

Green Human Resource Management: A Review

Sabzar Ahmad Peerzadah¹, Dr. Sabiya Mufti², Dr. Nazir Ah. Nazir³

¹. Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, University of Kashmir, India.

². Senior Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, University of Kashmir, India.

³. Professor, Department of Commerce University of Kashmir, India.

ABSTRACT

As an emerging concept, green human resource management (green HRM) means “HRM activities, which enhance positive environmental outcomes”. Green HRM is a new emerging concept in today's world. Growing concern for the global environment and the development of international standards and protocols for environmental management has created a need for business organizations to adopt environmental strategies and programmes. The business is shifting its focus from a conventional financial structure to a new capacity-based system which is ready to explore green economic facets of business as the corporate world is going global. In this emerging field, it has been generally observed that the extant literature has to be extended further from the HRM functions perspective. The objective of this review is to explore green HRM practices based on the existent literature. The study followed the archival method of the literature review. The contribution of this article lies in drawing together the extant literature in this area; highlighting different significant works by other workers and at the end attempts to suggest some green initiatives for HR.

Keywords:- Environment Management, Going Green, Green Economy, Green HRM, Green Initiatives.

1. INTRODUCTION

In this era of living, the levels of environmental awareness and efforts towards its sustainability have reached new heights. In every international conference on the environment, the nations are discussing the carbon credits, global warming and the changes in the climate, resulting into earthquakes, frequent floods, rapid melting of glaciers and vanishing of certain species and animals (Shaikh 2010)^[1]. Specific treaties to combat climate change like (Kyoto 1997, Bali 2007, Copenhagen 2009 and most recent Paris Agreement 2016) have wetted the appetite in environmental sustainability worldwide, thereby making it all the more necessary for business organizations to act in an eco-friendly manner. There is an alarming need for companies to strike a balance between the unavoidable industrial growth and the conservation of natural environment for enabling it for our future generation (Daily & Haung, 2001)^[2]. Given the prevailing situation, organizations globally have started to adopt such philosophies that can really prove fruitful towards this end. Amongst others, Green HRM is the most recent and prominent one. 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 harming arising from environmental concerns in organizations (Zoogah,2011)^[3].

Opatha and Arulrajah (2014)^[4] have explained GRHM as the policies, practices, and systems that make employees of the organization green for the benefit of the individuals, society, natural environment, and the businesses. In GHRM various human resource practices, such as recruitment and selection, performance appraisal, compensation and training, are designed in a manner to create a workforce that understands and promotes green behavior in the organization (Mathapati,2013). Green initiatives within HRM form part of wider programs of corporate social responsibility. Green HR essentially consists of two major elements namely environment-friendly HR practices and the preservation of knowledge capital (Mandip,2012)^[5]. Further, organizational strategies for environmental management and sustainable development will succeed when they are well-aligned with its human resource practices (Ichniowski et al., 1997)^[6]. Collins and Clark,2003^[7]elaborates that within an organization, human resource and their system are the basic foundation of any business, be it financial business or sustainable business. They are the ones responsible for planning and executing those eco-friendly policies to create a green atmosphere. Therefore, without facilitating the human resource and implementing sustainable policies, going green would be a hard nut to crack (Ahmad, 2015)^[8]. Considering the above points, the present study is a humble attempt to provide simplified insights on some common green HRM practices and their implementation globally with the special reference based to India on extant literature. With this brief introduction, this paper introduces the objectives, methodology used for the study, the literature review and at the end green initiatives required to be taken in an effort to embrace green HRM concept.

2. OBJECTIVE

The main purpose of this study is:

- To bring to the fore the concept of green HRM.
- To highlight different significant works on green HRM by other workers, and
- To suggest ways and means for green initiatives.

3. METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the above stated objectives, a systematic review of literature was conducted by using an archival method. This paper employs a methodology to review the articles from different databases, websites and other available sources with “green HRM” or “environmental HRM” as the topic. Hence the study for this paper becomes a desk research rather than a survey or any other mode of researching taking the cues from the extant literature. The present study adopted archival method of literature review so that it enables the researcher to structure the research, find gaps, scopes for further study and authentic knowledge base in this field of study (Renwick et al., 2008)^[9]. In this study, archival research provided insight on existing GHRM practices by congregating available research studies. Hence a systematic review of collected literature was done in detail.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

The term ‘Green HRM’ has been coined by (Wehrmeyer 1996)^[10], when he published his book as an attempt to connect the two fields of Environmental management and Human resource management. Hence, it is a recent concept in the field of Management. Prasad (2013) defines Green HRM as the contribution of HR policies to protect and preserve the natural resources. The prime aim of Green HRM is sustainable development through Human resource management. It has extended the boundaries of conventional HRM practices towards more sustainable and environmental strategies (Sarode et. al., 2016). Today the topic Green HRM not only includes awareness toward environmental affairs but also stands for the social as well as the economic well-being of both the organization and the employees within a broader prospect (Ahmad, 2015). It can be used to reduce costs, better efficiencies, to reduce carbon footprints, to make green awareness among the employees and initiate green work-life balance programmes (Nijhawan, 2014)^[11]. Ahmad (2015) stresses upon the need for developing the correlation between the existing HR policies and practices with Green HRM principles for sustainable development. He suggests that Green HRM can become a key business strategy for an organization with active participation by HR Department.

In essence, Green HRM can be understood as a manifesto which helps in the creation and development of Green employees. Opatha and Arulrajah (2014) have identified four roles for the purpose of becoming a Green employee. They are preservationist, conservationist, non-polluter and maker. Accordingly, the purpose of Green HRM is to create, enhance and retain green insights within each employee of the organization so that he or she can give the maximum contribution on each of these roles. Further, they stated that the Green HR requirements include Green Competencies, Green Attitude, Green Behaviors and Green Results. As per them, these are needed to achieve the corporate environmental objectives. Renwick et. al. (2013)^[12] states GHRM has been augmented to enhance green behaviors, attitudes and capabilities of employees, motivate workers to think green, and to provide opportunities for employees to build knowledge and skills associated with environmental sustainability. Renwick et. al. (2008) and (Muller-Carmen et. al., 2010)^[13] have explained that GHRM involves an integration of company’s environmental management objectives to the HR processes of recruitment, selection, training and development, performance management and evaluation, rewards and recognition etc. Renwick et. al. (2013) analyzed the separate literature of Environmental management and HRM and constructed a list of Green HRM activities. Opatha and Arulrajah (2014) states in order to make sure that the organization gets right employee green inputs and right employee green performance of the job, it is indispensable that HRM functions are adapted or modified to be green. Several practices to embrace green HRM are discussed hereunder:

Green Recruitment and Selection

It refers to the process of hiring such people in an organization who are conscious of their responsibilities towards environmental sustainability. They must be enthusiastic about working for an eco-friendly company. For this, the company’s job description should reflect the sustainability agenda and the company’s website and other research tools available for candidate access clearly outline its greening endeavor (Mandip, 2012). According to (Wehrmeyer, 1996)^[14], recruitment practices can support effective environmental management by making sure that new entrants are familiar with an organization’s environmental culture and are capable of maintaining its environmental values. A survey by the British Carbon Trust shows over 75% of 1,018 employees considering working for a firm see it as important that these organisations have an active policy to reduce carbon emissions (Clark, 2006)^[15].

Pavitra Mishra (2017) identified two parts of Green recruitment and selection:

- (1) Employing eco-friendly ways of hiring such as online tools, limited paper usage at the time of recruitment and selection.

- (2) Measuring green attitudes at the time of selection, considering people who value green practices and follow basic environment-friendly activities such as recycling, less printing, and conservation of energy.

Green Training and Development

Green training and development aim to improve employee's awareness and knowledge on environmental issues, build the positive attitude, take a proactive approach toward environmental concerns and develop competencies to conserve energy and reduce waste (Zoogah,2011). Employee training and development programs should include social and environmental issues at all levels, from technical health and safety considerations on the shop floor to strategic sustainability issues at the executive management and broad sustainability issues at the executive management and Board level. Green orientation programs for the newly hired employees should be an integral part of the training and development process (Mandip,2012). In Germany, all employees at Siemens receive some environmental training, with a focus on those involved with the treatment of hazardous waste/dangerous substances and interested specialists. Such training is an element of the in-house training program taking at least one day during working hours and has produced 5,000 suggestions a year from plant employee on environmental protection (North & Daig,1996)^[16]. All this will result in reducing wastage, proper utilization of resources and conservation of energy.

Green Performance Management and Appraisal

Performance management is considered as one of the key human resource practices for promoting environment behavior and sustainable development, thus advocating green performance management Gholami et al.,(2016). Opatha & Arulrajah (2014) advocates the evaluation of employees' job performance according to green-related criteria and inclusion of a separate component for progress on greening in the performance feedback interview. Green performance appraisal may be significant because when a behavior is measured to judge an individual, its perceived value rises and efforts to comply with the same are increased. Thus, including green behaviors in the performance appraisal system will facilitate their adoption among employees (Pavitra Mishra, 2017). Environmental incidents, use of environmental responsibilities and the communication of environmental policies and concerns are some of the issues addressed under green performance management. Organisations like Tata Group of Companies have installed corporate-wide environmental performance standards to measure environmental performance standards, and developing green information systems and audits to get beneficial data on managerial environmental performance (Mandip, 2012).

Green compensation and reward system

In the context of Green HRM, rewards and compensation can be assumed as a potential tool for supporting environmental activities in organizations (Ahmad,2015). In accordance with a strategic approach to reward and management, nowadays organizations are developing reward systems to encourage eco-friendly initiatives embarked upon by their employees. The statement is supported by a survey conducted in the UK by CIPD/KPMG that estimated that 8% of UK firms were rewarding green behaviors with various types of awards and/or financial incentives (Phillips, 2007)^[17], and these practices can be effective in motivating employees to generate eco-initiatives (Ramus,2002)^[18]. Mandip (2012) states that attainment of specific sustainable initiatives should be incorporated into the compensation system by offering employees a benefits package that rewards employees for changing behaviors. A variable pay element can be added to the compensation system by linking the pay to eco-performance. Opatha and Arulrajah (2014) advocate for giving financial as well as non-financial rewards to employees for their good green performance.

Green employee involvement

Green employee involvement is defined as "Creating an environment in which people have an impact on decisions and actions that affect their jobs" (Quagraine, 2015). Employee involvement is a continuous process of taking suggestions from employees on various environmental strategies. It also involves collecting feedback from the employees to improve the existing practices. This acts as a motivation tool to make employees more responsible and improves their cooperation in the greening of the organization. Phillips (2007) explained, "The use of employee participation in green HR has been noted to help prevent pollution from workplaces". An important way in which employee involvement and participation can be encouraged within the organization is to seek entrepreneurs within the company who are socially or ecologically oriented known as eco-intrapreneurs. They have the ability to organize existing financial, human and natural resources in a way that adds value to the company products or services where it didn't exist previously (Mandip, 2012). Employee involvement in organization greening has been reported as improving the key outcomes of environmental management such as efficient use of resources, reducing waste and reducing pollution from workplaces (Florida & Davidson 2001); (May & Flannery,1995); (Denton,1999). A study of employee involvement in 110 Spanish ISO 14001 registered factories found employee involvement in environmental management to be positively correlated with manager-rated environmental outcome measures (Brio et. al.,2007)^[19].

5. PROMINENT EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON GREEN HRM IN INDIA

Mandip (2012) examined the nature and extent of Green HR initiatives undertaken by ITC Limited as a case study. The findings revealed that ITC has achieved the milestone of being carbon positive, waste positive and achieving almost 100% solid waste recycling.

Pooja popli (2014)^[20] carried out a study of Green HR practices in industries in Nasik. The purpose was to identify whether the organizations in Nasik are aware of the concept of Green HRM and if the organizations are aware what different initiatives and efforts they take to make their HR practices and environment green. The findings revealed that most of the organizations in Nasik are well versed about the Green HR concept that has been put forward to help them to keep the environment green but still few companies are not able to put it into practice in different functional areas of HRM.

R.K. Mishra et. al. (2014)^[21] conducted a study on Indian CPSE's (Central Public Sector Enterprises) to explore the greening practices initiated over there. The study revealed that the companies have only a few existing Green HRM initiatives; the initiatives are not formally implemented yet and are not generally categorized under the Green HR technique. The companies do accept the need for greening and also support the concept of employee involvement yet; such initiatives at present do not exist in the organizations. There is high scope for the Indian CPSE's to adopt HR initiatives to support their vision of greenlining of organizations.

Parida et. al., (2015)^[22] conducted a study to examine the various Green HRM practices and policies adopted by IT firms and to check employee awareness regarding these sustainable practices in their organizations. The findings revealed that these companies are adopting various methods towards sustainable development like double-sided printouts, less use of paper, encouraging carpooling, switching off lights and other power consuming resources like A.C after 6 pm, encouraging online application for jobs and conducting interviews through video conferencing etc. The findings further revealed that majority of the employees are aware of the practices followed and they follow such practices because of the sense of responsibility towards the environment. The HR managers agreed that GHRM policies had contributed in increasing the profit share of the company. According to the research, the major barriers to implementation of sustainable policies were the cost of implementing programs and the cost of maintaining programs.

Mousumi & Nilanjan Sengupta (2015)^[23] conducted a research on junior and senior executives working in seven sectors such as IT, Banking, Airlines, Telecom, Automobile, Manufacturing, and Healthcare. The study was meant to investigate the perception of these employees about the Green HRM initiatives implemented by their respective organizations. It was found that these companies have been implementing a number of Green HRM initiatives. However, the more serious approach needs to be taken to implement them, communicate them to the employees, encourage them to adhere to such initiatives and reward them adequately.

Pavitra Mishra (2017) carried out a study to understand the status of GHRM practices in the Indian Manufacturing sector and to explore factors that may encourage Green behaviors. The findings suggest that the organizations have certain existing practices of GHRM, but these practices are neither formally organized under GHRM initiatives nor diligently followed. It further reveals though there are instances of organizations making efforts to increase awareness through informal means, only a few provided environmental training. In case of recruitment and selection, organizations are only practicing use of online portals and social media. In case of performance appraisal, there is no particular point about green behaviors.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The above review of literature shreds of evidence, to a great extent, inherent capacity of HRM functions in making employees and organizational operations green. From job design function to employee relations. The key challenge in front of HR professionals is to understand the scope and depth of green HRM in transforming their organizations as green entities. This effort ultimately leads to the better environmental performance of the organization. To create, practice and maintain environmental related innovative behaviors of employees coupled with the right attitude of greening, green HRM practices are critical. Existing HRM, EM, and green HRM literature suggest that employee behaviors are critical to the success and achievement of a company's green management and sustainability agenda. D. Jenny (2015)^[24]. Employees are willing to work in an organization only when they feel it adds to their value profile (Dechant and Altman, 1994). The study conducted by Hewitt Associates in 2009 elaborated that: "86% of employees at organizations with high engagement agreed that they worked for an organization that was socially and environmentally responsible" Same 2009 Study also found out that: "Green HR practices contribute to positive organizational reputation, higher or sustained employee engagement and eliminating waste/reducing their impact on the environment". Recent studies have also supported the same conclusions. Hence, we assert that by understanding the scope and depth of green HRM practices organizations will have a capability of performing in a more environmentally friendly manner than ever before. Finally, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) thinks that **"a green employer may improve employer branding, company image and is a useful way to attract potential employees who have environmental orientation"** CIPD(2007)^[25].

Based on the foregoing review, one can conclude that the green HRM practices are more powerful tools in making organizations and their operations green. The green performance, green behaviors, green attitude, and green competencies of human resources can be shaped and reshaped through adaptation of green HRM practices. The green human resource management has the responsibility to create green awareness among the new talent and the existing

employee working for the organization, encourage their employees for helping the organization to reduce the causes of environmental degradation through green movement, green programs, and practices, retain the resources for future generation. Green HRM can develop inspiration, willingness, and commitment to employees to contribute their ideas and efforts for the awareness and implementation of the Green HRM practices in their organization. The green HRM efforts result in increased efficiencies, sustainable use of resources, less wastage, improved Job-Related Attitude, Improved Work/Private life, lower costs, Improved employee performance, and retention which help the organization to reduce employee carbon footprints by the mean of Green HRM. Hence, it is suggested that organizations be required to give more priority to make each function of HRM green.

GREEN INITIATIVES

Human resource play very important role in managing employee from entry to exit. Now the corporates are focusing on greening the business, so the Human resource department has the additional responsibility of go green along with HR policies. The future of Green HRM appears promising for all the stakeholders of HRM, be it the employer, employee, practitioner, or academicians. We propose that Green HRM has substantial scope for research in the management field but lacks behind in practice within academic scenario; hence, there is a need to bridge the gap between professional Green HRM practices and studies in research and teaching environmental management. The present study also proposes future researchers to fill the gap in the existing literature by conducting empirical studies such as Green HRM practices in the manufacturing or service organizations (particularly the organizations that are polluting environment), Comparing Green HRM practices between developed and developing countries, Green perceptions, awareness, attitudes of employer and employees, barriers in the green HRM implementation etc. There are a number of reasons for companies to adopt Green HRM practices within the organization that will not only benefit the organization but also give advantages to the employees. To be ecological, economical and practical at the same time is possible through by adopting Green Practices. Here are some environmentally-friendly initiatives/solutions that are expected to make organizations stay green:

1. Green Printing
2. Green Manufacturing
3. Job sharing (sharing a full-time job between two employees)
4. Teleconferencing, Video conferencing and virtual interviews
5. Recycling
6. Telecommuting
7. Online Training
8. Energy efficient office spaces
9. Green Payroll
10. Car Pooling
11. Public Transport
12. Company Transport
13. Flexi-Work
14. e-filing
15. Free bicycles for workers to come to work instead of driving.
16. Buying computers from companies which are using recycled components in one form or another.
17. Buying stuff from local vendors (again reducing the CO₂ contribution of anything transported too far).
18. Some companies go to the extreme to use the total amount of printed pages by an employee during his/her performance review.
19. There is even recycled (certified) office furniture

So, let's think of **Green HR as every possible employee activity/ interface/touchpoint (whether metaphorical or physical) that helps promote the organization's sustainability practices and relevant commitments.**

REFERENCES

- [1] Shaikh, M., Green HRM: A requirement of the 21st century. *Journal of Research in Commerce and Management*, 1,2010, 122–127.
- [2] Daily, B. F. and Huang, S., Achieving Sustainability Through Attention to Human Resource Factors in Environmental Management, *International Journal of Operation and Production Management*, 21(12),2001, 1539-1552.
- [3] Zoogah, D., The dynamics of Green HRM behaviors: A cognitive-social information processing approach. *Zeitschrift fur Personalforschung*, 25, 2011, 117–139.
- [4] Opatha, H. H., & Arulrajah, A. A., Green Human Resource Management: Simplified general reflections. *International Business Research*, 7,2014, 101–112.
- [5] Mandip, G., Green hrm: People management commitment to environmental sustainability. *Research Journal of Recent Sciences*, 2012, 244-252.
- [6] Ichniowski, C., Shaw, K. & Prenzushi, G., The effects of human resource management practices on productivity: a study of steel finishing lines. *American Economic Review*, 87,1997, 291–313.

- [7] Collins, C. J, and Clark, K. D., Strategic human resource practices, top management team social networks, and firm performance: the role of human resource in creating the organizational competitive advantage. *Academy of Management Journal*, 46(6)2003, 740–751.
- [8] Ahmad S. (2015). Green Human Resource Management: Policies and practices, *Cogent Business & Management*, 2015.
- [9] Renwick, D.W.S. Redman, T., and Maguire, S., Green HRM: A Review, Process Model, and Research Agenda, University of Sheffield Working, 2008.
- [10] Wehrmeyer, W. and Parker, K.T. ‘Identification and relevance of environmental corporate cultures as part of a coherent environmental policy’, in Wehrmeyer, W., 1996, 163–185.
- [11] Nijhawan, G., Green HRM- A requirement for sustainable Organisation. *Paripex- Indian Journal of Research*, 2014, 69-70.
- [12] Renwick, D.W.S. Redman, T., and Maguire, S., Green Human Resource Management: A Review, and Research Agenda, *International Journal of Management Review*, 15, 2013, 1-14.
- [13] Muller-Carmem, M., Jackson, S., Jabbour, C.J.C. and Renwick, D., ‘Green human resource management’, *Zeitschrift für Personalforschung*, 24(1),2010, 95–96.
- [14] Wehrmeyer, W., *Greening People – Human Resources and Environmental Management*, Sheffield, England: Greenleaf Publishing, 1996
- [15] Clarke, E., *Power Brokers*, People Management, 2006, 40-42.
- [16] North, K., and Daig., ‘Environmental Training in the UK and German Companies’, 1996,247-269.
- [17] Phillips, L., *Go Green to Gain the Edge over Rivals*, People Management, 2007.
- [18] Ramus, C. A., Encouraging innovative environmental actions: What companies and managers must do, *Journal of World Business*, 37, 2002, 151–164.
- [19] Brio, J. A., Fernandez, E., & Junquera, B., Management and employee involvement in achieving an environmental action based competitive advantage: an empirical study, *International Journal of Human Resource Management*; 18, 2007, 491-522.
- [20] Pooja Popli, A study of Green HR Practices, Its Awareness, and implementation in the industries in Nashik, *Global Journal of Commerce and Management Perspective*, 3(1),2014,114-118.
- [21] R.K.Mishra et al., Green HRM: Innovative Approach in Indian Public Enterprises, *World Review of Science, Technology and Sustainable Development*, 11(1), 2014, 26-42.
- [22] Parida R, Raj S, Sharma P, & Yadav V, Green HR: Analysis of sustainable practices incorporated by IT firms in India, *Journal of Management Research*, 1, 2015.
- [23] S. Mousumi & S.Nilanjan, Green HRM: A Tool for Organizational Sustainability, *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Global Business, Economics, Finance and Social Sciences*, Kolkata,2015. Paper ID: K512
- [24] D. Jenny, Green Human Resource Management, and Employee Workplace Outcomes, doctoral dissertation, Division of Business and Enterprise, School of Management, University of South Australia 2015.
- [25] Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2007a) ‘The environment and people management’, Discussion web page accessed in February 2007.