

Green Human Resource Management: An innovative approach towards corporate sustainability.

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Abstract: The topic of environmental sustainability is getting increased attention among the corporate world across the globe. Environmental sustainability of any company means producing no harm to environment and thereby protection of natural environment and resources for benefit of future generation. Corporate sustainability requires high level of technical and management skills in employees. But, Human Resource Management aspect does not get considered in environmental sustainability. Due to this, there is rising need of strategic Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) which is integration of environmental management into Human Resource Management. A review of the literature shows that a wide process structure of reference for Green HRM has yet to emerge and well-structured Policy models in organization to adopt Green HRM are very rare. Systematic policy model will be generated only if we know the problems faced by employees in an organization. This paper aims to review the general need of integration of Human Resource Management with Environment Management. Green HRM is more effective ecologically, economically and socially than conventional HRM. This paper helps to study various problems faced by employees in any organization and try to find solution using Green Human Resource Management techniques.

Index Terms - Green Human Resource Management, Corporate sustainability, HR policies and strategies, Policy model

I. INTRODUCTION

The natural environment & resources protection for benefit of future generation have become global imperative. This emphasized the necessity to redefine operating and management strategies of various organizations. Green HRM is a combination of environmental management with Human Resource Management which enables to maintain sustainable environment within and outside of an organization. Green HRM is the set of activities (recruitment, training, performance development, appraisal, employee relations, pay and rewards) that direct at an organization's human resources with the aim of achieving organizational goals through ensuring environmental sustainability. The awareness on environmental management and sustainable development has been increasingly raising day by day all-round the globe. Today, the topic Green HRM not only includes awareness toward 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.

Green HRM incorporate environment-friendly HR commencement and 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 and retention which help organization to reduce employee carbon footprints by the mean of Green HRM practices. The primary outline for organizations in initiating innovative practices is optimum utilization of resources with less consumption of time, ultimately leading to cost-effectiveness which can affect company's brand value.

General Green HRM practices adopted within various organizations are as flexible work scheduled, electronic filing, car-sharing, job-sharing, teleconferencing, virtual interviews, recycling, telecommuting, online training, energy efficient office space etc.

There are three basic scopes of sustainable development of any organization:

1. Ecological- Protection of environment and resources and trying to make negligible impact on environment during any corporate processes and procedures.
2. Economic- encouraged by technological progress & improved effectiveness in use of resources, materials, personnel.
3. Social - Improvement in living condition & safety of all employees within and outside of an organization. Figure 1 below show three basic dimensions of Green HRM or Sustainable HRM as individual responsibility, work-life balance and employability linked with Individual placed at the center.

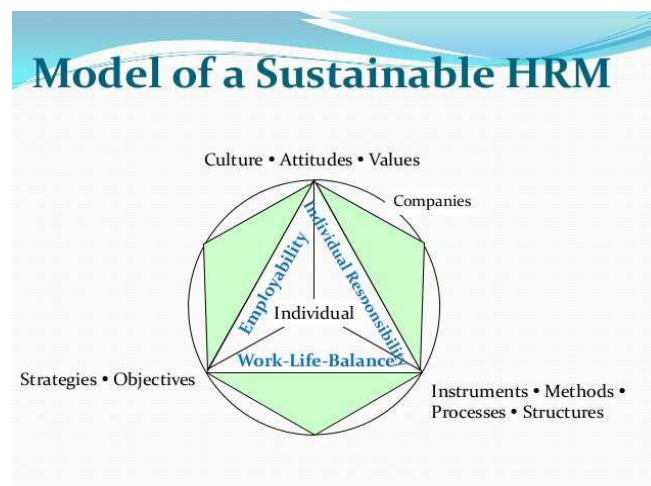


Fig.1 Model of a Sustainable HRM

Green HRM has two crucial fundamentals as environment friendly HR practices and policies and conservation of knowledge capital to reduce labor turnover. The days with suitability of the impression of 'continuous improvement' are withdrawing and what stands more appealing in today's scenario is 'continuous innovation'. As companies are moving beyond the conventional boundaries of profits and shareholders to multiple stakeholders, the realization to the natural environment, planet protection, and health of people, empowering poor and development of community by fostering diverse types of innovation is becoming more essential.

An innovation enhancing sustainability is not just the role of the corporate but largely involves individual citizen effort. Researchers have highlighted that companies have various formal and interpersonal ways of engaging people initiating sustainability efforts. Yet, there is not much work on the process of engaging employees in innovation for process changes ensuring sustainability. Thus, there lies a huge scope for researches in the area of the identifying innovative mechanisms for enhancing sustainability and greening efforts of the organizations.

Purpose of work

Sustainability has become the trending topic across the world. Yet, a number of the companies have not been able to incorporate environmental sustainability centrally or integrally into the day to day operation. Incorporating environment-based focus for sustainable growth, and providing support for environmental priorities are generally the secondary interest of many companies. Some organizations that do instigate greening efforts are unable to integrate the green initiatives with people, process, and technology and organization front. There is a call for companies to strike the balance between the inevitable industrial growth and the conservation of natural environment for enabling it for our future generation. As the operation of a company significantly depends on the dynamic role played by the human resource (HR) department, there is a growing need for the integration of green concepts into HRM practices. Though most companies have been working on for environmental sustainability yet there is a huge scope for researchers to work on the area of process innovations leading to environmental sustainability integrating with HR practices. Many companies know the concept 'sustainability', but fail to adopt Green HRM practices due to lack of knowledge in this area. Thorough process and policy models are not available on large scale for adopting Green HRM. Actual problems faced by employees in any organization are known to HR team. But their solution through new and innovative techniques is still not given in many organizations which lead to use of conventional HR systems as usual. Policy models using Green HRM is possible only when we actually know the problems faced by employees in particular organization, organization structure, type of work, brand value of an organization, market value and their stakeholders, etc The area of green human resource management (GHRM) is less explored and though some companies have taken initiatives in incorporating green management yet, the application of GHRM as a concept is laid back.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main objectives of the study were to review the need of adoption of Green HRM in any organization and identifying the problems faced by employees and thereby to suggest their solution through Green HRM which will become helpful while making structured policy model for that organization. To achieve the targets as mentioned above the following methodology was adopted: Firstly, the paper adopts a literature review approach beginning with indicating significant works on Green HRM research, integrating environmental management and HRM and classifying the literature in a process model format of HRM. Literature review is adopted as it enables to construct strong research and to make a reliable knowledge base in this field. The HR processes specifically recruitment; performance management and appraisal; training and development; employment relations; compensation; and exit are covered (entry to exit). Secondly, the paper adopts primary data collection method of interviews and questionnaire survey of selected sample. Questions regarding awareness of Green HRM within employees, current HRM practices used in their organization, problems faced by them in their day to day work practices are asked through questionnaire formed.

2.1 Population and Sample

200 employees are surveyed through 30 organizations to identify the problems faced by them while around 125 employees were randomly selected for general questionnaire survey to identify the need of Green HRM in organizations' policies and procedures. These organizations are mostly well established EPC contractor's firm working in construction sector in Pune region. Various organizations' employees are selected at random working on roughly same designation or level in their respective organization. This will help us to study the overall need of Green HRM in construction industry.

2.2 Data and Sources of Data

With a view to achieve the major objectives planned above, the present study adopted archival method of literature review so that it enables the researcher to structure the research, find gaps, scopes for further study and valid comprehension base in this field. Articles published on green HRM between 2000 and 2019 have been reviewed thoroughly to understand the basic concepts involved in Green HRM. The limitation of the study is that only the articles published and available online have been considered for the study. This study will be helpful for identifying solution to common problems faced by employees in an organization from their entry to exit.

Primary data was collected through questionnaire survey and direct interviews conducted. This data was helpful in reviewing the awareness of Green HRM in employees and thereby to identify the growing need of Green HRM adoption in organization's policies and procedures. Also, this survey helped to recognize common problems faced by employees in their work place.

III. DATA COLLECTION:

3.1 Data collection through general survey:

A questionnaire in the form of Google form has been prepared to collect data from people. This form has been shared through e-mails to random 125 employees' selected 30 different organizations. These questions help us to verify the need of the subject of project. The structured questionnaire which was compiled taking into account the various aspects of green HR, its meaning or interpretation, implementation of green HR practices and their effectiveness in private sector organizations. Out of 20 questions, some questions are highlighted below:

Are you aware of Green HRM?

127 responses

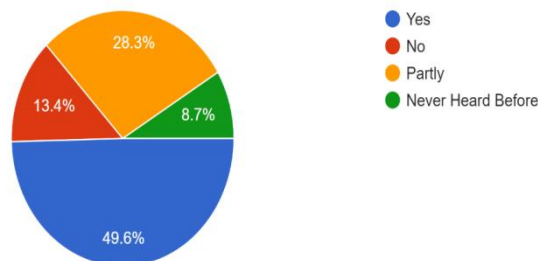


Fig.2

Figure 2 shows; more than 50% of employees are still aware of the term called Green HRM. But, more than 37% people are completely unaware of this concept while around 14% people partly know the term which means there is still scope of reaching Green HRM concept to many business levels.

Does your company/organization conduct training to increase awareness about sustainability?

127 responses

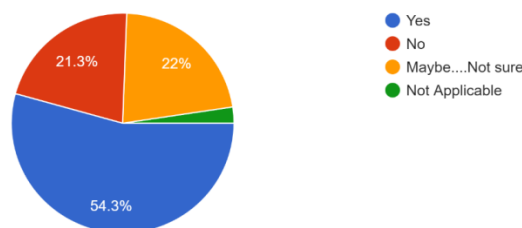


Fig.3

Figure 3 shows that more than 50% people are stating that their companies conduct training to increase awareness regarding environmental sustainability as well as corporate sustainability. But, around 23% companies do not emphasize on these trainings.

Does your company/organization promote paperless work?

127 responses

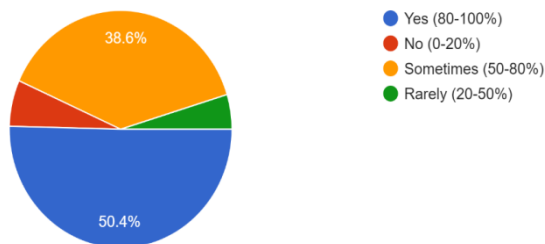


Fig.4

Figure 4 states that 50% companies are promoting paperless work. This includes paperless entry to exit of an employee within an organization. Perhaps, around 8-9% companies do not adopt paperless work at all whereas around 38% employees state that their organization adopts paperless work sometimes.

Rate on a scale of five whether Green Goals are assigned to the employees.

127 responses

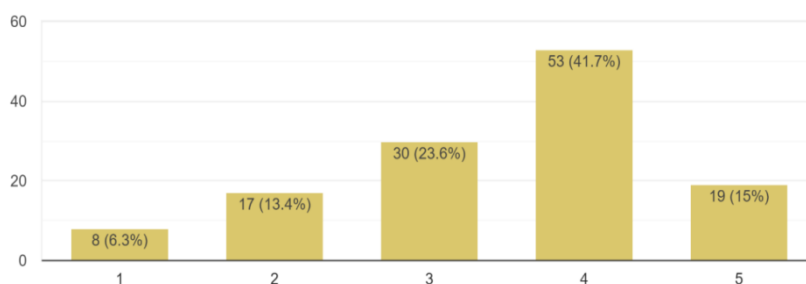


Fig.5

Figure 5 is showing that around 53% employees are assigned with Green Goals in their organization. Approximately, 25% employees are not assigned with Green Goals and they are not even sure about what Green Goals actually are.

Is Video Conferencing and Telecommuting used for routine meetings?

127 responses

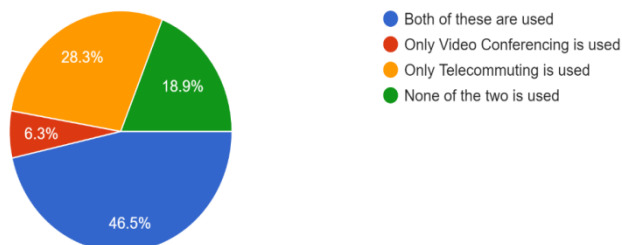


Fig.6

Figure 6 shows that around 45% employees in various organizations use video conferencing as well as telecommuting like Skype calls for meetings, while around 6% employees use only video conferencing for meetings, presentations etc. And around 30% employees do not use any of these tools for meetings which means they chose offline and direct face to face meetings.

Statement- Company Transport/Vehicle Sharing is adopted and encouraged.

127 responses

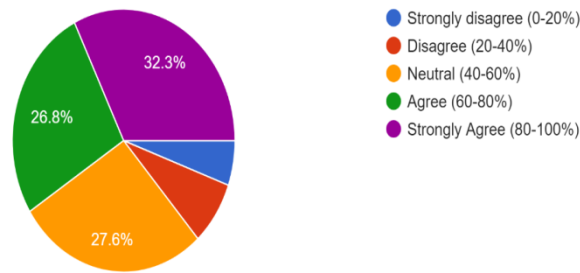


Fig.7

Figure 7 states that around 40% employees are not encouraged using Company’s transport or vehicle facilities like car pooling or car sharing etc. While, around 32% employees are strongly agree that their company encourages using common or shared vehicle. Also, approximately, 40%-42% people don’t have flexible timings according to availability of public transport.

Does your company/organization use Green Energy Systems (Solar, Wind or Hybrid) for daily utilization? If yes, how much?

127 responses

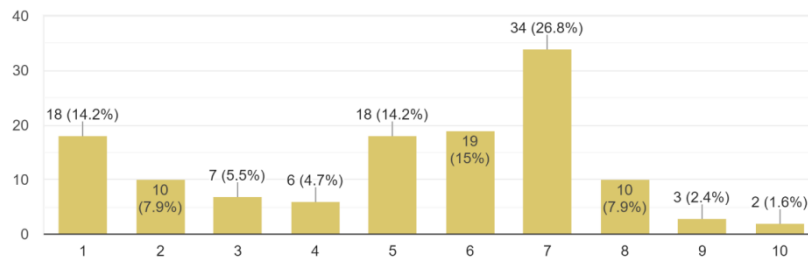


Fig.8

Figure 8 is showing that more than 50% of people don’t have rainwater harvesting or Green Energy Systems like (Solar, wind or hybrid) for daily utilization. While around only 5-10% employees state that their company have Green Energy Systems as stated above.

Statement- GHRM would help your company/organization to become a market leader.

127 responses

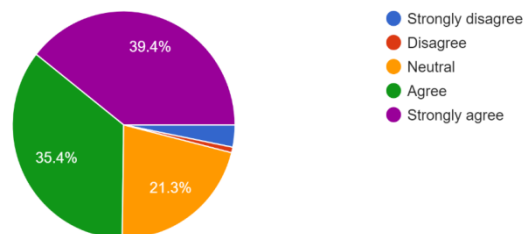


Fig.9

Figure 9 shows that around 73-74% employees agree that adoption of Green HRM in their organization will help their organization to become market leader which will help in global imperatives.

3.2 Data collection through detailed interviews around 200 employees regarding their problems in an organization:

Table 3.2 shows the problems faced by employees while working in an organization or an industry. Various problems were identified while taking interviews of 200 employees working in different 30 organizations, but the most common problems are shown below in table. These problems will enable us to find the common solution using integration of Environment Management with Human Resource Management.

Sr. No.	Common problems faced by employees in their day to day work practices	Number of employee facing problem (out of 200)	Percentage Of employees facing problem
1.	Problem regarding congested parking spaces	157	78.5%
2.	Travelling for meetings, site work, inspections, testing etc.	109	54.5%
3.	Systematic data, record keeping, audits maintaining	78	39%
4.	Work pressure, target completion loads, deadlines	116	58%
5.	Rapid changes in technology, corporate initiatives, and programs	174	87%
6.	Increased business opportunities as well as global competition for sustainable business	163	81.5%

Table 3.2 Common problems faced by employees

IV. INTERPRETATION OF DATA:

4.1 Interpretation of need of Green HRM in an organization using questionnaire survey:

1. The concept of 'sustainability' is well known to the most of the people as it has become the global need. Hence, integration of Human Resource Management with Environment Management is highly essential. Around 50% employees do not know the concept Green HRM which itself states the scope of research in this area as well as its proper application in companies' policies.
2. Around 50% people said that their company/ organization does not emphasize on online joining formalities. Moreover, 48% people still don't have paperless work in their organization/ company, or their company does not promote paperless work. Approximately, 38%-40% people responded that their company does not have online trainings, online performance feedback or appraisal, which clearly states that use of E-learning systems, online trainings is increasing. Still, there is a need to increase the use of such facilities for effective and efficient learning experience. There is strong need of emphasizing more on online joining formalities to encourage paperless work. Audits, records should be saved electronically. Online systems for trainings, performance feedback or appraisal should be adopted more for time saving and resource efficient work to be done.
3. There is strong need to increase awareness and assign Green Goals to the employees for the project to get completed sustainably as Green Goals are not assigned to almost 45% people in their organization/ company.
4. Around 20%-22% don't have telecommuting or video conferencing for their routine meeting. Approximately, 40%-42% people don't have flexible timings according to availability of public transport. Moreover, they don't have company vehicle sharing policy. Business travels should be avoided using telecommuting, video conferencing etc for time efficient work. Use of public transport, car sharing should be encouraged for fuel consumption, effective utilization of office parking spaces.
5. Organizations/ company require huge amount of energy in daily practice. Renewable energy systems should be adopted for efficient energy usage. More than 50% of people don't have rainwater harvesting or Green Energy Systems like (Solar, wind or hybrid) for daily utilization in their companies which is a call for innovative techniques like installation of hybrid systems in company, arrangement and placing of company's interior in such a way that natural ventilation and daylight can be used are to be adopted.
6. More than 70% employees agree that adoption of Green HRM will enable an organization to become global leader. 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 trending now. Also, Central Government and State government give subsidy and offer tax incentives and rebates due to which economic benefits can be achieved. Also, innovative techniques striving balance ecologically and economically are trending in business competition across the world.

4.2 Interpretation of solutions to the common problems faced by employees at workplace through Green HRM:

The green HRM efforts results in increased efficiencies, sustainable use of resources, Less wastage, Improved Job Related Attitude, Improved Work/Private life, lower costs, Improved employee performance and retention which help organization to reduce employee carbon footprints by the mean of Green HRM which is really difficult to achieve by only conventional HR management. Hence, it can definitely give innovative solutions to the problems faced by employees at workplace. The solutions are identified using literatures present on Green HRM.

1. Problem regarding congested parking spaces – Huge parking spaces is required for Multinational organizations/ companies. Generally, separate spaces for four wheeler and two wheelers are present in such big companies. Still, many employees face difficulty to park their vehicle in congested parking spaces. By adopting car sharing policy, number of employees can share their vehicle while driving back and forth to office. Due to this, many employees won't bring their own vehicle and parking problems can be avoided. Also, by emphasizing on flexible timings to the office according to availability of public transport can be encouraged so that employees will utilize public transport facilities. This solution works both ways, one in avoiding parking problems and secondly, by consumption of fuels.
2. Travelling for meetings, site work, inspections, testing etc. – This is one of the biggest problems faced by employees. Travelling for meetings in peak hours of traffic is one of the tedious jobs. This can cause negligence in work, loss of interest in work, unwanted use of fuel. By adopting job sharing, employees can exchange the work according to their location of work with respect to scope of work. More and more emphasize on online meetings can be given. People can use 'work from home' facility while they are unable to attend the organization/ company. This is useful to maintain productivity.
3. Systematic data, record keeping, audits maintaining – Data saving, record keeping is very important in documentation of any project. Audits are to be maintained to keep the detailed records of work done or to be done in detail. It is very difficult to maintain separate files, folders with papers. Paperless work in such case is encouraged more to keep these records electronically. This helps to maintain them in systematic and reliable manner.
4. Work pressure, target completion loads, deadlines – Most of the employees face this problem of work pressure and deadlines during their work in big organization/ companies. Sustainable solutions through timely communications, discussions can be given. Brainstorming for new and innovative ideas can be done. Among the benefits of this approach improved employee commitment toward company and job retention.
5. Rapid changes in technology, corporate initiatives, and programs – Everyday, new trends in technology are getting introduced. Various corporate policies, programs, initiatives are changing daily. Innovative tools and techniques are being used worldwide. Such technologies can be taught using online trainings, tutorials. This can increase awareness amongst employees and make them up to date. Online trainings are effective and efficient way to utilize time and learn new techniques.
6. Increased business opportunities as well as global competition for sustainable business- 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. Organizations/agencies, Commercial businesses organizations strive to meet specific green goals. Some government/semi-government and non-profit institutions only approach those standards. Increasing need of sustainable efforts to be made in projects ecologically, economically, locally is the key factor in global competition.

V. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to identify the need of Green HRM in any organization. Many literatures have shown a beneficial association between environment, HRM and firm. There are a number of reasons for companies to implement Green HRM practices within the organization that will not only benefit for the organization but also give advantages to the most vital asset or part of any organization that can never be overlooked i.e. human resources. Green HRM practices, enhanced employee morale and innovative techniques used while working in an organization that not only conserve natural resources but also help to achieve economical and social benefits to organization. Green HRM helps to establish win-win situation for both the company and the employee. Future studies can be done using large sample for more accurate results and conclusions.

The research helps to identify common issues, problems faced by employees. These problems are generally solved using conventional Human Resource Management technique, which may require additional resources and still may result in failed decision. Green HRM helps to provide solutions which can solve the problem on large scale. To adopt Green HRM in any organization is done through well-structured policy model. These policies can be made only when actual loopholes in the current system are known and identified. Then policies and procedures are introduced in respective organization considering various parameters like organization structure, type of work, brand value of an organization, market value and their stakeholders, etc. Such policy model making is the further scope of the study.

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