



Impact of green human resource management practices on behaviour of employees

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Abstract

Green Human Resource Management is an environmentally friendly Human Resource Management Programme that aims to secure and mobilise employee participation in superior green efficiency and lower costs to encourage an organisation to save and condense resource consumption whenever possible. It includes all the activities, practices and policies that are involved in development, implementation, and on-going maintenance of a system that is aimed at turning employees of an organisation green. The main issues in front of Human Resource professionals are to understand the scope and depth of green HRM in altering their organisations into green entities. The organisations are facing difficulties in motivating the employees to adopt green practices, to develop green culture and change the behaviour of the employees in short span. Against this background, a modest attempt has been made in this paper to cover the impact of Green Human Resource Management on behaviour of employees in the organisation.

Keywords: behaviour of employees, organisational citizenship behaviour, organizational performance, environmental sustainability, green HRM practices

Introduction

In recent times, much concentrated interest is being paid to environmentalism globally. It has arisen from specific treaties to combat climate change, e.g. Kyoto, 1997, Bali, 2007 and Copenhagen 2009 (Victor, 2001) [26]. Owing to the harmful consequences of industrial pollution and waste materials, including toxic chemicals, governments and NGOs round the globe promoted regulations and policies with effect of slowing down and to some extent even reverse the destruction of natural resources and its negative effect on the mankind and the society as a whole (Shrivastava & Berger, 2010) [25].

Given the present situation, the organizations have also to find out ways and techniques to deal with reduction in ecological footprints besides dealing with the economic issues. In order to attain success within the corporate community and to facilitate attainment of profit by the shareholders, organizations now-a-days have to concentrate on social and environmental factors along with economical and financial factors (Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004) [8]. The successful implementation of these sustainable corporate strategies within an organization requires both strong leadership and a concrete process. The sustainability issue is fast moving up on the list of priorities of the leaders of corporate world as the awareness on incorporating “green” into the corporate strategy is making its way in business, but still the topic is not comfortable with most practitioners in the HR environment (Wirtenberg *et al.*, 2007) [27].

To implement any corporate environmental program several units of an organization HR, Marketing, IT, Finance, and so on, work together to put forward a positive joint effort and among them, the most important contributor is the human resource management unit. No doubt, the corporate world is a major stakeholder in the discussion about environmental issues and therefore conforms to be an important part of the solution to the environmental hazard. There is clear

evidence that in the business world, a large part of the workforce feels strongly about the environment as employees today are more committed and satisfied with the organizations that take a proactive part in endorsing green. In the past two decades, a worldwide consensus has emerged around the need for proactive environmental management. Building upon this green concept numerous literatures on Green marketing, Green accounting, Green retailing, and Green management in general have impregnated the field of management. Moreover, the active participation of corporate sector in adoption of environment management strategies made way for green management perspective.

Green Human Resource Management: A Step towards Achieving Sustainability

Human Resource Management (HRM) is an important function of management that deals with the most valuable assets of an organization which is human resources. Now-a-days, the whole context of HRM is being considered in the light of sustainability all over the world.

Green HRM has been understood with different meaning by different people (Rani, 2014) [22]. Green HRM is the use of HRM policies to adopt the sustainable use of resources within organizations and helps the reasons of environment sustainability. The term “Green HRM” is used to refer to the concern of people management policies and practices towards the wider corporate environmental practices. The practice of green HR includes recruitment, selection and compensation, performance management, training and development, employee involvement and participation.

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. 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).

Green HR Practises consists of two essential fundamentals which are Environmentally-friendly HR practices and the preservation of knowledge capital. It demands undertaking environment friendly wits, resulting in greater efficiency, lower costs, and better employee engagement and retention. This helps the organization to reduce carbon footprints. Green HR practices can be effectively implemented only if the companies have the right people with the right skills and competencies (Daily and Huang, 2001) ^[4, 5]. The Green HRM practices are the Green HRM programs, processes and techniques that are applied in the organisation to reduce negative environmental impacts and to enhance the positive environmental impacts of the organisations (Anton Arulrajahan, 2015) ^[2]. Organisations can enhance their environmental performance in more sustainable manner than earlier by understanding and increasing the scope of Green HRM.

Need for Green Human Resource Management

Green HRM is a part of green management philosophy, policies, and practices followed by a firm for environmental management. It includes all activities that focus on helping an organization carries out its strategy for environment management to enable it to reduce its carbon footprint and earn carbon credits. Green HRM is one of the most important parts of green management systems with a primary mission of taking “green” tools to enhance economic, social, and ecological benefits in order to achieve harmony between the employee and the environment.

Green HRM involves undertaking environment friendly HR initiatives to promote sustainable practices and increase employee commitments and corporate sustainability. It involves lowering costs and increasing employee engagement and retention which, in turn, help organizations to reduce employee carbon footprints. This includes practices like electronic filing, car-sharing, job sharing, recycling, virtual interviews, and telecommuting. Efficiency created by Green HRM can lower operational costs and enables industry professionals to realize their corporate social responsibilities in a better manner.

Green HRM is the need of hour to survive in the modern biz world by having an advantage over the competitors, developing a distinct green image within the market, keeping to corporate social responsibility and fulfilling the basis of being a business person by the generation of employment opportunities for the talented eco-friendly workforce (Aggarwal and Sharma, 2015) ^[1].

(Dhingra *et al.*, 2014) found that most of the employees knew and are aware of green HRM. The majority of employees felt the importance of green HRM in building a good image of the organization. Most of the employees believe that best green practices include 3Rs. - Reduce, Recycle and Reuse but they are not aware of how to contribute (Cheema and Javed, 2017). For greening practices motive, appropriate instruction or training ought to be given to the workers to build learning levels in the associations which ultimately enhance comprehensive sustainability. HR experts, who wish to add to their association’s manageability by exercising sustainable HRM, ought to endeavour to be engaged with the supportability technique from the earliest starting point, which will

emphatically impact their apparent opportunities for making sustainability famous and their job in enthusing, encouraging and persuading workers for sustainability. Also, this won’t just save the environment but also benefit HR experts and the association itself.

Hence, to achieve environmental sustainability, a company must investigate how Green HRM influences employees' pro-environmental behaviour, ultimately ensuring the organization's overall environmental performance (Kim *et al.*, 2019). Though there is evidence of development in Green HRM and employee pro-environment behaviours in the workplace (Renwick *et al.*, 2013), new study suggests that understanding of the influence of Green HRM on green service behaviour, which is particularly important for empirical investigations, is lacking (Hameed *et al.*, 2020).

Boudreau and Ramstad (2005) recommended that the human resource department should assess and motivate employees' sustainability-related knowledge, attitudes, motivation, and actions. Organizations would find it easier to use HRM to successfully elicit sustainable, environmentally friendly employee behaviours with capabilities and activities (Dumont *et al.*, 2017). Green training practices are especially vital for newly hired staff to boost engagement (Jyoti, 2019).

Jackson *et al.* (2011) asserted that monetary and nonmonetary rewards have a distinct role in helping environmental management actions. Employees who participate in these environmental activities have a greater level of green behaviour (Chaudhary, 2020). Several studies have discovered a link between green incentives and employee environmental participation (Aktar and Islam, 2019). Employee engagement is routinely boosted via green rewards and pensions (Renwick *et al.*, 2013). Green performance management systems provide timely feedback to employees and help the firm achieve its environmental goals through continuous development (Jackson *et al.*, 2011) ^[11].

Implementation of Green Human Resource Management Practices

Organizations across the world are incorporating and working toward implementing Green HRM practices to gain competitive advantages among the corporate world. Complete adoption and integration of Green HRM in business is not impossible but requires a changed approach toward 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 (Sathyapriya *et al.*, 2014) ^[23]. There are numerous issues related to Green HRM that is to be taken into account by HR department before implementing green initiatives.

In order to make sure that the organization gets the right employee green inputs and right employee green performance of job, it is indispensable that HRM functions are adapted or modified to be green. Traditionally, there are eighteen functions of HRM including job design, job analysis, human resource planning, recruitment, selection, hiring, induction, performance evaluation, training and development, career management, pay management, incentives management, welfare management, management

of employee movements, discipline management, health and safety management, grievance management and labour relations.

Making an HRM function green involves inclusion of policies, procedures, and practices that ensure right employee green inputs and right employee green performance of job. The same may be seen in

Job Analysis

- To include environmental dimension as a duty in job description.
- To include green competencies as a special component in job specification.

Recruitment

- To include environmental criteria in the recruitment messages.
- To communicate the employer's concern about greening through recruitment efforts.

Selection

- To select applicants who are sufficiently aware of greening to fill job vacancies.
- To select applicants who have been engaging in greening as consumers in their private life domain

Induction

- To make new employees familiar with greening efforts of the organization.
- To develop induction programs showing green citizenship behavior of current employees

Training

- To impart the right knowledge and skills about greening (the four green roles) to each employee through a training program, exclusively designed for greening.
- To conduct training needs analyses in order to identify green training needs of employees.

Performance Evaluation

- To evaluate employee's job performance according to green-related criteria.
- To include a separate component for progress on greening in the performance feedback interview.

Rewards Management

- To give financial incentives to employees for their good green performance of job and nonfinancial rewards such as praise and recognition to employees for their greening.

The HR Department can make Green/EM (Environmental Management) job descriptions for employees. It is obvious that higher-level executives have to take greater responsibility for green initiatives. In addition, green goals should be included in managerial job descriptions. In its strategic plan for developing the competency model for talent, an organization can include environmental consciousness as one of the core competencies required of employees.

Green job candidates, who comprise a large section of talented and knowledgeable manpower, use green criteria when applying for jobs. As a result, companies having green practices can attract good talent. Preference in selection

should be given to candidates who are 'Green aware', which becomes a part of the HR acquisition policy. Employers displaying a strong green brand are more likely to attract talent than those who do not have a green philosophy.

Performance management systems should include 'green' targets in the key performance areas (KPA). Green targets and goals should be established for managers in accomplishing Green results, and that should be included in appraisals.

Impact of Green HRM Practices on Behaviour of Employees

The main objective of going green is to attain the level of sustainability through the proper utilization of available resources within the organizations through the adoption and implementation of environmental friendly practices and also keeping in mind the sustainability of the economy. This can be achieved by creating maximum awareness among the employees of an organization so that they are well informed and have knowledge about the need to preserve the environment and protect it and attain sustainability. The HR function within an organization becomes an important component and driver of economic as well as environmental sustainability through the adoption and implementation of green HR policies. The eco-friendly practices adopted by an organization should coincide with the organization goals and objectives.

Becker and Gerhart (1996) asserted that human resource management influences organizational performance by enhancing efficiency, cost control, and value creation. From the review of extensive empirical studies, they found a significant relationship between a firm's HRM activities such as selection and compensation have a positive impact on corporate performance.

Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1997) observed that employees' OCBs improve organizational performance, and they summarized the reasons. For instance, employees can help each other with job-related problems. Employees who actively participate in meeting can help distribute information in the company, and employees who learn new skill can improve the firm's ability to adapt to change in its environment.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour is linked to lower rates of employee turnover and absenteeism. However, based on the organizational level, increased productivity, efficiency, and customer satisfaction, as well as reduced costs, have also been observed (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2009). A study in grocery stores/supermarkets reported that OCB explained approximately 20% of the variance in store profitability (Ehrhart, 2004)^[6].

OCB enhances productivity by helping new co-workers; helping colleagues meet deadlines and it free up resource as autonomous and cooperative employees give managers more time to clear their work and their helpful behaviour facilitates cohesiveness as part of group maintenance behaviour.

Moreover, OCB attracts and retains good employees through creating and maintaining a friendly, supportive working environment and a sense of belonging and creates social capital a better communication and stronger networks facilitate accurate information transfer and improve efficiency (Organ *et al.*, 2006).

Green HR Practices results in different outcomes like improved employee morale, stronger public image,

increased employee loyalty, increased brand recognition, gained competitive advantage, increased workforce productivity and increased employee retention (Jafir, 2012). Roy *et al.* (2013) found that the spontaneity of an eco-friendly behaviour can improve environmental performance by supplementing environmental management system. Thus, this study investigates the direct relationship between employees' eco-friendly behaviour and hotel environmental performance. Green HRM practices influence the behaviour of the supervisors towards employee engagement and finds a possible solution for environmental problems (Chandarjeet, 2017) ^[3]. Green HRM is a system that motivates the employees and helps to understand the green culture in the organization. The employee's performance level, employee attitude, behaviour and competencies can be shaped and reshaped by applying green HRM practices (Jain, 2016) ^[13]. High level of management and technical skills are required among the employees for the purpose of implementing the green HR practices to have a powerful impact on the sustainable competitiveness among the organisations. Employees in the present scenario understand the environmental consciousness and follow the green values and practices in the organization. Wider level of employee participation in green practice will pay way for the successful outcome for the organisations (Hanna, 2000) ^[10].

Future of Green HRM

Though the green movement and Green HR are still in the stages of infancy, growing awareness within organizations of the significance of green issues have compelled them to embrace environment-friendly HR practices with a specific focus on waste management, recycling, reducing the carbon footprint, and using and producing green products. Clearly, a majority of the employees feel strongly about the environment and, exhibit greater commitment and job satisfaction toward an organization that is ever ready to go "Green." The effects of Green HRM practices are multifaceted and require constant monitoring to recognize their potential impact on HRM issues. The Greening HRM involves specific HR's policies and practices aligned with the three sustainability pillars—environment, social, and economic balance (Yusliza *et al.*, 2015). The responsibility of the present generations, HR managers are to create awareness among the youngsters and among the people working for the organization about the Green HRM, Green movement, utilization of natural resources and helping the corporate to maintain proper environment, and retain the natural resources for our future generation i.e. sustainable development (Mathapati, 2013) ^[18].

The future of Green HRM appears promising for all the stakeholders of HRM, be it the employers, employees, practitioners, or academicians. We may opine that Green HRM has substantial scope for research in management field but lacks behind in practice within academic arena; hence, there is a need to bridge the gap between professional Green HRM practices and preaches in research and teaching environmental management. Pushing further, we look forward to see more research on this topic in near future, which can highlight the role of HRM activities in supporting green initiatives and to some extent even influencing environmental management strategies. Studies that observe the overall impact of Green HRM systems rather than individual practices would be particularly helpful in this

respect. Such studies can help organizations to reduce degradation of the environment become healthier both physically and financially and, make the world a cleaner and safer place to live. Hence, HR is the major role player in implementing Green HRM practices and policies. Apart from this, they have a crucial role to play in recruitment of new employees who are more responsible toward green business practices thus, indirectly saving the Earth. Last, but not the least, HR has significant opportunity to contribute to the organization's green movement and plays important role in enthusing, facilitating, and motivating employees for taking up green practices for greener business.

Conclusion

Finally, we may conclude that if management or the organisation does not foster green attitudes and behaviour among staff and employees, successful policies to ensure environmental sustainability will be hampered. Putting green human resource policies and practices into practice helps elicit and promote green behaviour at work. To achieve or achieve green organisation and performance goals, organisations and administration must integrate the *go green* concept with the overall HRM agenda.

The main issue in front of HR professionals are to understand the scope and depth of green HRM in altering their organizations into green entities. The organisations are facing difficulties in motivating the employees to adopt green practices, to develop green culture and change the behaviour of the employees in short span. Adopting green practices would increase the morale and performance level of the employees, which in turn would be beneficial to both the organisation and the employees. Adopting green HRM helps in improving environmental performance as well as improving the financial performance of the organisation. Green HRM practice improves the well-behaviour of the employees in the organisation.

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