

GREEN HRM: A NEED FOR 21ST CENTURY

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ABSTRACT - Human Resource Management (HRM) is an important faction of management that deals with the most valuable assets of an organization which is human resources. The whole context of HRM is currently being considered in the light of sustainability all over. Expanding the statement, we contend that Green Human Resource Management is the most significant element of sustainability. Green Human Resources Management (Green HRM) has recently attracted the attention of academic researchers and practitioners. The objective of this study is to explore the green human resource management practices of organizations based on the existing literature. Thus the major areas of the study include basic understanding of Green HRM to the readers, the reasons why we need to adopt Green HRM, the limitations or barriers to its successful implementation and finally, the paper suggests some potential HR initiatives for Green organizations.

Keywords: *Green Human Resources Management (GHRM), Human Resources Management, Environmental Sustainability, Organization.*

INTRODUCTION

Green HRM refers to all the activities concerned in development, execution and on-going maintenance of a system that aims at making employees of an organization green. It is the area of HRM that is concerned with transforming regular employees into green employees so as to achieve environmental goals of the organization and lastly to make a significant contribution to environmental sustainability. It refers to the policies, practices and systems that make employees of the organization green for the benefit of the individual, society, natural environment, and the business. The rationale of green HRM is to create, enhance and retain greening within each employee of the organization so that he or she gives a maximum individual contribution on each of the four roles, i.e., environmentalist, ecologist, non-polluter, and inventor.

Green Human Resource Management can be defined as the triggering force of the human resource implementations that improves both economic and environmental sustainability of business resources by undertaking change and developing environmental conditions.

In simple usage, Green Human Resources Management (GHRM) means using human resources management policies to promote sustainable use of resources within business organizations and more generally promoting environmental sustainability.

Green HRM means bringing economic changes and raising the efficiency both ecological and economic while ensuring that the cost of natural resources exploitation is within the acceptable range in HRM practices. Green human resource management targets human resources to bear an environmental responsibility in their tasks, to turn them into employees who are able to develop positive behaviors with other co-workers, to present new ideas and recommendations, and thus to enable the implementation of environmental programs. The basic target actually is to motivate employees, to turn them into environment-conscious individuals, and to improve environmental performance of the organizations.

The Green Human Resource Management comprises of many functions in the Human Resource Department of an organization. It helps to reduction of paper usage and the implementation of green human resource policies such as planning, recruiting, selecting, managing employees and the employee relations. It makes the environment green in the workplace. All the activities involved in the green human resource management enhance the value of the employees and the organization.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study is:

1. To build up a basic understanding of Green HRM to the readers.
2. To come across the reasons why we need to adopt Green HRM.
3. To find out the limitations or barriers to its successful implementation.
4. To suggest some possible Green Initiatives by the HR Department.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is primarily based upon the secondary data. The data relevant to the topic is collected from different databases, websites, papers published journals, magazines and newspaper articles and other available sources.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Green HRM is the use of policies, practices, and systems in the organization that make green employees for the benefit of the individual, team, society, natural environment, and the organization. Different researchers describe Green HRM in different ways, but somehow their intentions are same for sustainability of human resources and their environment. By taking the base of

green concept various literatures on Green Marketing (Peattie, 1992), Green Accounting (Bebbington, 2001; Owen, 1992), Green Retailing (Kee-hung, Cheng, and Tang, 2010), and Green Management in general (McDonough and Prothero, 1997) have fertilize the area of management. Daily and Hung, (2001); Sarkaris et al., (2010), Lee (2009) specify Green Management“ as the exercise whereby companies build up an environmental management strategy to deal with the environment.”Therefore there is requirement of positive environmental management (Gonzalez-Benito and Gonzalez-Benito, 2006).

According to Renwick et al. (2008), the integration of Corporate Environmental Management into Human Resource Management is termed as green HRM. These scholars broadly specified that distinguished policies in the field of recruitment, performance management and appraisal, training and development, employment relations and pay and reward are considered powerful tools for aligning employees with an organization's environmental strategy.

According to Jabbour, Santos, & Nagano (2010) the greening of functional dimensions of human resource management such as job description and analysis, recruitment, selection, training, performance appraisal and rewards is defined as green HRM.

In 2011, Jabbour again defined green HRM as „the level of greening of human resource management practices“ in terms of functional and competitive dimensions of HRM. Others describe Green HRM as the use of HRM policies, philosophies, and practices to promote sustainable use of business resources and thwart any untoward harm arising from environmental concerns in organizations (Zoogah, 2011).

Mandip (2012) is of the opinion that green initiatives within HRM form part of wider programs of corporate social responsibility. Green HR essentially consists of two major elements that are environment-friendly HR practices and the preservation of knowledge capital.

Cherian and Jacob (2012) in their study identified that recruitment, training, employee motivation, and rewards are important human dimensions which contribute to the improvement in employee implementation of green management principles.

Mampra (2013) defines Green HRM as the use of HRM policies to encourage the sustainable use of resources within business enterprises and promote the cause of environmentalism which further boosts up employee morale and satisfaction. Within an organization, human resource and their systems are the basic foundation of any business, be it financial business or sustainable business.

They are the ones responsible for planning and executing those eco-friendly policies to create a green atmosphere. We argue that without facilitating the human resource and implementing sustainable policies, going green would be a hard nut to crack.

These definitions do not have significant differences or contradictions with each other. Therefore, based on the meaning of these definitions, we propose our own definition for green HRM in this moment. Green HRM can be defined as “the environmental (green) orientation of all human resource management (HRM) functions or practices of an organization at all levels.” The green HRM deals with rethinking the basic concepts of HRM, its objectives, functions, processes, activities, and strategies in an environmentally friendly manner in order to accommodate the needs of ecological sustainability.

Opatha & Arul rajah, (2014) is of the opinion that, Green HRM refers to the policies, practices and systems that make employees of the organization green for the benefit of the individual, society, natural environment, and the business.

Yusliza Mohd Yusoff (2015) since the concept of Green HRM is still unclear and needs to be developed; the study has done Qualitative-based research to gain deeper insights and understandings in this regard to Developed broad conceptualizations of Green HRM. These broad conceptualizations were then categorized in to a narrower conceptualization by grouping the activities which entail shared concepts and result in the formation of only five parent conceptualizations – the E-HRM, Work-life Balance (WLB), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Green Policies, and Extra Care Program. Green Human Resource is conceptualized as the use of the respective Human Resource Management (HRM) policies in promoting the sustainable spending of resources in a business and with the main aim of encouraging the cause of a sustainable environment (Cheema, Pasha, & Javed, 2015).

Jabbour & de Sousa Jabbour, (2016) defines that the basic elements GHRM are preserving and developing knowledge capital and the application of HR practices that are environmental-friendly. Through an eco-focus drive, the HR function is the epitome of environmental sustainability in a firm via the alignment of its policies and practices with the trajectory sustainability goals.

Aragao et al, (2017) in today's global environmental demands, sustainable consciousness has become intertwined with daily life and sound business. In recent years, companies have adopted sustainability in their corporate strategies.

WHAT IS GREEN HRM?

The term Green HRM has become the buzz word within the business field at present and its significance is increasing manifold with the passage of time. This term has also its secured position as a hot topic in recent research works since 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 economical well-being of both the organization and the employees within a broader prospect.

Green HRM IS the 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).

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 that make employees of the organization green for the benefit of the individual, society, natural environment, and the business (Opatha & Arulrajah, 2014).

NEED FOR GREEN HRM

Today the need for green human resource management is important for all over the world.

The environmental awareness of each human being drives the living style and environment. The general employees are concerned in green human resource management because of its significance and need in the existing place of work. Our personal and professional lifestyle is affected due to many consequences. The corporate world is the most significant in enhancing the environmental issues and the corporate has to give clarification to this hazards. Now-a-days Organizations need green HRM for several reasons.

1. To protect the environmental aspects e.g., global warming, climate change, energy crisis, etc. so as to make work meaningful and the place of work safe & healthy within and outside the organizations.
2. To instruct, teach and encourage both financially or non-financially the employees to perform their activities in an environmentally trustworthy way.
3. To increase or improve corporate environmental performance by certain HR functions such as training, employee empowerment, and Environmental Management System (EMS) rewards.
4. To motivate employees, to become involved (employees) in corporate environmental management activities and to develop green abilities and provide employees with opportunities to be involved in corporate environmental management initiatives and efforts.
5. To provide environmentally friendly products and operations (companies face increasing pressures for eco-friendly products and operations), to manage corporate environmental programs in successful manner (without failure) and to overcome implementation challenges of corporate environmental programs.

CHALLENGES OF GREEN HRM

Human resources play very important role in managing employee from access to egress. Now the corporate are focusing on greening the business, so the Human Resource Department has the additional responsibility of 'go green' along with HR policies. Green HRM highlight certain challenges, they are:

1. It is very difficult to change the performance and activities of employees in a short duration of time.
2. To develop the culture and traditions of Green HRM in entire organization is a burdensome and long lasting process.
3. Recruitment and Sourcing of green employees with excellence talents is a challenging job.
4. All the employees are not equally goaded to contribute in the promotion of Green HRM practices in an organization.
5. It is easier said than done to measure the efficiency of green HR practices in employees' behavior.
6. Green initiatives require a lot of support and dedication not only from the Management of an organization but also from the Government.
7. In the initial stage it requires high investment and relatively slow rate of return.
8. HR professionals faced problems of being likely to provide the essential green structures, green processes, green tools, and green philosophy to make the best selection and build up the future green leaders of the organization.
9. Using green materials can lead to more expensive raw materials for manufacturers and hence more expensive products for consumers.
10. Switching to solar power will need panels to be installed at business facilities. The cost reduction in energy savings gained by going green is not always enough to offset the initial conversion costs.

GREEN HR INITIATIVES

Now-a-days Organizations across the world are incorporating and working toward implementing GHRM practices to gain competitive advantages among the corporate world. Complete adoption and integration of GHRM in business is not impossible but requires a changed approach towards the existing HR practices on part of both the management as well as employees simultaneously. A key role for HR environmental executives could 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.

Following are some of the green HRM initiatives that can be adopted by the Organizations to **GO GREEN**.

1. Paperless office

Generally the work in the office is managed on paper but, with introduction of IT, the consumption of paper has been reduced. Now-a-days E-business and learning have changed the methods and procedures at offices converting them into paperless offices. Paperless office is a work place where the use of paper is either limited or eliminated by converting important official documents and other papers into mechanized workflows. The tradition to a great extent will 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. By reducing the use of paper documentation, we can directly protect natural resources, prevent pollution, and reduce wastage of water and energy.

2. Preservation of Energy

Preservation of energy in the office has the budding for a great environmental impact. In an effort to provide more efficient and eco-friendly services, offices around the world have implemented several energy conservation initiatives to reduce the environmental impact. The HR department at the upper limb of Sky has started an operation where the employees are asked to turn off PCs, TVs, and lights when leaving, to use 100% renewable energy. Organizations are also promoting the extensive use of energy star rated light bulbs and fixtures which undoubtedly consumes at least two-thirds less energy than regular ones.

3. Green printing

Printing papers leads to increased usage of paper, toner wastage and carbon dioxide discharge. Organizations are now adopting “pre-ton” saver, a software which can reduce paper demand by 20% and toner and ink demand by 50% without degrading the quality of output image or printout.

4. Green Building

The organizations around the world are significantly opting for green building as their workplace and offices as a substitute to traditional offices. The phenomenon is quite trend setting as Green buildings fulfill certain criterion for reducing the exploitation of natural resources that are utilized in their construction. Furthermore, green buildings include some enhanced features related to green practices such as energy efficiency, renewable energy, and storm water management.

5. Save water

Wastage of water in manufacturing processes and in watering the company’s lawns should be totally eliminated. Water wastage due to leakage in sinks and toilets must be carefully monitored.

6. Recycling and waste disposal

Recycling is the method of processing used up materials (waste) into new and useful products.

Recycling reduces the use of raw materials that would have been otherwise used to produce new products. Therefore, this technique saves energy and reduces the amount of waste that is thrown into the dustbins, thus making the environment cleaner and the air fresher. As a part of their green initiatives, several organizations are implementing recycling program to increase the amount of recycled products and decrease the amount of waste.

In the process, many HR professionals ascertained that green initiatives were a necessary aspect of overall Corporate Social Responsibility, now the whole corporate world is reciting the old mantra of three Rs—Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle to save the environment. Recycling of glass, paper, plastic, metal trash and manufacturing waste materials should be adopted.

7. Green Recompense

Recompense and rewards are the major HRM processes through which employees are rewarded for their performance. In the environment of Green HRM, rewards and compensation can be unspecified as prospective tools for supporting environmental activities in organizations. Initiating green rewards to departments and individuals for innovative initiatives and green contribution through reduction of wastes, green resources and energy.

8. Saving Electricity

Electricity can be saved by taking innovative initiatives by encouraging volunteering to switch off lights and fans where and whenever required and also by installing Solar panels.

CONCLUSION

Today, human resource plays a very important role in managing employee from entry to exit. Organizations should provide proper training to the employees and influence them to adopt green HRM (GHRM). No doubt there are certain barriers in the implementation of green HRM but the Organizations should still concentrate on the innovative methods to adopt Green HR and should learn from other organizations green HR initiatives adopted by them. They should focus on strengthening their employees so that they can also contribute in this regard. Green HRM can develop willingness, inspiration and commitment to employees to contribute their efforts, ideas to the greening of their organization. Thus, the Green Human Resource Management has the responsibility to create green awareness among the new talent and the existing employee working for an organization, encourage their employees for helping the organization to reduce the causes of environmental degradation through green movement, green programs and practices, retain the resources for future generation.

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