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Green Human Resource Management: Introduction

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Abstract

This paper is presenting the current progressions and research gaps in Green Human Resource Management literature and investigates the future of green practices in meeting the social sustainability requirements of an organisation. By keeping in mind, the growing awareness on greening and sustainability, a systematic review of the domain specific literature was carried out using the available databases we came to a conclusion which exhibits all the human resource activities into three clusters namely, green human resource management practices, employee green behaviour at workplace and organisational sustainability. Further it was found the social sustainability to be the least explored area than economic and environmental pillars of sustainability. With this, the author conceptually explored the theoretical concepts with explaining the mediational role of 'employee green behaviour at workplace' in the relationship between 'green human resource management practices' and 'social sustainability' of organisations. Therefore, prioritising social equity, health, wellness and well-being, this work examines the state-of-the-art in green human resource management research to unravel the enormous potential of core green practices envisioning social sustainability, which has not been established till date.

The objective of this study is an effort in direction of green HR practices as it will be helpful in knowing the level of awareness regarding green HR among the people.

Keywords: Green Human Resources Management (GHRM), Awareness, Environmental Sustainability.

Introduction

What Is Green HRM?

The term Green HRM has become the buzz word all around that everybody is concerned about at present and its significance has increased with the passage of time. This is the most sizzling topic of discussion among the researchers nowadays due to increased awareness of people on environmental management and sustainable development all around the globe. Today this topic Green HRM is not only about awareness toward environmental affairs, but it is also related with the social as well as economic well-being of both the organization and the employees within a broader prospect. "Green HRM refers to the use of HRM policies to promote the sustainable use of resources within organization and, more generally promotes the causes of environment sustainability" (Marhatta & Adhikari, 2013). GHRM is directly responsible in creating green workforce that understands, appreciates, 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 & Arulrajah, 2014).

Need For Green HRM

At present Green human resource management has become the need of the day all over the world. The life style of human being has driven the transformation of prevailing environment. Our personal and professional lifestyle has a great impact over our surrounding. The corporate world plays most significant role in overcoming the environmental issues and to reduce the effect of these hazards. Now-a-days Organizations

are emphasizing more on green HRM for several reasons.

1. To reduce the effect of some hazardous environmental phenomenon e.g., global warming, climate change, energy crisis, etc. so that the workplace of employees become safe & healthy within and outside the organizations.
2. To train the employees in such a way that they perform their activities by keeping in mind both financial and non-financial benefits.
3. To improve corporate contribution towards environment by implementing certain HR functions keeping in mind the green perspective such as training, employee empowerment, and Environmental Management System (EMS) rewards.
4. To motivate employees, for participation in corporate environmental management activities and to develop green abilities in them.
5. To offer environment friendly products and incorporate related operations, and to overcome the challenges related to implementation of such environmental programs.

Green HR Initiatives

At present organizations across the world are incorporating and emphasizing on implementing GHRM practices to gain competitive advantages in their respective field. Transformation of traditional HR practices into GHRM in business is not difficult at all rather a changed approach of the existing HR practices on part of both the management as well as employees can be implemented simultaneously. HR executives could play an important role in guiding the line managers for attaining full staff co-operation in implementing environmental policies which means a strong network of supporters and problem-solvers should be nurtured who are willing to act according to the current status quo.

Some of the green HRM initiatives that can be adopted by the Organizations to GO GREEN are as follows.

1. **Paperless office:** Generally, the work in the office is managed on paper, but with the introduction of IT, a reduction in the usage of paper can be seen. Today, the most recent way of learning and doing work for office has been changed and has transformed into paperless offices. Paperless office is a place of work where the use of paper is either limited or nil by converting important official documents and other papers into mechanized workflows. The practice has reduced the consumption of paper upto great extent, the costs of paper-related actions like copying, printing, and storing, and the time used for searching paper documents has also been reduced. With less use of paper for documentation, we can directly protect natural resources, prevent pollution, and reduce wastage of water and energy.
2. **Preservation of Energy** Preservation of energy at workplace can be a very strong step in protecting the environment. To provide more efficient and eco-friendly services, offices across the world have incorporated several energy conservation initiatives to reduce the environmental impact. The HR department of many organizations has initiated some green initiatives where the employees are asked to turn off PCs, TVs, and lights while leaving the offices, and motivating them for using 100% renewable energy. Some organizations have also started promoting the extensive use of star rated light bulbs and fixtures which

undoubtedly consumes at least two-thirds less energy than regular ones.

3. **Green printing:** Printing papers leads to increased usage of paper, toner wastage and carbon dioxide discharge. Organizations have started using “pre-ton” saver, a software to reduce paper demand by 20% and toner and ink demand by 50% with maintaining the quality of output image or printout.

4. **Green Building** The organizations around the world are significantly opting for green building as their workplace and offices. Green buildings are made according to certain criterion which may reduce the exploitation of natural resources being utilized in the construction of offices. Furthermore, green buildings are formed with some enhanced features such as energy efficiency, renewable energy and storm water management.

5. **Save water:** A lot of water is being wasted in manufacturing processes and while watering the company’s lawns, these should be totally eliminated. Water wastage due to leakage in sinks and toilets must be taken care of.

6. **Recycling and waste disposal** Recycling refers to processing the used-up materials (waste) into new and useful products. Recycling reduces the consumption of some more raw material to produce new products. Therefore, this way it saves energy and reduces the amount of waste being thrown into the dustbins, and hence making the environment cleaner and the air fresher. As a part of the green initiatives, many organizations are incorporating recycling programs to increase the number of recycled products and decrease the amount of waste due to overconsumption of raw materials. In this process, many HR professionals has ascertained that green initiatives would have been a necessary aspect of overall Corporate Social Responsibility, now the whole corporate world is following the concept of three R’s—Reduce, Reuse and Recycle for the sustainability of organization as well as the environment. Recycling of glass, paper, plastic, metal trash and manufacturing waste materials has been incorporated for the same.

7. **Green Recompense:** Recompense and rewarding are the major steps in appraising the employees for their performance. In Green HRM, rewards and compensation can be unspecified as prospective tools for supporting environmental activities in organizations. Initiating green rewards to departments and individuals for innovative initiatives and green contribution in reduction of wastes, green resources and energy may be considered.

8. **Saving Electricity:** Electricity can be saved by motivating people to switch off lights and fans where and whenever required and also by installing Solar panels.

Impact of green HR practices in your organization

1. Higher productivity
2. Cost reduction
3. Elevated Brand Recognition
4. Increased Employee Retention
5. Improved Employee Morale

Challenges Of Green HRM

Human resources management practices play very important role in managing employee. At present, organizations are emphasizing on going green with products as well as practices. But it is not an easy task as in implementing Green HRM an organization faces certain challenges, which are:

1. It is very difficult to change the way of doing things or activities of employees in a short duration of time.
2. To inhibit the culture of Green HRM in entire organization is a burdensome and long-lasting process.
3. It is a challenge to hire and sourcing of green employees with excellence.
4. As every employee has not equal responsibilities in the organization thus all of them are not equally accountable to contribute in the promotion of Green HRM practices in an organization.
5. Green management can be exercised with the cooperation of both the management of an organization and from the Government.
6. During the initial stage green human resource management requires high investment and shows slow rate of return.
7. HR professionals faces a lot of problems while initiating and maintaining the essential green structures, green processes, green tools, and green philosophy to hire the best employee and create the future green leaders of the organization.
8. Maintaining green human resource management leads to usage of more expensive raw materials for manufacturers and therefore provides more expensive products for consumers.
9. Switching to solar power from the old cable networks requires a huge investment for panels to be installed at business facilities. The cost reduction in energy savings which is to be gained by going green is not always enough to offset the initial conversion costs.

Review of Literature

Green HRM refers to the policies, practices, and systems followed by the organization that make employees green for the benefit of the individual, team, society, natural environment, and the organization. Each researcher describes Green HRM in a different way according to his perspective, although their intentions are same towards the sustainability of human resources and their relationship with the environment. By assuming the green concept as a base various literature has been created as on Green Marketing (Peattie, 1992), Green Accounting (Bebbington, 2001; Owen, 1992), Green Retailing (Kee-hung, Cheng, and Tang, 2010), and Green Management in general (McDonough and Prothero, 1997). Daily and Hung, (2001); Sarkar et al., (2010), Lee (2009) specify Green Management“ as the exercise whereby companies build up an environmental management strategy to deal with the environment.” Therefore, there is requirement of positive environmental management (Gonzalez-Benito and Gonzalez-Benito, 2006). According to Renwick et al. (2008), the integration of Corporate Environmental Management into Human Resource Management is termed as green HRM. Many scholars broadly specified that distinguished policies in the field of recruitment, performance management and appraisal, training and development, employment relations and pay and reward are considered as key tools for aligning employees with an organization’s environmental strategy. According to Jabbour, Santos, & Nagano (2010) the dimension of human resource management focussing on the concept of going green such as job description and analysis, recruitment, selection, training, performance appraisal and rewards is defined as green HRM. In 2011, Jabbour again defined

green HRM as going green of human resource management practices“ in terms of functional and competitive dimensions of HRM. Others researcher describe Green HRM as the use of HRM policies, philosophies, and practices to promote sustainable use of business resources and reduces the harm arising from environmental concerns in organizations (Zoogah, 2011). Mandip (2012) supported the opinion that green initiatives within HRM are a broader part of programs of corporate social responsibility. Green HR practices consists of two major elements one is the environment-friendly HR practices and the other is the preservation of knowledge capital. Cherian and Jacob (2012) in their study identified that recruitment, training, employee motivation, and rewards are important human dimensions which contribute to the implementation of green management principles. 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. Within an organization, human resource and their management system are the basic foundation of any business. They are the one who are responsible for planning and executing those eco-friendly policies to create a green atmosphere. We argue that without facilitating the human resource and implementing sustainable policies, going green would be a hard nut to crack. These definitions do not have significant differences or contradictions with each other. Therefore, based on the meaning of these definitions, we propose our own definition for green HRM at this moment. Green HRM can be defined as “the environmental (green) orientation of all human resource management (HRM) functions or practices of an organization at all levels.” The green HRM deals with the basic concepts of HRM, its objectives, functions, processes, activities, and strategies in an environment friendly manner in order to accommodate the needs of ecological sustainability. Opatha & Arul rajah, (2014) supported the opinion that, Green HRM 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. Yusliza Mohd Yusoff (2015) since the concept of Green HRM is still unclear and needs to be explored further; the study has to be done with qualitative approach to gain deeper insights and understandings in this regard to develop broad conceptualizations of Green HRM. These broad concepts were then narrowed down by grouping the activities which entail shared concepts and result in the formation of only five parent concepts – the E-HRM, Work-life Balance (WLB), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Green Policies, and Extra Care Program. Green Human Resource management practices are conceptualized as the use of the respective Human Resource Management (HRM) policies in promoting the sustainable use of resources in a business and following the aim of encouraging the cause of a sustainable environment (Cheema, Pasha, & Javed, 2015). Jabbour & de Sousa Jabbour, (2016) defines that the basic elements of GHRM are preserving and developing knowledge and the application of HR practices that are environment-friendly. Through an eco-focus drive, the HR function is the epitome of environmental sustainability in a firm via the alignment of its policies and practices with the sustainability goals. Aragao et al, (2017) in today’s global environmental demands, sustainable consciousness

intertwined with daily life and sound business. In recent years, companies have incorporated the issue of sustainability in their corporate strategies.

Methodology

The the present study has been done with the help of secondary data available on the different sites.

Objective

1. To understand the concept of Green Human Resource Management.

Scope of the Study

As it has already been discussed that Green human resource management is in its initial stage. Only a few researches have been done in this regard so the topic can be of great importance from the point of view of research scholar. Green hrm can be studied in different sectors as each and every business have a significant impact on sustainable development.

Significance of Study

After achieving substantial development, we have realized about limitations of natural resources. Hence, need for sustainable development has emerged and proved its importance for our next generations' need. Sustainable development is not a process but it is a life style, which everyone needs to adopt in lifecycle including private and work life.

In today's scenario, development of industrialization should be sustainable and based on environmentally friendly path. Our future is depending on how each individual is contributing for green environment by adopting sustainable practices. Adaption of Green HRM practices will certainly help in upgrading working environment in each organization. Hereby the study will contribute in developing policies and procedures for environmentally friendly HR practices based on Green HRM concept.

Conclusion

It is clear from the above stated facts that GHRM promises potential benefits for both the organizations and those employed by them in long term. From the organizational perspective, it is clear that better environmental performance is directly related with improved financial outcomes; the so-called 'Green pays' argument.

The GHRM practices stated in this paper plays an important role in improving not only the environmental performance but also the financial performance of the organization. The GHRM practices analysed here are likely to improve employee wellbeing in the workplace, not only through improving the working environment and satisfying the needs of an but also making the workforce environmentally aware. At the end, we believe that GHRM has the potential to contribute positively to both employee wellbeing and to the improved organizational performance. Green HR management helps in achieving greater efficiency and lower costs within a process, reducing and eliminating ecological wastage and refurbishing HR products, tools, and procedures.

On the basis of the study, it can be said that people in Bareilly city are not much aware about the concept, practices and products of Green HR. people are also

unaware about the advantages and practices of green Hr practices. it can be inferred from the study that people are not well versed with the trending concepts in Hr.

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