Green HRM-A Tool of Sustainable Development

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Abstract— Green HRM is the emerging topic in current scenario. The business environment is transforming itself from a traditional financial perspective to a competency based, strategic perspective. Green issues have already been popular in environmental and social aspects of present corporate world. Corporate green HR focuses on high level of technical and managerial competencies for employees as the firms wants to develop innovative environmental initiatives and functions that have tremendous managerial implications. In general, green HR particularly deals with the HR activities with are environment friendly and promote the sustainability of resources that an organization may have. However, there is a substantial gap exists in human resource management (HRM) literatures on environmental aspects of human resources. There is still a growing need for formulating green HRM strategies, including literature, processes, models and examining their implications on overall firm performance. Firms are also under immense pressure from different stakeholders for integrating green HR policies and strategies into overall firm strategy. The general purpose of this study is to discuss the green HRM practice and why firm should adopt Green HRM practices and to study the challenges and strategic implementation of it on various traditional HR activities. The paper will hopefully create an interest for the academicians and tentative researchers who wish to study the basic understanding of green HRM practices in a literature perspective.

Key words: Human Resource Management, Green HRM Practices, Firms, HR Strategy, HR Practices & Policies

I. INTRODUCTION

Organizations are nowadays realizing that, in addition to focusing on financial profits, they must consider all social and environmental impacts for their long-term sustainability. Organizations need to understand their responsibility towards social and environmental risks and opportunities for all business decisions taken by them. Human resource department of an organization is supposed to have a means to play an important role in the design of their organization’s sustainability culture. Many authors, particularly in the area of HRM, battled that the helpfulness and successful in any management innovation and strategic tools are depending on the quality and facility of their human resources. Green HRM refers to using every employee to support sustainable apply and increase employee responsiveness and commitments on the problems of sustainability. Green HRM has obtained different meaning for different people. Ashok Ramachandran, Director HR Vodafone Essar Ltd defines green HR as using every employee touch point to espouse sustainable practices and raise employee level of awareness, Anjana Nath Regional Head HR, Fortis healthcare ltd defines Green HR as environment- friendly HR initiatives leading to better efficiencies, lesser cost and heightened employee engagement levels. It involves undertaking environment friendly initiatives resulting in greater efficiency, lower costs, and better employee engagement and retention which in turn help organization to reduce carbon footprints by the means of “Electronic filling, Car sharing, Job sharing, Teleconferencing, Online training, Flexible working hours and Telecommuting”.

A. What Green HRM

Green HRM is a relatively new agenda in management and HRM literatures. The concept of green HRM typically includes using less possible paperwork at all HR functions like recruitment & selection, training, performance review etc. to create a sustainable, environment friendly and competitive advantage through employee engagement. Green HRM is the use of HRM policies to support the sustainable use of resources within organizations and, more usually helps the reasons of environment sustainability. Typical green activities contain video recruiting, or the use of online and video interviews, to minimize travel requirements. Green rewards can embrace the use of workplace and lifestyle benefits, ranging from carbon credit compensates to free bicycles, to keep people in the green program, as continuing to identify their involvement. Other simple green events embrace minimizing the amount of printed materials used in performance management, salary evaluations and so on. Although there is absolutely an important amount of “green washing” happening in reducing waste, there are many opportunities here too.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The key research objectives are as follows:
- To study the green practices and why firm should adopt Green HRM practices in the organisations.
- To study the challenges and strategic implementation of Green HRM in the organizations.

A. Research Methodology

This study is totally based on secondary data collected from different sources. The data are generated by responsible authorities of the departments and published research by various researchers provided on their site/reports. Apart from these, data has been taken different Books, Journals, Research Papers and other print media. The present study was undertaken to understand the green practices and strategic implementation of Green HRM in the organizations.

III. GREEN PRACTICES

Renwick, Redman, and Maguire (2008) introduce a comprehensive compartmentalization of Green HRM practices that can be clearly understood, starting at the point of an employee’s organizational entry and proceed until the point of the employee’s exit. To be ecological, economical and practical at the same time is possible through by adopting
Green Practices. Here are some environmentally-friendly solutions to stay Green. 
1) Green Printing 
2) Green Manufacturing and Disposal of Staff ID card 
3) Job sharing (sharing a full-time job between two employees) 
4) Teleconferencing and virtual interviews 
5) Recycling 
6) Telecommuting 
7) Online Training 
8) Reduce employee carbon footprints by the likes of electronic filling. Green HR involves reducing carbon footprint via less printing of paper, video conferencing and interviews etc. 
9) Energy efficient office spaces 
10) Green Payroll 
11) Car Pooling 
12) Public Transport 
13) Company Transport 
14) Flexi-Work 
15) e-filing 

IV. WHY FIRMS SHOULD ADOPT GREEN HRM PRACTICES? 
Even though initially it may be difficult to initiate and implement the green HRM practices at the first level, it can fulfill the prime objectives of an organization such as cost control, ensuring corporate social responsibility, talent acquisition and gaining competitive advantage over the rivals through environment consciousness and preservation of natural and ethical values. The usual reasons why a firm should adopt green HRM practices are noted down below: 

A. Preservation of natural environment 
The elements of the environment which are not created by human beings are called the elements of natural environment like trees, forests, rivers, animals etc. Green HRM practices such as online advertising and recruitment which uses less paper, creating less carbon emission on the office space, training through electronic sources to reduce paper waste can keep the environment form loss or negatively affected. 

B. Ensure healthy working environment and raise employee morale 
Making the corporate space green with trees & plants, forbidding smoking on the office premises, using less paperwork (which makes an employee hectic), providing natural fruits & vegetables on HR meetings- all these can create a healthy and habitable working environment which in turn, can raise the speed and morale of the workers. 

C. Gain competitive advantage through ensuring corporate social responsibility (CSR) 
Corporate social responsibility is now-a-days a part of company’s core responsibilities which no company can ignore. Therefore, a firm can gain competitive advantage over its rivals by ensuring green management practices in a well performed manner. 

D. Save cost 
Creating a sound working environment can reduce employee fatigue, absenteeism and turnover. The result is reduced cost. Again using less paper and disseminating and recording the information via online can reduce wastage and cost. 

E. Increase Company Image 
It is obvious that a company which has green management/HRM practices will have a higher image than a company which has not. 

F. Reduce intervention from the government and other law enforcing agencies 
Adoption of proper green management/HRM practices can reduce the chance of intervention by the central/local govt. and other law enforcing agencies. 

G. Develop eco-friendliness and environmental learning among the employees 
Adoption of green HRM practices make the employees environment conscious and make them eco-friendly which makes them a good corporate citizen in environmental perspective. 

H. Stimulate innovation and growth 
Green HRM practices encourages new innovative ideas and practices that facilitates growth in quality and enhancement of methods and processes. 

I. Facilitate learning and shape behavior 
Such practices help to facilitate green/environmental consciousness among the employees and refine or shape their behaviors to develop eco-Friendly attitudes in their personal and work lives. 

J. Maximize use of resources and reduce waste 
Green HRM practices can help a firm to maximize its natural resources through the use of recycled products and reduce waste to an optimum level. 

V. 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: 
- There are some employees in every organization who are not equally motivated to adopt green HRM practices. 
- Developing and maintaining a culture of green HRM is a lengthy and time consuming process. 
- At the initial stage of implementation, it requires a high investment and may bring a low return. 
- Recruiting and training employees about green HRM is a challenging job to do. 
- It is very difficult to appraise the green performance of employees’ behavior. 
- It is difficult to transform employee attitude to green HRM from traditional HRM in a short period of time. 
- 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. 

VI. STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION OF GREEN HRM ON GENERAL HRM FUNCTIONS 
As a new expansion of general HRM, Green HRM can be feed into usual HRM functions. Several functions involving
regular HRM practices in which green HRM can be implemented could be the following in general.

A. Online advertisement and invitation of application via online

The unbelievable advancement of technology has made it easier for the firms to post their job advertisement to the online job sites and their own websites. Even it is now possible to submit the resume for a candidate online. This process is quick, efficient, easy and cheap. The candidates just need online access. Another advantage of online application is that the potential candidate can search and gather the information he/she needs from the company website which would not be possible otherwise.

B. Green recruitment and selection of candidates

The companies can pick the resumes/CVs of suitable candidates and download them. Later, they can print whenever needed. The selection tests also can be as much paperless as possible like behavioral observation, interview, presentation in which less paper is needed. Moreover, preferences could be given to the candidates who are more environment aware and friendly or who have strong motivation to keep the office and environment green or natural as it is.

C. Green orientation

The induction and socialization process can be designed in a way that facilitates the inclusion of new employees into the process of green consciousness. Orientation programs should uphold the organization’s attitude for green issues like health and safety, green workplace, healthy and clean local area etc.

D. Green performance management and evaluation

Overall performance management system should be developed including green target in Key Performance Areas (KPA) and Key Performance Index (KPI). Green performance goals and green behavior indicators should be the key areas of performance appraisals at all levels. Examples of such goals might be to create awareness and achievement among the employees, encouraging the subordinates to facilitate green environment learning etc.

E. Green learning and development

Training, learning and development process should include programs, workshops, seminars, sessions and presentations that develop and help employees to acquire knowledge in green management skills. The training learning content should be developed to increase competencies and skills in environment management. Extensive online and web-based training modules and tools can be used for not only green management but also other functions as well. Issues like safety, energy efficiency, waste management, recycling can be the core points of green training. Training supervisors should use more on online course materials and case studies rather than printed handouts, books and brochures to reduce the use of paper.

F. Green compensation and reward

Compensation packages should include rewarding green skills and achievement. Special bonuses might be given to the employees for extra-ordinary effort to make the workplace clean, maintaining health and safety standards, using less paper and so on.

G. Maintenance of employee relations

The Company can promote the “eco friendliness” to add value to company’s products and services with efficient utilization of existing financial, human and natural resources. Employees should be motivated for involvement and participation in social and ecological initiatives to create a general healthy and workable office space that results in sustainable, competent, efficient and socially responsible employer-employee relationship.

H. Creation of a green leadership management

The company can assign a top-level manager to can initiate and organize the green sustainability. He/she can include the green issues in business and corporate plans.

I. Green health and safety management

The green health and safety management is really beyond the scope of traditional health and safety management function of HRM. It not only includes the traditional health and safety management but also some more aspects of environmental management of an organization. That is why nowadays many organizations are redesigning post of “health and safety manager” as “health, safety and environmental manager”. This includes a wider job scope when compared with traditional post of health and safety manager in an organization. For example, it includes biodiversity protection and community support initiatives etc. that include local environment and people. The key role of green health and safety management is to ensure a green workplace for all. Green workplace is defined as a workplace that is environmentally sensitive, resource efficient and socially responsible. At present there are companies where traditional health and safety function was extended to include environmental management/protection. These companies have continually endowed to create various environmental related initiatives to reduce employee stress and occupational disease caused by hazardous work environment.

J. Green employee discipline management

Wehrmeyer stated explicitly that green discipline management is a pre-requisite in corporate environmental management. In ensuring green employee behavior in the workplace, organizations may need green discipline management practices to achieve the environmental management objectives and strategies of the organization. In this context, some companies have realized “discipline management” as a tool to self-regulate employees in environmental protection activities of the organization. These firms have developed a clear set of rules and regulations which imposes/ regulates employees to be concerned with environmental protection in line with environmental policy of the organizations. In such companies, if an employee violates environmental rules and regulations, disciplinary actions (warning, fining, suspension, etc.) are taken against him/her.

VII. CONCLUSION

Based on this review, it is possible to conclude that proper understanding and implementation of scope and depth of green HR practices, a firm can improve its social and organizational performance in a sustainable manner that will
create some competitive advantages for them. 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. Therefore, firms should integrate the green issues and practices into the regular, day to day HRM activities and also; into the strategic HR decisions and corporate policies. Hence, we suggest that organisations be required to give more priority to make each function of HRM green.

REFERENCES