (Opatha & Arulrajah, 2014).

III. GHRM PRACTICES

(1) Introduction of Green Thinking In the Organization

HR plays an important role in Management of people which is regarded as asset of an organization. The responsibility of the present HR managers is to incorporate the Green HR Philosophy in corporate mission statement, HR –Policies.

(2) The Green HR Role

Indeed, many organizations are adopting an integrated approach to implement Environment Management programs. But achieving this integration of HR and Environment Management involves importantly changing the approach of some HR staff themselves to green issues as well as changing the unsustainable practices that all levels of staff may have learned over decades.

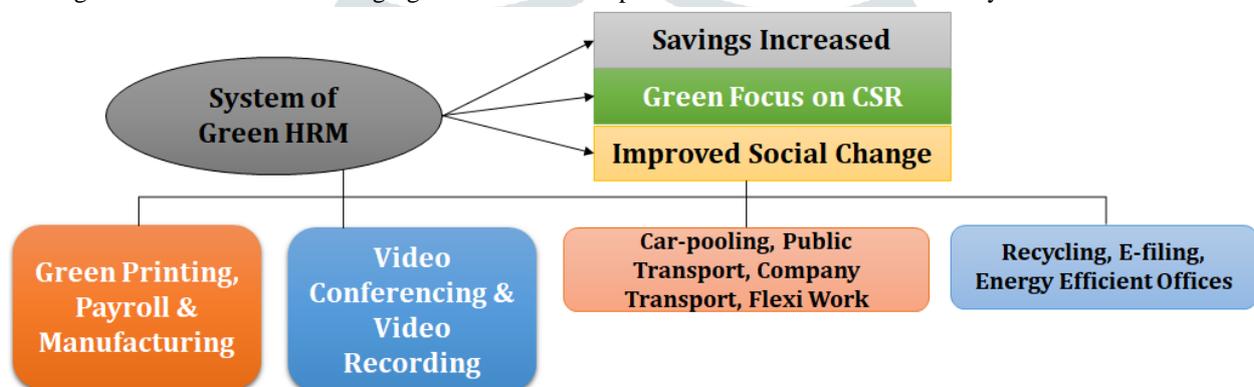


Figure 1: Green HR Practices and their Possible Outcomes in Organization

(3) Towards Green and Clean HR

Operation requires lot of consumables –paper, plastic, and envelope and ink toner. ISO 14000 environmental management standards exist to help companies to minimize the operational effects on natural resources and environment. Taking a step towards clean HR many manufacturing companies are shifting from old packing material like tin containers, plastic bags to eco-friendly packing material.

(4) Green Job Design and Analysis

In general, job descriptions can be used to specify a number of environmental protection related task, duties and responsibilities (Wehrmeyer, 1996; Renwick et al, 2008 and 2013). These days, some companies have incorporated environmental and social tasks, duties and responsibilities as far as possible in each job in order to protect the environment. In some companies, each job description includes at least one duty related to environmental protection and also specifically includes environmental responsibilities whenever and wherever applicable.

Job descriptions and person (job) specifications may include environmental, social, personal, and technical requirements of the organizations as far as possible. For example, environmental protection duties should be included, along with the allocation of environmental reporting roles and health and safety tasks (Crosbie and Knight, 1995; Wehrmeyer, 1996; North, 1997; Revill, 2000). In addition, some companies use teamwork and cross-functional teams as job design techniques to successfully manage the environmental issues of the company (Palmer and Andrews, 1997; Beard and Rees, 2000; Griffiths and Petrick, 2001).

(5) Green Human Resource Planning

At present, some companies engage in forecasting number of employees and types of employees, needed to implement corporate environmental management initiatives/programs/activities (e.g. ISO 14001, cleaner production, responsible care etc.). These are good practices some leading companies have adopted to manage their environmental issues. The corporate environmental management initiatives demand some new job positions and specific set of skills. Green human resource planning gets required in this context. In addition these companies engage in deciding strategies to meet the forecasted demand for environmental works (e.g. appointing consultants/experts to perform energy or environmental audits) and sometimes they are outsourcing. As far as existing literature is concerned, it did not clearly specify the practices under the function of green human resource planning. However, based on the observations of the industries and organisations, it is possible to identify certain green human resource planning practices (Arulrajah et al., 2015).

(6) Green Recruitment

In general, environment concerned companies have their own environmental policy framework. In materializing the established environmental policies, companies need environmentally oriented workforce. In creating environmental oriented workforce, companies have two options: First is focusing on green recruitment. Second is providing required environmental protection related awareness, education, training and development to the existing workforce. The first option is more proactive and cost effective than the second option. Hence, searching best green recruitment practices is important to organizations. In the recruitment context, what some companies are doing is that they integrate corporate environmental policy and strategies with the recruitment policy of the company. A survey by the British Carbon Trust confirms that most of the employees (more than 75%) considering working for an organisation perceived it as important that they have an active environmental policy to reduce carbon emissions (Clarke, 2006).

(7) Green Selection

In the selection context, when making selection for the job vacancies some companies consider candidates' environmental concern and interest as selection criteria. When interviewing candidates or evaluating them for selection, environmental-related questions are asked by those companies (Crosbie and Knight, 1995; Wehrmeyer, 1996; North, 1997; Revill, 2000). Really, these are some of the good green selection practices any organisation can adopt to select environmental friendly people in addition to the normal selection criteria relating to the specific duties of the job being concerned. Table 4 shows a list of the existing HRM practices under the green selection.

(8) Green Induction

Induction for new employees seems to be needed to ensure they understand and approach their corporate environmental culture in a serious way (Wehrmeyer, 1996). Organizations should ensure that new recruits understand their environmental responsibilities, become familiar with health and safety arrangements, appreciate the corporate environmental culture, adopt the company's environmental policy and practices, and know given relevant contact persons within the organisation (Crosbie and Knight, 1995; Wehrmeyer, 1996; North, 1997; Revill, 2000; Renwick et al, 2008; Renwick et al, 2013).

(9) Green Performance Appraisal

In order to sustain good environmental performance, organizations must establish Environmental Management Information Systems (EMIS) and environmental audits. Many organizations have established environmental management information systems (Wells et al, 1993), and environmental audits (Carpenter, 1994). Schwalm (1994) states that the aim of an environmental management information system is to effectively monitor the large number of pollution, resource usage, energy and regulatory requirements an organization encounters. Milliman and Clair (1996) state that when an EMIS has been developed, it is important that it is not just used for reporting purposes, but should also be integrated with performance appraisals of managers as well as employees. Incorporating corporate environmental management objectives and targets with the performance evaluation system of the organisation is a must for any organization nowadays.

(10) Green Training and Development

Providing environmental training to the organizational members (non-managerial employees and managers) to develop required skills and knowledge is an important function of green HRM. This will be helpful to implement corporate environmental management programs of the company (Cook and Seith, 1992). Providing training to encourage recycling and waste management, supporting flexible schedules and telecommuting, and reducing long-distance business travel (Jackson et al, 2011) are very useful to reduce the negative environmental impacts of the organisations. Creating environmental awareness among the workforce by conducting seminars and workshops at organizational level is also important to achieve good environmental performance. Providing environmental education that will result in a change of attitude and behaviour among managers and non-managerial employees (North, 1997) is also needed to the organisations.

(11) Green Reward Management

Crosbie and Knight (1995) state that some companies have successfully rewarded extraordinary environmental performance, practices and ideas by including environmental criteria into salary reviews. Due to the scarcity of financial rewards, recognition rewards for environmental performance have been established in many organizations, including Monsanto, Dow Chemical, and ICI Americas Inc, (Whitenight, 1992). The success of recognition rewards relies on the importance of company-wide identification. For example, such attention increases employees' awareness of environmental achievements (Bhushan and Mackenzie, 1994).

(12) Green Employee Relations

Employee relations are that aspect of HRM which is concerned with establishing harmonious employer and employee relationship. The cordial relationship facilitates increase in the productivity. Basically, employee relations involve employee participation and empowerment activities. Employee participation in Green initiatives enhances the chances of better green management as it aligns employees' goals, capabilities, motivations, and perceptions with green management practices and systems. Involving employees in Environment Management has proved to be an improvement in Environmental Management systems such as efficient resource usage (Florida & Davison, 2001); reducing waste (May & Flannery, 1995); and reducing pollution from workplaces (Kitazawa & Sarkis, 2000). Several workers in their study concluded that individual empowerment positively influences productivity and performance, and facilitates self-control, individual thinking, and problem-solving skills (Renwick, 2008; Wee & Quazi, 2005).

(13) Paperless Offices

Most of the work in the office is managed on paper but, with introduction of IT, the consumption of paper gradually reduced. Paperless office is a work place where the use of paper is either restricted or eliminated by converting important official documents

and other papers into automated workflows. The practice greatly reduce the consumption of paper, the costs of paper-related actions including copying, printing, and storing, and also save the time used for searching paper documents.

(14) Green Initiatives For HR

Organizations in general organize HR practices into systems that are consistent with their culture and business strategy (Boselie et al., 2001). We can say that green initiatives included in HRM manifesto is a part of corporate social responsibility in the long run. Today, organizations are implementing and integrating green initiatives in their agenda with the help of their human resource. A key responsibility for HR environmental executives possibly will be to guide line managers in terms of gaining full staff co-operation toward implementing environmental policies which means HR needs to nurture supporters and create networks of problem-solvers willing to act to change the current status quo (Sathyapriya, Kanimozhi, & Adhilakshmi, 2014).

(15) Recycling & Waste Disposal

The practice of recycling and proper waste disposal saves energy and reduces the amount of waste that is thrown into the dustbins, thereby making the environment cleaner and the air fresher. As a component of their green initiatives, quite a few organizations are implementing recycling agenda to increase the amount of recycled products and decrease the amount of waste.

IV. CONCLUSION

The paper has reviewed the literature on Green HRM and few Green Practices and offered a model in Green HRM. More than half of the employers practice strategic environmental management, according to new survey conducted by M/s Buck. Consultants in US in 2008. The future of Green HRM appears promising for all stakeholders of HRM Unions and employees can help employers to adopt Green HRM policies and practices that help safeguard and enhance worker health and well-being. Green HR involves reducing the carbon footprint via less printing of paper. To conclude one can say that HR has a role in the pursuit of greener business practices, a role to save planet Earth and recruit new employees and enforce greener working practices and change environmentally unfriendly behaviors. HR has significant opportunity to contribute the green movement and motivated employee /people to work for greener practices.

V. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Previous researches have shown a constructive relationship between environment, HRM and firm. There are a number of reasons for companies to adopt Green HRM practices within the organization that will not only benefit for the organization but also give advantages to the most important asset or part of any organization that can never be ignored i.e. employees. Green HRM practices, improved employee morale and this may help to save Environment and that will be beneficial for both the company and the employee. Some of the benefits that an employee and organization can attain by implementing green HRM in the organization include:

- **Improvement rate of retention in employee-** Organizations that are not aware about green concept, green practices and policies may lose their talented or innovative employees to companies that have implemented Green Practices or make their image as an eco-friendly company and offer socially responsible incentives. Some of the incentives include giving subsidies for buying hybrid cars, on solar power system. Among the benefits of this approach is improved employee commitment toward company and job retention.
- **Improved public image-** By using environmentally friendly practices and product, implementing the Green concept, Most of the persons are much aware about eco-friendly practices and they attract toward organization adopting green management practices better as compared to organization that are causing harm to the environment.
- **Improvement in attracting better employees-** In the race of attracting most creative and innovative employees, companies increase their recruiting potential and they are trying to attract the talented employee by providing environmentally friendly practices like GE are painting themselves in green.
- **Improvement in productivity-** Green HRM practices specifically focus on practices for sustainable use of resources that resulting in more efficiencies, less wastage, Improved Job-Related Attitude, Improved Work/Private life, lower costs, improved employee performance. So it improved employee commitment and job satisfaction toward an organization that improved the productivity of both.
- **Improvement in sustainable use of resources-** By increasing the awareness among the individuals working in the organization about the Green HRM concept, Green practices, proper utilization of natural resources and retain the natural resources for our future generation.
- **Reduction of practices that cause the degradation of the environment-** By implementing Green HRM practices in both the life domain, avoiding misuse of resources.
- **Reduced Utility Costs-** By using technologies those are energy efficient and less wasteful. Using Energy Star-rated CFL bulbs, energy-efficient windows and doors decreases heating and cooling costs, water conservation
- **Save Environmental Impact-** By Recycling and using long-lasting/Green products reduces the amount of energy needed to produce replacement products.
- **Rebates and Tax Benefits** – Central Government and State government give subsidy and offer tax incentives and rebates.
- **Increased Business Opportunities-** organizations/agencies, Commercial businesses organizations to do-all those meet specific green Some government/semi-government and non-profit institutions only approach those standards.

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