

Green HRM: An Emerging Approach towards Sustainable Development

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Abstract: In general, green HRM particularly deals with the HR activities which are eco-friendly and promote the property or sustainability of resources that an organization may have. These activities lie in implementing eco-friendly changes in different areas of HR like recruitment, training, appraisal, and compensation etc. It additionally covers the way to sustainability through Green HRM practices. The Green HRM has emerged from companies engaging in practices related to protection of environment and maintaining ecological balance. Green HRM can assume a valuable job in business in advancing condition related issues by receiving and following Green HR arrangements and practices. This study is also helpful to understand the challenges and best practices to overcome from this.

Keywords: Green HRM, Green HRM functions, sustainable development, eco-friendly practices

1. Introduction

Green, it is the color of life, renewal, nature and energy. It is associated with meanings of growth, consistency, safety, productivity and environment. Green is also associated with business terms i.e. money, finance, banking, ambition and greed. Green can help enhance vision, stability and fortitude.

In current scenario, organizations are working for sustainable development. Sustainable development is concerned with the world level challenges and how organizations can contribute to some of the most significant challenges. This challenge can be like climate change and biodiversity, to working conditions and health amongst the poorest in the world. The HR function will become the initiator of environmental sustainability and help in sustainable development by applying the eco friendly practices and policies in the organization. The green movement for protection of environment also influenced business and organizations to adopt and follow green policies and environment friendly practices, which is referred to as "Green Management."

What is Green HRM?

The Green HRM means initiating and creating awareness or introducing about and implementing "Green and eco friendly policies" in an organization. The Green HRM helps in the betterment of organization and it's sustainable development ethically. Green initiatives within the human resource management form part of wider programs of CSR. Here, CSR or corporate social responsibility indicates the responsibilities of business towards society and it's development. Some companies consider CSR as their duty and responsibility to give back something and substantial to the natural environment.

"Green HRM is associated with the effective implementation of HR management policies in organization at the global level to attain absolute green corporate culture."

GHRM is directly responsible in creating green workforce that understands, motivates 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 and Arulrajah, 2014).

2. Research Methodology

Secondary Data: The data was collected from various research journals, websites and articles to detailed understanding of the subject authenticity of information.

3. Functions of Green HRM

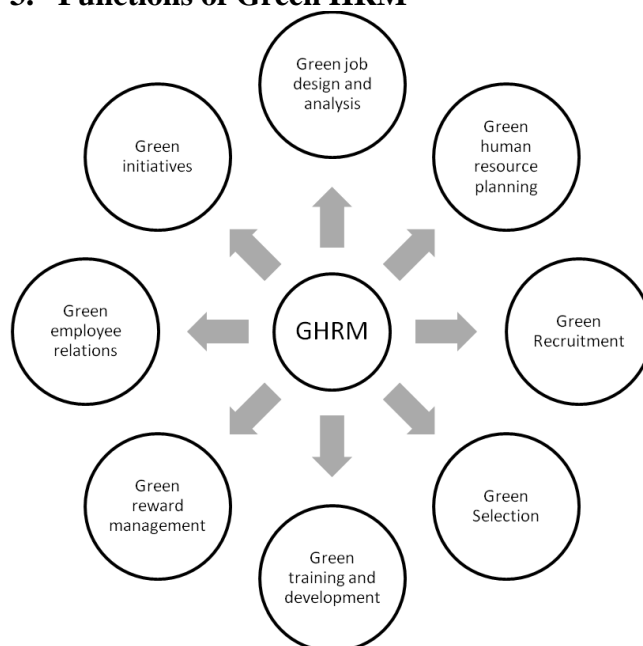


Figure 1: Functions of Green Human Resource Management

1) Green job design and analysis

In general, job descriptions can be used to specify a number of environmental protection related task, duties and responsibilities (Wehrmeyer, 1996; Renwick et al, 2008 and 2013). These days, some organization have involved in environmental and social tasks, duties and responsibilities for the protection of environment. For environmental protection, some organization includes at least one duty related to environment in job description. Environmental,

social, personal, and technical requirements of the organizations should be included in Job descriptions and job specifications. Nowadays many companies have designed environmental concerned new jobs or positions in order to focus on environmental management aspects of the organizations. It is really a great initiative and practice to protect the environment.

2) Green human resource planning

At present, some companies engage in forecasting number of employees and types of employees, needed to implement corporate environmental management initiatives/ programs/ activities (e.g. ISO 14001, cleaner production, responsible care etc.). These initiatives are adopted by the organizations to manage their environmental issues. In addition these companies engage in deciding strategies to meet the forecasted demand for environmental works (e.g. appointing consultants/experts to perform energy or environmental audits) and sometimes they are outsourcing.

3) Green recruitment

Green recruitment means a paper-free recruitment process with a minimal environmental impact. Applications are invited through online mediums like e-mail, online application forms or the Global Talent Pool. If possible, telephone or video-based interviews are conducted to minimize any travel-related environmental impact. Green Recruitment is active in the field of professional recruitment. It is long-term partner in environmental recruitment for recruiters.

4) Green selection

In the selection context, when making selection for the job vacancies some companies consider candidates' environmental concern and interest as selection criteria. When interviewing candidates or evaluating them for selection, environmental-related questions are asked by those companies (Crosbie and Knight, 1995; Wehrmeyer, 1996; North, 1997; Revill, 2000). These green selection practices can adopt in addition to the normal selection criteria relating to the specific duties of the job being concerned.

5) Green training and development

Training and development is a practice that focuses on development of employees' skills, knowledge, and attitudes, prevent deterioration of EM-related knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Zoogah, 2011, p.17) In green training and development we train employees in working methods that conserve energy, reduce waste, diffuse environmental awareness within the organization, and provide opportunity to engage employees in environmental problem-solving. With the help of green Training and development we can make employees aware about different aspects and value of environment management. It helps them in waste management and sharpens the skills of an employee to deal with different environmental issues.

6) Green reward management

Green reward management is another key function of green HRM. The sustainability of organisation's environmental performance is highly dependent on the green reward management practices of the organisations. Reward systems

are no new concept to HR departments, but the idea of a green reward kind of system is a fairly new approach. In such systems, employees are rewarded for their alignment with green company practices, and often times, the rewards themselves are additionally of some eco-friendly nature. The more convincing and compelling the reward system, the more effective it is typically found to be. Organizations can practice it in two ways such as financial and non-financial.

7) Green employee relations

Employee relations are that aspect of HRM which is concerned with establishing amicable employer–employee relationship. The relationship facilitates motivation and morale of the employees as well as, increases the productivity. It also helps prevent and resolve problems arisen at workplace that may affect the work.

Employee participation in Green initiatives increases the chances of better green management as it aligns employees' goals, capabilities, motivations, and perceptions with green management practices and systems. There are two ways in which the workers can participate: a suggestion program and problem solving circles wherein the specialist staffs is more involved in project initiation while line level workers are more likely to participate in project implementation.

8) Green initiatives

Green HR initiatives help companies find alternative ways to cut cost without losing their top talent; furloughs, part time work, etc. Today, organizations are implementing and integrating green initiatives in their agenda with the help of their human resource. Managers make sure that their HR is utilizing green human resource practices in appropriate manner.

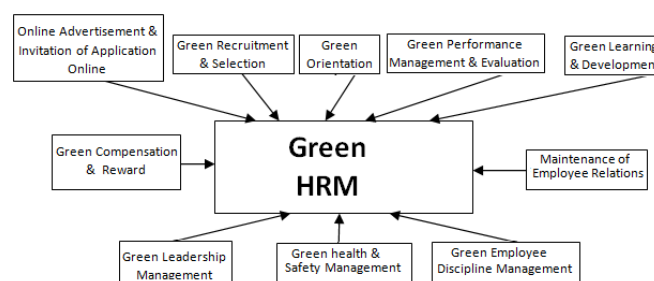


Figure 2: Green Human Resource Management Process

4. Challenges of Green HRM

No policies and practices are free of challenges. On the other side of the story of benefits, there are also a few challenges of using the practice in an organization. The challenges are mentioned below:

- a) There are some employees in every organization who are not equally motivated to adopt green HRM practices.
- b) Developing and maintaining a culture of green HRM is a lengthy and time consuming process.
- c) At the initial stage of implementation, it requires a high investment and may bring a low return.
- d) Recruiting and training employees about green HRM is a challenging job to do.
- e) It is very difficult to appraise the green performance of employees' behavior.
- f) It is difficult to transform employee attitude to green HRM from traditional HRM in a short period of time.
- g) A major challenge for HR professionals is to select and develop future green leaders is to create a green working structure, set up green working processes, providing green tools and creating expected green thinking for their employees

5. Green office practices

Some suggestions or green office practices to stay Green in the HR functions are as follows:

- 1) **Green Printing:** More printing of paper leads to increase in paper, toner wastage and carbon dioxide emission. Preton Software is software which can reduce paper demand by upto 50% without degrading the output image quality. According to the actual case reference, a company with 1000 employees may reduce its toner consumption by around 350 cartridges per year and will reduce its carbon footprint by around 1.68tons of Co2 annually.
- 2) **Green Design for Payroll and Taxation forms:** Sealer Solution enables automatic individual information printing and form sealing in a secure manner. Its speed is 34000 pieces per hour while operating in a silent mode. It can not only reduce manpower but also enhance the indoor working environment in the HR department.
- 3) **Green Manufacturing & Disposal of Staff ID card:** ID card issued by HR department are made of PVC and hard to be recycled. PETG is better material to produce plastic cards in terms of ecology, it is 100% recyclable, does not produce noxious fume and creates less water and air pollution. Moreover when such cards that contain personal information need to be disposed use of 'Disposal Service can be made' which enables the waste plastic cards to be securely transferred for recycling.
- 4) **Encouraging the Adoption of Digitalization:** Digitalization helps us to reduce the office filing work, stationeries etc. and this green concept ensures the transparency in the administration. The digitalization leads to store huge volume of data in small equipment and avoids use of stationeries in offices.
- 5) **Providing common Transportation facilities:** Common transportation facilities involve cabin services to the employees. Instead of using separate vehicles common transportation facilities helps to minimize the environmental hazardous like carbon emissions.
- 6) **Planting Trees:** Organization makes awareness programs among the employees in the society about important of

tree planting. It is to be noted that large industrial houses sponsors the highway beautification project as part of their brand building.

- 7) **Declare Plastic Free Zones:** Declaration of industrial areas as plastic free leads to reduce the usage of plastic in offices. The organizations can digitalize the office and keep the office stationeries as minimum. The usage of pen, plastic files covers and other stationeries are also generating undisputable waste.
- 8) **Declare Smoke free Areas:** Smoking injurious to health is the slogan everywhere but still it is unavoidable by the man. Organizations avoid such personals in the recruitment process itself and make ensure that the organization is smoke free.
- 9) **Encourage Green ideas:** Educating the employees and stakeholders about the safe disposal of the electronic and bio medical waste.

6. Companies who have adopted GREEN HRM

- 1) General Electrics: Uses six sigma technique for optimizing their operations to improve environmental and social outcomes in a manner that increases overall performance.
- 2) Google: Uses green recruiting technique- Believes that most talented people get attracted because of it.
- 3) Infosys: eRecruiting Staffing Solutions
- 4) Hewlett Packard: Product take-Back programs, green packaging and integrating designs.

7. Conclusion

Based on this review, it is possible to conclude that by understanding and increasing the scope and depth of green HRM practices, organizations can improve their environmental performance in a more sustainable manner than before. The green HRM practices are more powerful tools in making organizations and their operations green. A key finding of the Green 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 and 60 implement wellness programs for employees. It is just a matter of time when almost all the firms must adopt environment friendly practices for the betterment of the overall society and also, for the world.

The green performance, green behaviors, green attitude, and green competencies of human resources can be shaped and reshaped through adaptation of green HRM practices. Green HRM policies encourage the sustainable use of resources within business enterprises to promote the cause of environmentalism and in the process, create improved employee morale and satisfaction. The academicians can contribute by carrying further research in this area revealing additional data that can build a knowledge base on Green Management in general.

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