

GREEN HRM: A Roadmap To Sustainability

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Abstract: The Green Human Resources Management is based on green movement related to Protection of Environment and this movement across the world gave birth to Green HR. This paper seeks to offer elementary comprehensive understanding in respect of green human resource management (green HRM) that is a innovative concept and certainly has avast prospective to serve the individual, society and business. The paper has its emphasis on different aspects such as meaning of green HRM, importance of green HRM, green human resource requirements, greening of HRM functions and the findings of some green HRM research studies. The paper will be of some interest to potential researchers and for gaining a theoretical understanding of green HRM.

Introduction:

The Green Human Resource Management will play an important role in promoting the environment related issues by adopting it, in management philosophy. The Green HRM is the requirement of 21st Century as it is stated that because of the excess consumption of natural resources as a raw material by the industries and other commercial organization there is tremendous pressure on the natural resources of planet Earth. The situation is so alarming that the scientist and the environmentalist are discussing the issues of ecological imbalances and the bio-diversity. The responsibility of the present generations, HR managers is to create awareness amongst 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.

Green means environmental. “Green” or “Greening” has at least four meanings in the context of managing people at work (HRM).

- 1) Preservation of the natural environment: all the things in the world which are neither caused nor controlled by human beings and they include land, forests, plants, animals, and other natural phenomena are referred to as the natural environment. To keep it in its original form and protect it from harm, loss, or negative change.
- 2) Conservation of the natural environment: to be very careful in the way of using it in order to let it last as long as possible, to use it at the minimum level so that future generations will be able to utilize it.
- 3) Avoidance or minimization of environmental pollution: to stop contaminating the water, air, atmosphere, etc. through unpleasant and poisonous substances and wastes.
- 4) Generation of gardens and looking-like natural places: to create parks and places which have plants, trees, and grass.

Thus, it is possible to debate that an employee who may be a manager or a non-manager is supposed to perform Green or greening means Preservation of the natural environment. There are four roles for the purpose of becoming a green employee. They are preservationist, conservationist, non-polluter, and maker. Preservationist does keeping the natural environment in its original form and protecting it from harm, loss, or negative change. Conservationist becomes very careful in the way of using the natural environment so that future generations will be able to utilize it. Non-polluter does preventing from (or minimizing) contaminating the water, air, atmosphere, etc. through unpleasant and poisonous substances and wastes. Maker does creating gardens and looking-like natural places. In other words he or she intentionally builds parks and places which have plants, trees, and grass.

Why go green?

According to Rugman & Verbeke (1998), environmental issues are some of the most complex and significant managerial challenges of twenty-first century. It includes climate change, resources depletion and reduction of biodiversity and ecosystem integrity. Rapid destruction of natural resources is seen and heard. Organizations are responsible for the environmental degradation (Alshuwaikhat & Abubakar, 2008; Haden et al., 2009). Climate change is a major issue and this is of increasing concern to governments, general public and business organizations nowadays (Boiral et al., 2012). Fortunately some organizations and some individuals including environmentalists and nature lovers commenced increasingly to pay a serious attention to preserve (to protect), conserve (to save) the environment and to minimize environmental pollution. Hence, green or greening is for our survival and development. It is possible not only to make organizations green but also to make each individual/employee green.

What is green hrm?

Green human resources refer to using every employee touch point / interface to promote sustainable practices and increase employee awareness and commitments on the issues of sustainability. It involves undertaking environment-friendly HR initiatives resulting in greater efficiencies, lower costs and better employee engagement and retention which in turn, help organizations to reduce employee carbon footprints by the likes of electronic filing, car sharing, job-sharing, tele-conferencing and virtual interviews, recycling, telecommuting, online training, energy-efficient office spaces etc. 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. The purpose of green HRM is to create, enhance and retain greening within each employee of the organization so that he or she gives a maximum individual contribution on each of the four roles, i.e., preservationist, conservationist, non-polluter, and maker.

Few green hrm initiatives:

- 1) Making double-sided photocopies or altogether discouraging the use of paper in filing and office work by making use of technology like adopting digital filing.
- 2) Powering down computers after a few minutes of inactivity instead of hibernating.
- 3) Using energy-efficient bulbs for desk lamps or switching off lights and using Sun light during day time wherever possible. Some corporates may adopt green architecture in building their offices that allows bright Sun light into work place.
- 4) Donating used office furniture / supplies to employees or local charity
- 5) Pooling of cars for transporting executives to minimize fuel consumption and carbon emissions or even encouraging cycling among employees to commute to office, wherever possible.
- 6) Use natural water rather than refrigerated water for drinking thereby reducing electricity consumption.
- 7) Strict implementation of smoking free premises.
- 8) Announcing rewards for employees for green ideas.
- 9) Putting plants in the working cubicles to absorb pollution and conducting tree planting camps for employees.
- 10) Educating employees on safe disposal of electronic waste or bio-medical waste etc.

Sustainability

The term Sustainability, Sustainability development, corporate sustainability and corporate social Responsibility are often exchangeable the term Sustainability can be defined “as the development that meets the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. WCED defined three components for sustainability development person environmental protection, economic growth and social equity. Sustainable development is really mostly identified by referring to this establishment of a balance between Profit, Planet and People. A Sustainable organization can be defined as an undertaking that all together gives economic, social, and environmental benefits- known as the “Triple bottom line”.

Imperative of green hrm?

Few general reasons for greening are as follows:

- To avoid or minimize global warming.
- To avoid or minimize natural disasters such as acid rains, red rains, tsunamis, flooding, hurricanes, droughts etc.
- To avoid or minimize health diseases owing to pollution.
- To avoid or minimize harms to animals and other natural creatures.
- To ensure appropriate balance of relationships among plants, animals, people, and their environment.
- To ensure survival of humans and business organizations for a prolonged period of time.

The above mentioned reasons are very general for a company to adopt Green Practices,so, as far as a particular organization is concerned a phenomenon called corporate social responsibility (CSR) exists. CSR is defined as the extent to which an organization will strive to improve the overall welfare of society. It is an obligation to the general society. Thus, every organization gets obligatory to perform corporate environmental management and therefore there are environmental goals to be achieved by the organization.Green HRM under the umbrella of CSR would help in building company image to attract good human resource. It also improves the brand image of the company in the market. It can furthermore be used as a marketing strategy.It does rallies relationship of the company with its stakeholders- customers, suppliers, vendors, shareholders, government agencies, employees and the media.

Green HRM becomes necessitated in order to provide environmentally friendly products and operations, to manage corporate environmental programs successfully, and to overcome implementation challenges of corporate environmental programs (Milliman& Clair, 1996). Distinguished policies in recruitment, performance appraisal, training and development, employee relations and reward systems are considered powerful tools for aligning employees with a company's environment strategy (Renwick et al., 2008) and therefore green HRM can decisively contribute to successful environmental management (Jackson et al., 2011). Greening will be beneficial for the employee to give a significant individual contribution and become a good citizen giving a significant contribution to environmental sustainability.

Conclusion:

To conclude one can say that HR has a role in the pursuit of greener business practices, a role to save planet earth and recruit new employees and enforce greener working practices and change environmentally unfriendly behaviours.Green HR efforts have mainly focused on increasing competency within processes, reducing and eliminating environmental damage, and restoring efficiency and lowering costs. Society becoming more environmentally conscious, businesses are starting to include green proposals into their everyday work environment. The rising concept of green human resource management carries a great significance for both organizations and employees. HR has significant opportunity to contribute the green movement and motivate employee / people to work for greener business.

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