



GREEN HRM: NEED OF THE HOUR

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Abstract

Green Human Resource management has its basis on Green movement related to The Protection of Environment and saving the Planet from various disasters. The “Magna Carta” on Human Environment was declared in the first United Nation’s (International) Conference on Human Environment held in June 1972 in Stockholm declared that, to defend & improve the human environment for present and future generation has become an imperative goal for mankind. Green HRM is an emerging trend in the field of management. It describes the integration of environment friendly practices with HR policies of an organization in order to attain sustainable environment and long- lasting healthy future of organization, industry and hence, economy. The color green stands for peace, friendliness, growth, happiness, life and these days fashion too. Therefore, organizations are now increasingly comprehending the importance and need of going green with respect to their polices, processes and practices. Green HRM becomes necessitated in order to cater environment friendly products and operations, to manage corporate environmental programs successfully and to overcome implementation challenges of corporate and environmental programs (Milliman and Clair, 1996).

Present research paper tries to understand the concept of Green and Green HRM, its importance, advantages and limitations for an organization that wish to survive in this modern era with a view of sustainability. Also, it is hoped that this paper presents some utility for developing interests, among potential students, research scholars and academicians, and gaining theoretical understanding and knowledge of green HRM.

Keywords: *Green HRM, Green Management, Green HR, Environment Friendly Practices.*

INTRODUCTION

Ecological imbalances and biodiversity issues are increasing day by day. Many scientists and researchers are discussing national issues like carbon credits, global warming and climate changes resulting into natural calamities and disasters in national and international conferences. Excess utilization of natural resources as raw materials by factories, industries and other commercial organizations has led to increase in environmental pollution and there is also huge pressure on these resources of our Earth to fulfill requirements of coming generations. In the light of these issues, companies are becoming aware of their responsibility towards the society from where they get resources. The technical term for this is Corporate Social Responsibility. CSR in organizations is practiced by the HR department. One of the various methods to practice CSR in organization that is increasingly coming into focus is Environment Management / Green Management. The integration of green practices with HR policies for contributing in development of a culture of sustainability is called Green HRM. Further explained are some concepts of Green HRM.

GREEN

The color green stands for peace, friendliness, growth, happiness, life and these days fashion too. Therefore, organizations now increasingly comprehend the importance and need of going green with respect to their policies, processes and practices. The New Oxford Thesaurus 2000 presents several other meanings such as verdant, eco-friendly, unripe, unseasoned, and inexperienced and naïve. In terms of organization, greening is sheltering the natural resources, nurturing the natural habitat, detracting the pollution of the atmosphere and engenders greenery.

GREEN MANAGEMENT

According to Lee (2009), “Green Management is defined as the method whereby organization manages the environment by developing environmental management strategies”. Green Management is the process of



managing all activities and resources of organization keeping concern of the environment and sustainable living. It is pursuing all those activities related to business which lead to development and preservation of a green earth. Green management is perceived differently in the different parts of the globe. In developed countries, green management is to a certain degree a contemporary ideology which has found its niche in vital functions of the organization whereas in developing countries green management is in its inception stage and has lots of scope and enrichment opportunities.



HRM

According to flippo, “HRM is planning; organizing, staffing, directing and controlling of the procurement, development, compensation, integration, maintenance and reproduction of human resource to the end that individual, organizational and societal objectives are accomplished. HRM is administering the human resource from recruitment to retirement, achieving objectives of the organization for which it is established and fulfilling the responsibility of society and the environment.

GREEN HRM

Green HRM refers to all tasks and duties involved in evolving, pursuing and prolongation of a system those targets at making human resource of an organization environment conscious in their private and professional lives. Green HRM means outlining the strategies for awareness of green practices in order to promote and prolong sustainable business activities which in turn help organizations to conduct in an environment friendly manner. So, green HRM includes two necessary facets: environment conducive HR practices and nurturing of knowledge capital.

GREEN HR

According to Mandip (2012), “green HR refers to using every employee interface to promote sustainable practices and supplement employee responsiveness and commitments on the problems of sustainability.” Shaikh(2010) confirmed that green HR plays important role in organizations to support the environment connected problems by accepting it and in management viewpoint HR policies and practices, training people and implementation of rules linked to environmental protection. Thus, green HR is an employee which is well aware about environment friendly activities, committed to solving environmental issues by practicing green habits both in his personal and professional lives.





OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to realize the significance, benefits and challenges or limitations Green Human Resource Management offers to the contemporary biz world.

Following are the secondary objectives of this study:

- To throw light on the concept of green HRM.
- To facilitate or support further research in the field.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A key finding of “The Greening HR Survey” indicates that 54% organizations, incorporated environmental management in their business operations, 74% used web to reduce travel, 76% promote reduction of paper use & 60% implement wellness/fitness programs for employees. A report published in DNA paper on March 27, 2010. “Corporations are going the green mile, points out that number of consultancy and corporate taking initiatives on Green HR and Green Movement e.g. Gensol Consultants (P) Ltd., the Hyatt Regency, id 8 Media Solutions adopted Green lifestyle. Lastly, the giant Pepsico has reduced its water use by 15%. It concludes to say that HR has vital role in pursuit of green business practices, role in saving the planet, recruiting, training and development of a green workforce and enforcement of environment friendly green practices and amendments in environment unfriendly behaviors.

Green management refers to the management of corporate interaction with, and impact upon, the environment (Lee and Ball, 2003), and it has gone beyond regulatory compliance and needs to include conceptual tools such as pollution prevention, product stewardship and corporate social responsibility (Hart, 2005; Pullman et al., 2009; Siegel, 2009). Application of new technology could improve the environmental decline by developing, for example, the biotech products and by searching for alternative energy to reduce the use of finite natural resources. Therefore, organizations should put more effort into the research on new technology to minimize the impacts of environmental destruction by creating products that are harmless and less pollution to environment (Liu, 2010; Ozen and Ksku, 2008). Environment friendly HR processes gives better efficiency, minimized costs and manage to develop and nurture an environment of engaged employees helping organization to operate in an environment friendly and sustainable manner.

“Green” or “greening” has at least four meanings in the context of managing people at work / human resource management:

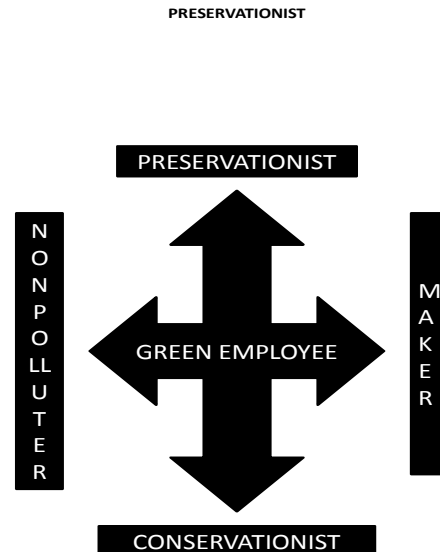
1. *Preservation of the natural environment*: all the things in the world which are neither caused nor controlled by human beings and they include land, forests, plants, animals, and other natural phenomena are referred to as the natural environment. To keep it in its original form and protect it from harm, loss, or negative change.
2. *Conservation of the natural environment*: to be very careful in the way of using it in order to let it last as long as possible, to use it at the minimum level so that future generations will be able to utilize it.
3. *Avoidance or minimization of environmental pollution*: to stop contaminating the water, air, atmosphere, etc. through unpleasant and poisonous substances and wastes. To guard against outcomes that will ultimately endanger the planet/earth where humans and non-humans are living.
4. *Generation of gardens and looking-like natural places*: to create parks and places which have plants, trees, and grasses.

Thus, it is possible to argue that an employee who may be manager or non- manager is supposed to perform four roles for the purpose of becoming a green employee.

1. *Preservationist*: He does keeping the natural environment in its original form and protecting it from harm, loss or negative change.
2. *Conservationist*: He becomes very careful in the way of using the natural environment in order to let it last as long as possible.



3. *Non-polluter*: He does preventing from contaminating water, air and atmosphere etc. through unpleasant and poisonous substances and waste.
4. *Maker*: He does creating gardens and looking like natural places.



Instead of focusing on individual HR practices that are used independently or in isolation, SHRM researchers look more broadly at bundles of HR practices or HR systems that are implemented in combination (Paawe and Boselie, 2003; 2005). Delery and Shaw (2001) argued there is a general agreement that “(1) human capital can be a source of competitive advantage, (2) that HRM practices are the most direct influence on the human capital of a firm, and (3) that the complex nature of a coherent HRM system of practices can enhance the inimitability of the system” (p 166). Studies show that as companies begin recycling, reusing, refurbishing their products and upgrade to energy-efficient production systems that save energy or reduce wastage of energy, it becomes quite easier for them to achieve many indirect benefits of going green. Currently, many corporations are implementing a proactive, strategic tool known as an EMS to gain competitive advantage (Daily and Huang, 2001). This system provides a structure that allows management of the firms the ability to better control the firm’s environmental impacts (Barnes, 1996; Florida and Davison, 2001). An EMS includes commitment and policy, planning, implementation, measurement and evaluation, review and improvement (Hersey, 1998). Callenbach et al. (1993) argued that in order to carry out green management, employee must be inspired, empowered and environmentally aware of greening to be successful. On the other hand, to effectively implement green management initiatives and fostering environmental innovations, corporations require a high level of technical and management skills (Callenbach et al., 1993; Renwick et al., 2008). Hence, this paper argues that to effectively implement green management initiatives through the implementation of EMS requires strategic implementation of HR systems that fit with organization’s culture and long-term goals.

It has been found out in various researches that HR department in many companies and even some other departments are increasingly greening their processes to gain Competitive Advantage over others. Dr. Professor Asha Nagendra and Sugandha Kaushal (2014) in their paper named “reducing carbon footprint through green HRM” explained the activities practiced by different companies HR departments for reducing carbon footprints.



COMPANY NAME	GREEN PRACTICE	IMPACT
INFOSYS	New ERP system and Private cloud implementation Smart meters	85% reduction in energy consumption 50% reduction in lighting consumption
NOKIA	Green operations and facilities Shifting from Air to Ocean transport Introduced energy efficient chargers(AC-20 & AC- 50)	Reduction in volatile organic compound by 40% 80% reduction in Carbon dioxide Reduction in no load consumption by 73%
ITC	Manufacturing & Freight Management Waste Management Water Management	Reduction in Carbon dioxide from 15,63,526 ton to 14,74,558 ton 99.8% waste is recycled Fresh water intake reduced from 3645 L/unit to .3495 L/unit
LUFTHANSA GROUP	Active noise production eFLY campaign Airport eMOVE	Reduction of 18,000 ton of carbon dioxide per year. Two million paper were saved Reduction in carbon dioxide and noise emission
COCA- COLA	Up gradation of 30 air handlers Energy management devices	Reduction of carbon dioxide by 650 metric ton Reduction of 3.1 million metric ton of carbon dioxide

SIGNIFICANCE OF GREEN HRM

Green HRM is increasingly coming into light as an outcome of developing concern over environmental issues and ill- effects of various enterprise practices on the natural habitat. Companies are making themselves competent enough to boost up their image, gear up employee morale and drastically reduce costs. Green HRM, hence, is important for the following:

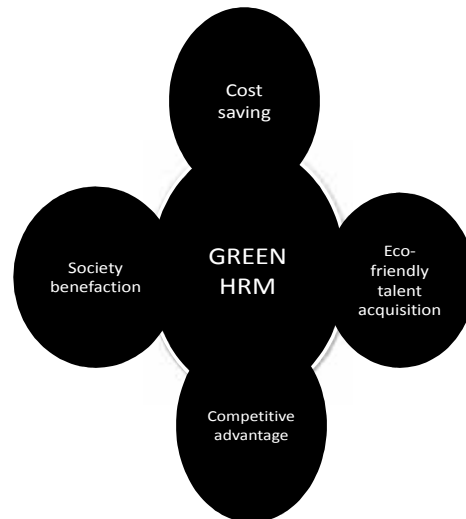
Cost Savings: Green HRM helps in reducing cost by the use of energy efficient electrical appliances such as 5- star air conditioners, energy efficient monitors, CFLs and LEDs light bulbs, and recycling and reusing products. For example, using refill pouches of hand wash instead of using soaps and bottles.

Competitive Advantage: Green HRM helps in gaining competitive edge by green brand building (creating brand as an environment friendly organization), creating more satisfied and loyal employee base and customer market by implementing green strategies.

Eco- Friendly Talent: Green HRM attracts employees who are preservationists and conservationists and wish to work in a sustainable environment. This helps in the fulfillment of self- actualization needs of such employees.



Green HRM also develops a learning environment to educate HR on efficient green practices to be utilized in their professional as well as personal lives.



Society Benefaction: Green HRM supports society augmentation by evolving more green jobs like Green HR manager, green intrapreneurs, green IT professionals(green software and hardware developers), green engineers etc. , promoting greenery by developing parks and planting trees, reducing carbon credits, minimizing environmental pollution and promoting green infrastructure.

ADVANTAGES OR BENEFITS OF GREEN HRM

Green HRM has its prime importance in the achievement of broader objectives such as cost saving, corporate social responsibility, talent acquisition and management and gaining advantage over the competition. It further has the following benefits:

- It increases employee morale.
- It helps in employee retention and reduces labor turnover.
- It provides lucrative opportunities for quality human talent.
- It helps in building company image to attract good human resource.
- Improves brand image of the company in the market.
- It can also be used as a marketing strategy.
- It improves the quality of the overall organization both internal and external.
- It improves relationship of the company with its stakeholders- customers, suppliers, vendors, shareholders, government agencies, employees and the media.
- It reduces the overall cost of the company as costs are largely influenced by the size of the company and steps taken to make it environment friendly.
- It provides competitive advantage to the company in industry as well as the market.
- With increasing global issues, many organizations are becoming vigilant of their activities and their impact over the environment.
- Green management practices are also beneficial to the companies as it helps to save money and reduces ill- effects on the environment, hence avoiding much government interventions.
- It stimulates innovation facilitating growth, improvement in quality and enhancement of procedures and methods.
- It helps in efficient use of resources and manages risks more effectually.
- It develops green learning environment in the organization.



- It leads to refinement of employee behavior in order to develop eco- friendly habits in their private and professional lives.
- It serves as a helping hand in realization of the self- actualization needs of an employee.
- It helps in generation of employment opportunities.
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CHALLENGES OR LIMITATIONS TO GREEN HRM

Apart from the above mentioned advantages or benefits, green HRM faces certain challenges. The challenges or limitations of Green HRM are as follows:

- It is difficult to alter the behavior of employees in a short span of time.
- Not every employee is equally motivated to participate in the promotion of Green HRM practices in the organization.
- Developing the culture of Green HRM in entire organization is a cumbersome and lingering process.
- It requires high investment at initial stage and comparatively slow rate of return.
- Sourcing and recruitment of green employees with quality talents is a challenging task.
- It is difficult to measure the effectiveness of green HR practices in employees' behavior.
- HR professionals are faced with being expected to provide the essential green structures, green processes, green tools, and green thinking to make the best selection and develop the future green leaders of the organization.

CONCLUSION

Green HRM practices enable productive use of organization's space and infrastructure. It improves management and employees and employee- employee relationships by sharing of resources and responsibility to manage and develop green practices to inculcate courtesy of sustainability. It helps in minimizing environmental pollution by encouraging practices like car- pooling, video conferencing, e- recruitments, use of CFC- free air fresheners, recycling, online training programs, etc. Green HRM is not only a part of HRM but it provides a new dimension to entire organization. Green HR efforts have most importantly focused on increasing KSA, cut down and knock out environmental havoc and restoring HR product tools and procedures. Environment friendly HR processes give better efficiency, minimize costs and manage to develop and nurture a culture of engaged employee helping organization to operate in a sustainable manner. To conclude, Green HRM is the need of the hour, requirement of this century to outlast in the contemporary biz world by having an edge over the competitors, developing distinct green image in the market, conforming corporate social responsibility and accomplishing the motives of being an entrepreneur by generation of employment opportunities for talented eco- friendly manpower.

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