

## Green HRM: Concept and Practices

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### Abstract

The topic of environmental sustainability is capturing increased attention among the corporate world. Green management initiatives have become an important factor in forward-thinking businesses all around the world. In the present scenario, corporates have become more aware about the emerging importance of integrating environmental preservice and Human Resource Management. Regardless of the significance to managers, employees, clients and different stake holders, there are not many research works that consider the role of human resource management systems in organizations endeavouring to accomplish environmental sustainability, that is, Green Human Resource Management Practices. The idea of Green HRM depends up on the initiatives attempted with the target of securing the earth and to spare out the compelling force of nature from the common and man-made fiascos in future. Green HRM tries to handle the Human Resource practices which are environment friendly and advance the economical utilization of resources in the organization. The motivation behind the thought of becoming environmentally friendly is to utilize the things and strategies that would not contrarily affect the earth and environment through contamination or exhausting characteristics. Additionally, it results into diminished costs, high proficiency, and better regulation of workforce. This thusly, help business organizations to chop down employee carbon footsteps by the methods of video-conferencing, sharing of vehicles, tele-communication, documenting electronically, virtual meetings, reusing materials, online training, and so on. The nurturing results of Green HRM can bring down operational expenses and to give power to industry individuals to end up increasingly aware of their business and communal responsibilities in a better way. Likewise, Green initiatives inside HRM frames some portion of more extensive projects of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility).

This paper deals with the concept of Green HRM, benefits and various Green HR initiatives and practices which leads to Green HRM at workplace.

**Keywords:** Green HRM; Sustainability; Corporate Social Responsibility.

### Introduction

The word 'Sustainable' is tied in with addressing the necessities of individuals today without trading off the capacity of future ages to address their very own issues. Organizations are presently running on a concept to build up an incredible social still and green sense of responsibility. In

all sense, it is not just good but also considered as an organisational vision. They are focusing on human resource functions which will end up being the driver of environmental sustainability inside the organization by adjusting its practices and approaches to sustainable goals which mirrors an eco-focus. The human resource techniques must motivate the wish of the human resource team and other employees alongside adjusting the organization's strategies, qualities, values and culture. To put it as it is, 'making a green world where buyers and employees constrain change'. Or, the human resource function can be renamed as "People and Society".

Fundamentally, Green HRM is the usage of HRM policies to promote the sustainable utilization of resources inside business organization, and in

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addition, promotes the reason for environmental sustainability. It incorporates human resource initiatives to completely support sustainable practices and increase employee awareness and responsibilities on the issues of sustainability. Green HR comprises mainly environmentally friendly human resource practices and the safeguarding of knowledge capital. It includes, undertaking environment friendly initiatives, bringing about higher productivity; bring down expenses, and much better employee engagement and retention which in the long run help organisation to decrease carbon footprints. On other hand, Green HR strategies and practices centre on group and individual abilities to achieve green behaviour. Such strategies and practices are decisive on building up an environmental business culture. The administration initiatives argued that Environmental Management System (EMS) can be adequately actualized just if the organizations are having the perfect individuals with the correct skills and competencies (Daily and Huang 2001), as the usage of these initiatives requires a high level of specialized and worth management skills among employees (Callenbach et. al., 1993). Accordingly, the Green HR initiatives include the carrying out of recruitment and determination practices, pay performance based appraisal systems, and furthermore the training programs went for mounting the employees environmental awareness. Regardless of the fact that the organizations these days are buckling down on product innovation for environmental sustainability, yet the issue of how an individual organization could accomplish sustainability from the green management movement is as yet obscure. Consequently, this study attempts to detail the HR practices connected with green HRM based on available literature.

### **Theoretical Background of Green HRM**

Green HRM is in relation to the wide deployment of the concept of sustainability to organization and its workforce. It includes actions determined on increasing efficiency in the processes alongside environmental sustainability, declining and dispensing with environmental waste, and revamping HR products, administrations practices, services, and strategies and in this way bringing about more outstanding effectiveness and lower costs.

The notion of Green HRM has come to existence with the introduction of Green Movement. Green Movement was a political movement, in which it upholds four important principles:

Environmentalism, Sustainability, Non-violence and Social justice. The followers of the Green Movement are commonly called as "Greens", they stick on to Green Ideologies and share many ideas regarding environmental preservation, ecology, environmental sustainability and peace movements. With the rising awareness of the Green Movement across the globe, researchers from assorted areas such as marketing, finance, supply-chain management and Human Resource Management also started to analyze how managerial practices in these areas can put in to environmental sustainability and green management goals. Already at present, the UN Global Compact in collaboration with several educational institutions has developed the (PRME) Principles for Responsible Management Education with the aim of cheering scholars and managers to jointly coordinate on budding new knowledge to promote environmental accountability. In 2000 Dunphy, Benveniste, Griffiths and Sutton correlated the execution of ecological sustainability with human sustainability. The authors extracted out that the training and investment in human resources goes hand in hand along with the ecological sustainability. Presently, many corporations are implementing an optimistic and strategic tool commonly known as Environment Management System to gain competitive advantage (Daily and Huang, 2001). This system provides a clear cut configuration that allows a firm's ability to enhance the control system and the environmental impact.

(Barnes, 1996; Florida and Davison, 2001). However, the element of worker involvement and commitment in EMS implementation has one of the most elementary influences on its effectiveness and success. Sudin (2011) discussed the optimistic effects of the types of green intellectual capital on corporate environment citizenship, which leads to competitive advantage of firms. Thus, there is a vital need for redefining HR role from HR executives to environmental executives who in turn, achieves employee support in implementing environmental policies (Wehrmeyer and Parker, 1996).

The HR practices are persistent on escalating the efficiency within the processes along with environmental sustainability, revamping HR products and services, tools, procedures, reducing and eliminating environmental waste and thereby resulting in greater efficiency and lower costs. The practices included: online training, job sharing, ride sharing, teleconferencing and virtual interviews, recycling, electronic filing, telecommuting, and budding more energy conserving office spaces.

## Objectives of the Study

The paper has two objectives:

- i. To detail the concept of green HR.
- ii. To examine the practices involved in Green HR

## Research Methodology

This paper follows a literature review approach indicating significant works on Green HRM. It is also integrating environmental management and HRM and explaining the green HR practices which are being followed. Literature review is followed as it enables to organize research and to build a trustworthy knowledge base in this field. The following HR practices namely green hiring, green performance management, green training, green rewards, green employee involvement, green employee relations, green building, energy conservation and 3R's are being discussed.

### Literature review

#### *Green hiring*

Induction programs are must for new employees to ensure that they make out and approach their corporate environmental culture in a considerable way. Therefore sustainable development matters must be incorporated into the recruitment process. This involves monitoring and maintaining the long-term proficiency requirements for the organization, providing new employees with insight into sustainable development policies and commitments, using recruitment channel which support all the classes of people. For this, the company should reveal in its job descriptions, the value of sustainability and the agenda should evidently mention this and also the company's website and other research tools accessible for candidate should clearly sketch its greening endeavours. Finally the interview questions should be framed to flush out prospective compatibility with the company's green goals.

#### *Green Performance Management System (GPMS)*

By means of performance management (PM) and environmental management (EM), it presents the challenges of how to evaluate environmental performance standards across different units of the firm and by this means gaining useful data on the environmental performance of managers. One way

in which Performance Management systems can be successfully implemented in an organization is by tying up the performance evaluations to the job descriptions mentioning the specific green goals and tasks. For example, Performance Appraisal (PA) can wrap topics such as environmental incidents, usage of environmental responsibilities, reducing carbon emissions and the communication of environmental concerns and policy. HR systems such as e-HR can be introduced which will be able to help management and employees track their own carbon emissions. Issues involved in environmental Performance Appraisal's should be taken care by the managers. They should be held liable, so that they familiarize themselves with compliance issues. It is suggested that, if environmental criterion are integrated with the process of staff appraisal, then the learning culture in EM can be expectant. Also the managers can ask their employees to bring precise green ideas or plans pertaining to their individual jobs in order to their performance evaluation meetings. These ideas can be brought collectively to include them into the objectives/plans for the forthcoming year. Achieving these objectives would be the basis of performance evaluation.

#### *Green Training and Development*

The next major spot to be focused on is employee training and development. Those programmes should consist of social and environmental issues at all levels, i.e., from technical health and safety considerations on the low floor, to strategic sustainability issues at executive management and board level on the top floor. They should try to wrap the full series of social, environmental and economic risks and opportunities concerned with the business and the means or ways to recognize and solve them. The main focal point should be on developing competencies for different business functions at different levels of seniority. Green induction programs for the newly hired employees should be a crucial part of the training and development process. They should notify their employees about the green procedures and policies practised in the company including the vision/mission statement of the company, the sustainability oriented benefits, company-wide initiatives including reducing greenhouse gases, creating green products etc. Training is a key course to manage waste. It occurs all through the organizations and training teams of front-line employees have to put up a waste analysis of

their work areas. Such employees are considered as idyllic staff to spot and reduce waste as they are near to it, but they must be well-informed on how to assemble the relevant data. One of the best examples of company practising in training and development in EM in the U.S. comes from Allied Signal Inc., which included a Total Waste Minimization (TWM) component into their training. Training methods like Job rotation provides a useful insight into guide green executives or future board members in EM, and it is seen as a decisive part of successful environmental programme. A number of steps may be used to launch an environmental training system, such as an audit of existing training system resources and activities, forming a corporate environmental committee, a job analysis producing a job description, and environmental responsiveness as part of induction/orientation training chiefly for new employees, or to exercise a performance management system to keep an eye on and reconsider performance on productivity, quality, wastage and accidents. This may be followed by training to do the job, and an assessment of the attitudes, knowledge and skills staff may need for future roles. The timing or sequencing of training then needs to be assessed, as it could be that the firm can build it into their existing terms, with organizations needing to assess and review the success of the training they have provided.

Issues on waste management, transport and air emissions and a argument of treating waste and ground water, communications, awareness-raising and risk management are mostly solved by subsequent procedures. It is recommended to have "green teams" in each department, in order to offer general awareness and specific training in EM intended to augment personal ownership and budge staff to taking personal action. Some other alternative ideas comprise bringing in general interest speakers like local contractors who are functioning on green buildings, recycling coordinators or experts on alternative transportation, reducing greenhouse gases, creating green products etc. The companies can also subscribe to popular industry based sustainability journals to keep informed the employees about the most recent sustainability trends. One of the folks in the office can be assigned to answer daily sustainability questions like, what can be recycled, green office provisions, using two sided printing etc. In addition to that, to gauge the training required in environmental management, a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) can be done in terms of assessing what environmental awareness and skills do the staff needs.

### *Green Employee Involvement (EI) and Participation (EP)*

An essential way in which employee involvement and commitment can be encouraged within the organization is to seek out help from entrepreneurs within the company who are socially or ecologically oriented mainly identified as eco-intrapreneurs. They have the unusual talent to systematize existing financial, human resources and natural resources in a mode that it adds a value to the company's products or services where it wasn't there beforehand. Apart from this employee involvement (EI) teams in EM can incise waste and can manage such difficult work well; and using them, helps in building employee pride and commitment in their work. EI teams can not only bring about a transformation in how work are performed, but also progress worker health and safety too. American Airlines state that their flight attendants recycle over 616,000/- pounds of aluminium cans, earning at least \$40,000/- to them in one year, and Dow Chemicals Waste Reduction (WRAP) programme was conducted as a competition for all employees to engage with, and from which Dow claims a Return On Investment (ROI) of 173 percent from their first year of operation. Eco-initiatives roots from creative ideas from all employees, and hence mechanisms are obligatory to involve employees in it - which take in handing a role for managers in giving employees autonomy to generate creative solutions to solve problems and make finest use of applying their skills. An EI approach in EM motivates a worker, allows them to spot problems like leakages in the process of production, and delegating responsibilities to workers is based upon team knowledge of the causes of waste and how to lessen them. The two key gains from introducing Green EI initiatives are observed to be improvements in environmental and worker health and safety, and the advancement of more knowledgeable employees and supervisors. The findings suggest that the employees are obligatory to involve in formulating environmental strategy, so that they can generate and expand their knowledge needed to the market the "green products". Organizations are cheering and serving employees to think of ideas that will reduce carbon emissions and save energy. For example, a recent HSBC initiative in the U.K. found that, benefits in carbon saving being observed to come from employee initiatives, including one where staffs at first, can bring rubbish from home and recycle it at work. The use of Employee Participation (EP) in EM has been recognized to help put off pollution from workplaces. EP contributes to getting better

environmental performance as employees own knowledge and skills that manager's be short of. There are primarily two ways in which the workers can partake on environmental projects: a suggestion programme and problem solving circle wherein the specialist staff is more caught up in project initiation while line level workers are more likely to partake in project execution. Other methods in which employees can be expectant are to pursue green commuting habits like allowing elastic work weeks, establishing a car pool-program, offering free or economical free transportation passes, adding car sharing as an employee advantage and setting up transportation savings account etc. One of the key changes in the HR policy is the escalation of telecommuting or e-work.

### *Green Compensation (Pay and Reward Systems)*

Accomplishment of specific sustainable initiatives should be coupled up with the compensation system by offering employees an advantage package that rewards employees for altering their behaviours. An inconsistent pay element can be mixed to the compensation system by connecting a pay to eco-performance. Work organizations can gain more from gratifying waste reduction practices that the teams develop. For example, while implementing a green suggestion, a part of the savings that accrued from its results can be returned back to the team or the employee who suggested the idea. DuPont has an Environmental Respect Awards program which recognizes employee environmental achievements for suggestions that individual personnel make to help out the environment and increase firm profitability. Reward packages are associated with acquiring designated skills and competencies, as they are observed to be significant factors in performance over the long-term, an example being that knowledge of environmental legislation or chemistry may put off serious accidents or illegal emissions taking place in an organisation.

In general, such organizations are observed to be in a necessity to develop pay and reward systems to generate desirable behaviours in EM, and doing so requires effective employment of both incentives and disincentives. Disincentives comprise negative reinforcements like suspensions, criticisms and warnings and may be obligatory to get employees to make environmental improvements. Organizations desire to engage in providing with employees a positive reward in terms of verbal feedback from supervisors, or such informal verbal and written feedback which might help motivate the employees towards environmental improvements.

### *Green Employee Relations*

Employees are an elusive asset to any organisation and to bind an amicable bond between employer and employee is the main hub of HRM. Employee relations can be enhanced by introducing an environmental proposal in the organization, wherein each and every employee from top to bottom level can come collectively onto a common platform to add to the scheme. This gives an occasion to interchange enormous ideas creating an eco-friendly work culture.

### *Green Building*

Vanished are those days of the conventional office buildings. Organizations today are taking up green buildings. These occupy a great deal of financial saving in construction and maintenance of buildings. Green buildings assure to give instant and long-term economic benefits for the developers as well as the occupants. Organizations like Pepsico, Johnson & Johnson have incorporated the notion of green buildings into their system. Energy positive building allows plentiful natural light to be thrown in and also helps in cost cutting of electricity. Other innovations being built-in are facilities for rainwater harvesting along with giant amount of condensate from air conditioners.

### *3R's*

At present, the entire corporate world is buzzing the mantra of 3Rs of environment economy, i.e., Reduce, Reuse and Recycle to breathe in more of oxygen into their lungs for a longer life to work more.

### *Energy Conservation*

Conservation of energy has a crucial role to be played to en route for environment defence. Offices around the globe are stressing to switch off PCs, ACs and lights prior to leaving the work place and some have introduced the initiative of car-pooling to have a check on carbon emissions. They are trying to lessen the Carbon Footprint and also perk up water Conservation.

### *Conclusion*

The focal point on getting better the operational efficiencies combined with up-gradation of technology have led the companies in the world to attain the milestones of being carbon positive,

water positive and achieving approximately 100% solid waste recycling. The future of Green HRM appears hopeful for all the stakeholders of HRM. The employers and practitioners can establish the worth of linking employee involvement and participation in environmental management programmes in order to progress organizational environmental performance with a specific focus on waste management recycling and creating green products. Unions and employees can facilitate employers to take up Green HRM policies and practices so that it helps to uphold and enhance worker health and well-being. The academicians can extensively contribute by carrying further research in this area revealing additional information that can erect a knowledge base on Green Management in common.

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