



Green Human Resource Management: An evolving tool for sustainable development

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Abstract

The paper focuses on integrating the environmental aspect with Human Resource Management practices. Development is something that every business strives for but in recent times of pandemic, when uncertainty plays around, initiatives that yield sustainable results must be practiced. Environmental Management (EM) is one of the crucial tasks for all business to undertake along with the usual business practices. This paper contributes in identifying the different GHRM (Green Human Resource Management) practices and then analysing it as a tool for sustainable development. For this, a conceptual research has been conducted and secondary data has been collected and analysed. Finding of the research is that there are five Green HRM practices i.e. Green Recruitment and selection, Green Training, Green Performance Management, Green Pay and Reward and Green involvement which when implemented in an organization can lead to sustainable development.

Keywords: Green Human Resource Management, Green HRM practices, sustainable development.

1. Introduction

The drastic climate change has led organizations to constantly compel their workforce to bring their innovative green initiatives in the spotlight and achieve the sustainable development goals propagated by United Nations. In recent years, organizations have become aware of Environmental Management and consider it the need of the hour. Resources are limited, and an organization's processes are eternal; hence, an organization's realization about the ill impact of its activities and practices over the environment is called "Greening of Management". Efforts and initiatives are being taken to narrow down the ill effects of the activities and processes undertaken by organizations

on the environment with various motives like attaining competitive advantage over their competitors, attaining goodwill, sustainable development, adapting responsible behaviour towards the environment and society etc. Consumers now demand "Green Products", and employees want to work in "Green Workplace"; hence, it becomes somewhat a compulsion for organizations to pay special attention to their impact on the environment. In an organization, almost all the departments have launched or are planning to introduce practices involving the concept of greening like Green accounting (Syamroy, 2017), Green Marketing (Vaibhav et al. 2021), Green Retailing (Sarma, 2020), Green Operation Management, Green Supply chain management, etc. As HR personnel are the link between the organization and employees and all functions related to managing the people in the organization lies in the hands of HR. They act as a gateway for the entry, maintenance and existence of the employees of the organization. Their contribution in the formulation of the strategies and policies and in implementing the same is significant. Hence, assimilating green practices with HRM to reach the entire organization at once; is known as "GREEN HRM".

2. Literature review

In recent times, conserving, protecting and taking relevant actions to preserve ecosystems has become a mandatory thing for every operating business. Organizations are now viewing "Green Human Resource Management" as an evolving area of management by integrating environmental concerns with human resource management (Ali et al. 2020). Sustainability itself applies to human resource management. Strategic HRM assumes that the human asset in the organization is sometimes being consumed and exploited instead of maintained and developed. On the other hand, practices of GHRM would help in sustainable development not only for the organization but also who are employed by them. (Renwick et al. 2012). Green HRM is an emerging tool for organizations to achieve sustainable development. A development that stays for long and benefits the organization in the long run. The companies should work on the Green employer branding which projects the image and reputation of the company towards environmental management. It is likely for the job applicants to join the company that shares the same values as the applicant carries. So, the chances of an applicant to apply and join the company will be higher, if both the company and the candidate share the same environmental values. This is evident from a report by GlobalScan 2003 which stated that one-third of students (68%) agreed that while choosing a company to work, they would look for a company with a social and environmental reputation more than the salary offered by the company. The companies should not only focus on improving the green reputation of their company but also put efforts in building and raising trust about their sustainable performance among the employees and people. A survey from GlobalScan and GRI which included 1000 people from 27 countries, including India, each with the agenda to indicate the agreeableness of the people on how honest and truthful companies of their respective countries have been about their environmental and social performance. The results showed that 70% of the population in India in 2020 agreed that the companies communicate honestly about their sustainable performance which was only 59% in 2016 making India top 3 countries with 73% people trusting the companies with their sustainable performance (GlobalScan, 2020). Dzhengiz & Niesten (2019) mentioned that Green HRM practices like formulation the job

description which are inclined to environmental protection, focus on green competences ,experiences in implementation of projects related to ecology while recruitment and selecting candidates for the organization.

Benevene & Bunomo (2020) mentioned in their study that according to publication of United Nation’s Brundtland report which was also called as Our Common Future in late 1980’s. The report threw light on the need for sustainable development which is defined as “a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” after this the concept of organizational sustainability emerged. **Iqbal (2018)** posits environmental sustainability to be the top most concern for the organization as the business market conditions are focused on Environmental Sustainability. Integration of Employee Green Behaviour, Green Human Resource Management and Environment Sustainability gives a new way to achieve sustainability

3. Objective

1. To identify the relation between Green HRM and sustainable development.
2. To study the concept of GHRM.
3. To identify the common GHRM practices for sustainable development used in organization

4. Methodology

A conceptual research has been conducted with the recent and relative literature on Green Human Resource Management. Secondary data has been used in this study. The research papers were collected from different databases and thoroughly analysed by both the authors. The data has been collected from different research papers, articles, magazines etc., ranging from 2015-2021. The collected data are mostly from published in international journals. The collected data is from period of 7 years (2015-2021). The data was rigorously reviewed and analysed and conclusions have been drawn.

5. Green HRM

Green Human Resources Management (GHRM) can be defined as the set of policies, practices, and systems that stimulate a green behaviour of a company’s employees in order to create an environmentally sensitive, resource efficient and socially responsible workplace and overall organization (**Joyce & Vijay, 2021**). **Jalaja (2018)** “Green HRM has been defined 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.” (**Swarnalatha, 2020**) “Green HR deals with practicing all HR activities with environment-friendly concerns. This, in turn, helps in the sustainability of businesses as well as the employees. Nevertheless, there is a wide crack between the HRM and environmental facets.” According to (**Lather & Goyal, 2017**), companies must focus on the

implementation of the Environment Management employees to indulge in environment-based endeavours. This is important because employees are known as the actual bearer of any such initiative taken by the organization. So, when HRM practices are to be practiced in the workplace, it is essential to know employee motivation towards environmental initiatives. **Jia et al. (2018)** posits that implementation of Green HRM practices falls in the hands of the HR personnel. The authors prescribed the following ways in their study in which HR practices can be aligned with Greening the organization 1)The company must invest in issues related to the environment to attract green-minded job seekers and support green enthusiasm and green creativity of employees.2) Companies must include green strategies in their existing HR strategies like green training and development, green pay and rewards, green recruitment, develop green competitiveness 3)Companies must use their leadership style to inspire promote the green passion of employees. **Yulia et al. (2105)** found that various other studies define technology usage in HRM as Green HRM. He also mentioned that the application of technology into HR practices undoubtedly had a visible positive impact on managing people and increased HR practices' efficiency.



6. Conceptual framework.



Figure 1. Green HRM practices.

7. Green HRM and sustainability

(Das & Singh, 2017) found in his study that organization implements GHRM practices with a motive to promote sustainability. But it could be done with a serious approach while implementing those practices, communicating them with the employees, employee and stakeholder's encouragement and participation is also very essential. Merging the HRM functions like recruitment and selection, Performance and compensation management, employee participation with greening the management could be a way to achieve sustainable development. For protecting the environment new approaches has to be involved. GHRM when involved modifies HRM culture, strategies, structure and organizational policies. So, it can be concluded that GHRM contributes to the sustainable development of the organization (Amjad et al. 2021). Organizational and environmental sustainability is the end product of GHRM practices when implemented. In their study suggested that government should inculcate GHRM in their vision and policies so that it could be communicated well to the employees who are working in public sector because for mainting sustainablility in growth and performance organziations have to implement greening of their business processes which includes GHRM as well (Qureshi et al. 2020). Bombiak et,al.,(2018)In the findings of the study discussed that as there are no assessment, measurement or reporting of Green HRM practices in the organization so, it effects the implication of the same in the organization which in turn impact the sustainability of the company in relation to environment. The author stated the demand of green personnel reporting which aims at promoting good HR practices.

Company's name	Environmental initiatives	Purpose
1. ITC	1.“Ozone treated elemental chlorine free technology” 2.EHS(Environment, Health, Safety) programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India's first, Premium Business paper, eco-friendly and multipurpose paper for home and office use. Programme dedicated to environmental protection.
2.WIPRO Tech.	1. “EcoEye” 2. “Greenleaf”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To become carbon neutral, water positive, establishing new standards for waste recycle, achieve bio-diversity footprint, sustainability checks, reduce carbon footprints and manage climate change. Intelligent Automated Power Management- to identify power savings, measuring carbon reductions and implementation of Green Goals.
3.ONGC	1. “Harit Moksha”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green cremation system to reduce air and river pollution and also saving wood up to 75%, reducing global warming and also making cremation tradition economical for the weaker section.
4.TATA MOTORS	1. “Vasundhara”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the green cover by planting approx. 1,24,584 saplings and ensuring their survival . Planting a sapling on every

	2. “Go Green”	commercial car sale and servicing requested by any new customer in any station with TATA motor’s dealership.
5. IndusInd Bank	1. “Hum or Hriyali”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced Solar- powered ATM expecting to save energy and reduce carbon emission.
6.SBI	1. “Green Banking Policy”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To mitigate global warming and climate change. Reduce carbon footprint. Employing energy efficient measures. Etc,
7. Google	1. e- Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracting and selecting candidates for recruitment through e-platforms to reduce environmental hazardous for offline recruiting.

Fig 2 The list of some Indian companies conducting environmental initiatives.

8.Green HRM Practices

8.1. Green recruitment and selection

“Green recruitment and selection refers to the procedure of hiring people having behavior, Knowledge and skills of environment management systems in the organization.” In this process of green recruitment and Selection Company’s invite applications through online mode for ex- emails, global talent pool, and online applications forms. Telephonic interviews and video conferencing could be conducted so that travel related environmental hazards could be reduced. As we know, that recruitment means attracting a pool of applicants to the available job vacancies, so, as far as green recruitment and selection is concerned, it could be used to attract candidates who are willing to preserve the environment and also possess environmental knowledge and skills i.e. green knowledge and green skills. If a candidate with green knowledge and skills is recruited, it becomes easier for the company to move forward with sustainable processes as the candidates are already well versed with fundamentals of environmental terms like recycling, conservation and creation of a logical world. (Mwita & Kinemo , 2018)

There are some companies who apply green criteria when they select candidates whereas many do not. In all the cases, if a company wants to project its environmental values and orientation then the company can peg at practicing GRS. Earlier, studies have stated that there are four mediators that play an important role in a company's corporate environmental sustainability and perception of job seekers about organizational attractiveness. Tough,

there are five moderators like “pro-environmental attitude, yield impactful results through one’s work, environmental related standard registration and job seeker’s expertise.” (Pham & Pallie 2020)

8.2 Green training

“Green training is a process of on the-job training and further education designed to integrate the goals and objectives of environmental management, which has drawn great interest”. In recent times of pandemic, different sectors were shut down globally. Meanwhile, companies propagated a new strategy for development namely “Green Environment Performance” in this path companies inclined towards “Green training” as an approach to achieve economic sustainability and eco- friendly initiative to greening (Yafi et.al, 2021). The performance of an organization can be affected by the training and development of its employees as training sprouts and enhances knowledge and skills which an employee is needed to achieve goals and objectives of an organization (Obaid & Alias 2015). Many researches in their studies suggests that firms, now, have started providing training to their human capital as a strategic inclusion of green HR practices with eco-friendly initiatives in order to promote sustainable business solutions (Lawal & Olawoyin 2021).

8.3 Green Performance Management.

Job performance has been rigorously studied and researched in past times as a prominent subject of HRM and others. It is very important for organizations to evaluate job performance as it is directly related to the effectiveness of not only the organization but also the individuals and teams. It is also a very essential factor for sustainability and wellbeing of both organization and employees. When we talk about Job Performance of an organization, it becomes essential for them to improve their employees’s job performance. In the same way, Green Performance Management is an important and evolving concept when GHRM and Corporate Environmental Management (CEM) is thought of (Arulrajah et.al, 2016). The most vital performance management’s aspect is performance appraisal. For continuous improvements in organization’s environmental outcomes effective performance appraisal is provided to meet the criteria of reliability, fairness and validity. Further researches could be done on green performance appraisal focusing on environmental issues and responsibilities, communicating environmental policies, green information system and audits. (Ahmed, 2015).

8.4 Green Employee Engagement.

Nowadays, green jobs are created which focus on sustainability and job opportunities related to the environment. Employee engagement is very important for environmental sustainability for an organization. The author mentioned that these green employee engagement practices can be “ Involvement of employees in green schemes and problem solving circles, Training union representatives on environmental management aspects, encouraging people to use green transportation systems, sharing on environmental initiatives or programs etc”. Human Resource Management plays a primary role in executing Green practices and emphasizes the contribution of HRM in Green Employee Engagement. He further concludes that GHRM is useful in enhancing employee engagement level (Welmilla &

Ranasinghe 2020). There are some ways suggested by **Employee Engagement and Going Green (2021)** in engaging employees in going green and they can be assigning major projects like “going carbon neutral or environmental auditing to the most senior operations person, giving employees company time to participate in volunteer projects. Buy energy efficient equipment or lights; Offer employees flexible work hours or mobile work options, create policies and codes of conduct that support your goals and some others' '.

8.5 Green Pay and reward

Green pay and reward is a strategy of providing financial and non-financial rewards to attract, retain and motivate employees, so that they can contribute to environmental goals. Combination of both is considered to be the most effective. Different green travel benefits such as rewarding employee’s transport and travel choice that they make can be considered as non-financial rewards. Other initiatives like green recognition, promoting usage of bicycles etc. Some UK companies have introduced financial rewards to the employees so that they get motivated to preserve the environment (**Woodard & Tang, 2018**)

It was found that green reward had a small influence on sustainability of the environment. The author also suggested that firm’s should give more emphasis to practices which focus on environment sustainability (**Mandago, 2018**). In a study about reward and pay for constructing green building, the author identified rewards and compensation as a voluntary incentive and describes “rebates/fees reduction/support and eco- labelling” as different forms of reward and compensation also can be “density bonus, demonstration projects and government awards” (**Saka et. al, 2021**)

9. Conclusion

It is evident from several researchers that executing GHRM practices in organizations promotes sustainability. Some of the HRM practices mentioned above like Green Recruitment and selection, Green Pay and reward, Green Performance Management, Green Employee Engagement when implemented in the organization can lead not only to the sustainability of the organization but the environment as well. If an organization wants to keep operating for a long time, they must focus on preserving and conserving and maintaining the ecology. Green HR initiatives could be implemented to reduce the carbon footprint and reduce the hazardous impact of the operations of the firm, not only this but, if GRHM practices are executed in the firm, it could lead to profitability and gaining a competitive edge over the competitors. GHRM is one of the most researched areas and is a promising field of research for future researchers.

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