

## Green HRM: Management of people through commitment towards environmental sustainability

Devika Ahuja

Student

Symbiosis Institute of Business Management  
Bengaluru (Karnakatka) India

### Abstract

The term Green human resources refer to promotion of sustainable employee practices with the help of interface of every employee. Its aim is to increase the awareness among the employees on the issue of sustainability. The topic of sustainable environment is gaining augmented interest of the management people. A great need of integration of environmental management into the HRM has been felt. Thus the term Green HRM is used. Green HR deals with the HR activities which are environment friendly and promote the sustainable use of resources in the organizations. It results into decreased costs, high efficiency, and better management of employees. This in turn, help business organizations to trim down employee carbon footsteps by the likes of teleconferencing, sharing of car, telecommuting, filing electronically, virtual interviews, recycling, online training, etc. The effectiveness formed by Green HRM can lower operational costs and enable industry people to become conscious of their business and communal responsibilities in a better way. This paper aims is to study current environmental sustainable solutions to stay "Green" in the Human Resource function by reviewing the literature on HR aspects of environmental management. A review of the literature shows that a broad process frame of reference for Green HRM has yet to emerge.

*Keywords: Green HRM, Environment Management, Sustainability*

### INTRODUCTION

The term "Sustainable development" is related to fulfill the needs of community at present with no compromise on the capability of future generations to meet their own needs. Organizations are now realizing the need to build up an influential social conscience and green sense of responsibility. The HR function will turn out to be the driver of environmental sustainability within the business by aligning its practices and policies with sustainability goals reflecting an eco-focus. The strategy followed by the HR team must replicate and motivate the ambitions of the members of the HR team and other employees. The strategies should also align with the company's policy, ethics and customs. They should deliver sustainable profits to investors, fulfill the customer needs, recognize and respond to emerging communal trends, and influence the public policy schema. In a nutshell creating a green World where consumers and employees force change. In fact the HR function can be renamed as "*People and Society*"

"Green" or "greening" has various meanings but in the context of management of people at work or human resource management the following four meanings have identified:

1. **Conservation of the natural environment:** to protect the natural things from the loss or damage and to keep them in their original form
2. **Preservation of the natural environment:** to use the natural resources wisely so that they last as long as possible. Also to use natural resources at the minimum level, with the aim to conserve them for the future generations.

3. **Minimization of environmental pollution:** to prevent contamination of the air, water etc. through obnoxious and toxic substances. To safeguard against results that will eventually put in danger our earth.

4. **Generation of gardens and looking-like natural places:** to grow more and more trees and plants

### What is Green HRM?

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is the combination of environmental management and human resource management (HRM) practices. It helps organizations to uncover alternative way to reduce the cost without losing their experienced workers. Green HRM involves the application of HRM policies to encourage the sustainable use of resources within companies and to promote the cause of environmentalism. According to Gill man dip 2012, Shakti – “It involves reducing carbon footprints via less printing of paper, car sharing, job sharing, telecommuting, video conferencing and interviews etc ()”. Hence GHRM involve two essential elements: HR practices which are friendly to environment and the conservation of knowledge capital. According to Meily Margaretha and Susanti Saragih (2013), the practice of green HR includes , recruitment, compensation and selection, performance management, training and development, employee involvement and participation. The benefits of GHRM are: Reduced Utility Costs, Decreased Environmental Impact, Improved Public Image, Rebates and Tax Benefits, and Increased Business Opportunities

The HR Professional today is also helping the companies to adopt strategies to green their business through online sharing of training/self-learning materials, by Encouraging employees to turn off their computer monitor when they are not present on their desk. It also motivates the employees to keep the lighting minimum during non- working hours and more usage of LED is also promoted by the companies. The two elements of GHRM are: environmentally friendly HR practices and the preservation of knowledge capital. Green HRM policies and practices also help to safeguard and enhance worker health and well-being.



### Green Work Life Balance (GWLB)

It can be assumed that the complete prospective of Green HRM in theory and practice has not yet been realized. One possible shortfall which could obstruct the greening process is that the green HR policies focus only on employees’ working role. The need has been identified to recognize that environmentally significant attitudes and conduct are not learned entirely at the workplace, but also in personal life. People have distinctive modes of living. They carry out particular utilization patterns in their daily routine life. Hence employees’ personal role as consumers plays crucial for learning and practicing environmental attitudes and behavior.

Work- life balance refers to the need of employees to balance personal life and work and it is important for IT employees to maintain a healthy balance between work and their private lives so that both they and the company benefit in the long term (Andrew Iserson et al 2000; Guna Seelan Rethinam and Maimunah , 2007). Research has observed, work life balance of IT professionals to be associated with employees work place stress and work environment (Devadoss, J. Befija Minnie 2013, Stephen Theiler 2012). Hence family work-life balance programs and practices can benefit an organization; while at the same time provide other indirect benefits to employees.

Green Work Life Balance is defined as the reconciliation of work life and private life with regard to environmental values, attitudes and behavior (Viola Muster & Ulf Schradr, 2011). The green work life balance polices aim at decreasing imbalances in environmentally friendly behavior by promoting positive influences both from work to life and from life to work. According to Viola Muster & Ulf Schradr (2012) the green work life balance instruments includes environmental concierge services, green canteen , car sharing, flexible work timing, telecommuting. The following table (Table -1) shows the some of the green work life balance practices available in the IT organizations.

**T able- 1: Green Work Life Balance Practices**

<b>Green Work Life Balance Practices</b>	<b>Description/Benefits</b>
Job Sharing Scheme	Two part-time workers filling one full time job
Telecommuting	work from home
Teleconferencing	to cut down business travels
Energy -Efficient office space	proper working environment
Transportation Pooling	vehicle sharing
Flexible Work Schedule	reduction of vehicle use/ fast food consumption
Employee Assistance Program	employee counseling
Wellness Program	healthy living

Source: secondary data

#### **Green HRM processes**

- Green Recruiting
- Training, Development, and Learning
- Performance Measurement
- Compensation and Rewards

#### **Actions companies can take to go green:**

- Conducting an energy audit
- Recycle
- Reuse
- Reduce commuting
- Buying green
- Implement green manufacturing processes
- Implement green policies

#### **Effects of green HRM on its subs**

1. **Performance Management System (PMS):** Presents the challenges of how to measure environmental performance standards across different units of the firm, and gaining useful data on the environmental performance of managers. (Tata Group of Companies) . Tying the performance evaluations to the job descriptions mentioning the specific green goals and tasks. For example : e-HR

2. **Training and development** : Training is a key intervention to manage waste (in terms of both prevention and reduction). Employee training and development programmers' should include social and environmental issues at all levels, from shop floor, to executive management and board level. Orientation programs for the newly hired. Inform the employees about the green procedures and policies. "green teams" can be established in each department, producing general awareness and specific training.
3. **Employee Involvement (EI) and Participation (EP)**: American Airlines claim their flight attendants recycle over 616,000 pounds of aluminum cans, earning at least \$40,000 to them in one year. An EI approach in EM motivates the worker, allows them to detect problems like leakages in the process of production that delegating responsibilities to workers is based upon team knowledge of the causes of waste and how to reduce them. Other ways in which employees can be encouraged are to pursue green commuting habits like:
  - a. Allowing flexible work weeks.
  - b. Establishing a car pool-program.
  - c. Offering free or discounted free transportation passes.
  - d. Adding car sharing as a employee benefit and setting up transportation savings account.
  - e. Telecommuting or e-work.
4. **Performance-Related Pay (PRP)**: An important proportion of monthly managerial bonuses are dependent upon performance outcomes in EM. Du Pont base their executive compensation and bonus system for middle managers and senior officers in part on environmental stewardship practices, where bonuses can be over 10 per cent. They get the most commission money for pushing green products.
5. **Recognition and Awards**: Senior managers at presenting awards in public meetings, and via news articles. Firms include paid vacations, time off, favored parking, and gift certificates with them all seen to encourage employees on environmental performance.

#### Case study:

- ▶ Company name: ITC limited
- ▶ ITC is one of India's foremost private sector companies with a strong commitment to the triple bottom line.
- ▶ It has been a frontrunner in adopting eco -responsible processes, much ahead of legislation.
- ▶ A market capitalization of over US \$ 22 billion and a turnover of over US \$ 5 billion with a diversified presence in cigarettes, hotels, paper boards and specialty papers, packaging, agribusiness, packaged foods and a whole range of other services.
- ▶ ITC PSPD, the Paperboard and Specialty Papers Division has 4 manufacturing units.
- ▶ All four manufacturing units are ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001 certified.

- ▶ For the first time in India ITC has launched an environment friendly multipurpose paper "Paper Kraft Premium Business Paper", for office and home use using a new technology 'Ozone Treated Elemental Chlorine Free Technology' replacing Elemental Chlorine which was conventionally used in the bleaching process during paper manufacture.

## CONCLUSION

The employers and practitioners can establish the usefulness of linking employee involvement and participation in environmental management programs to improved organizational environmental performance, like with a specific focus on waste management recycling, creating green products. Unions and employees can help employers to adopt Green HRM policies and practices. IT Professionals are the representatives of global economy. The nature of their work involves high level autonomy and they will show a strong commitment to their jobs. In the current business scenario, more IT organizations now realize the value sustainability has on their competitiveness, reputation, and ability to attract and retain top talent. Hence HR people in IT organizations should contribute the green movement in terms of training practices, as well as introduce special programs to drive green initiatives.

## REFERENCES

1. Wehrmeyer, W., (ed)1 Greening People: Human Resources and Environmental Management, Sheffield :Greenleaf Publishing
2. Govindarajulu, N. and Daily, B.F.,12 Motivating employees for environmental improvement, *Industrial*
3. *Mgmt and Data Sys*, **104(4)**, Charbel Jose Chiappetta Jabbour, (2011) "How green are HRM practices, organizational culture, learning and teamwork? A Brazilian study", *Industrial and Commercial Training*, Vol. 43 Iss: 2, pp.98 - 105
4. Edwina Pio Senior Faculty, AUT University, New Zealand ,HRM and Indian epistemologies: A review and avenues for future research
5. Jacob Cherian<sup>1</sup> & Jolly Jacob<sup>2</sup> <sup>1</sup> Department of Management, College of Business Administration, Abu Dhabi University, Abu Dhabi, UAE <sup>2</sup> Department of Applied Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences, Abu Dhabi University Abu Dhabi, UAE A Study of Green HR Practices and Its Effective Implementation in the Organization: A Review
6. Sroufe, R. (2003). Effects of environmental management systems on environmental management. practices and operations *Production and Operations Management*, 12(3), 416-430. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1937-5956.2003.tb00212.x>
7. Nalini Govindarajulu, Bonnie F. Daily. (2004). Motivating employees for environmental improvement. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 104(4), 364-372. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/02635570410530775>