Green HRM: Approach to Sustainability in Current Scenario
Tulsee Giri Goswami*, Saroj Kumar Ranjan**

*Asst. Prof Management, **Research Scholar Central university of Rajasthan Kishangarh, india-305801
Corresponding Email id: skrmgt@gmail.com

Abstract: -

The corporate world is changing the perspective and poignant from a business oriented financial perspective to a competency based economy and green economy. As the world if moving towards green economy, the responsivity of corporates has expanded to go green. Organizations must understand and so inspire and empower the intellect capital to practice green management initiatives at work place. The go green approach is taking a step ahead for the integration of environmental issues in management. Human resource management can have a significant influence on go green approach.

Researchers try to create awareness about the implementation of green human resource practices. The main purpose of this conceptual paper is to give an overview of green human resource practices at work place and also to discuss the extensive literature based on the previous research studies. Will try to enlighten the way corporates consider green HR practices at work place and the relation with organizational sustainability. The emergence of the concept of Green Human Resource Management will be discussed later on. The researchers will also try to come up with the research model for practicing green human resource practices and the impact on organizational outcomes. In order to give a better insight of the picture, this conceptual paper is the outcome of extensive review of exiting research studies based on green human resource management practices. The paper encapsulates sections as follows-

1. Introduction to Green HRM
2. Initiatives for Green Management
3. Green HRM Practices
4. Conclusion and
5. References

Key words: - Green HRM, Organizational Sustainability, HRM Practices,

Introduction

Human resource management department plays a very significant role for the mark able success of an enterprise. Researches in past few decades have proved the critical role of intellect human capita to maintain organizational uniqueness in competitive scenario. There is an emerging requirement for organizations to respond towards green economy by focusing on employee expectations and future environmental change to go green. The green human resource management is a practice to move towards the optimization and protection of natural resources to overcome scarcity. Green human resource practices may result in greater efficiencies, lower cost and create
a healthy atmosphere of healthier employee engagement, which help organizations to operate in an environmentally sustainable business practices

Green hrm is a part of green management philosophy, policies and practices which implemented by an organization to protect environment and maintain ecological balance. It includes practices to reduce carbon foot print and gain carbon credit in organizational outcomes. Green hrm involves undertaking environment friendly HR initiatives aiming greater efficiencies, lower cost and better employee engagement which in turn help the organization to reduce employee carbon footprint.

According to Daily and Huang (2001), the concept of green management for sustainable development has various definitions; all of which generally, seek to explain the need for balance between industrial growth for wealth creation and safeguarding the natural environment so that the future generations may thrive. Scarbrough (2003) strategic HR practices can be conducive to environmental management initiatives because the practices may allow firms to discover and utilize knowledge and expertise in the organization.

However, knowledge within the human capital and firms cannot easily be transferred among individuals inside the firm. Although a firm has access to the knowledge, skills and expertise of employees, it may need to possess good capacities in managing knowledge and human capital tools must be in place to ensure effective utilization of the human capital in the development of organizational expertise for environmental management.

Daily and Huang (2001) Growing global environmental concerns and the development of international environmental standard are creating the need for businesses to adopt formal environmental strategies and programs.

Renwick et al. (2008)In this respect, the implementation of rigorous recruitment and selection of employees, performance-based appraisal system, the introduction of training programs aimed at increasing the employees’ environmental awareness and courses addressed to the development of new technical and management competencies have a basic importance for fostering environmental innovations.

Daily and Huang, (2001) Researchers in this area argued that environmental management system (EMS) can only be effectively implemented if the companies have the right people with the right skills and competencies

**Initiatives for Green Management**

Liu (2010) business firms play a key role in the issues of environmental management since they are part of our society and cannot be isolated from the environment, and in fact, they contribute most of the carbon footprints in the past. Earlier the corporate success of enterprise was measure by the economic parameters of business. Now a days it’s no longer valid though the economic and financial performance dose matter but equal focus should be given to minimization of ecological footprints and socio environmental aspects. Since last two decades the concept of corporate environmentalism/ green management is getting more attraction at international level.

Lee (2009) Green management is defined as the process whereby companies manage the
environment by developing environmental management strategies in which companies need to balance between industrial growth and safeguarding the natural environment so that future generation may thrive Daily and Huang (2001).

Banerjee (2001) this concept becomes a strategic dominant issue for businesses, especially multinational enterprises operating their business globally. Hart (2005); Pullman et al. (2009); Siegel (2009) it has gone beyond regulatory compliance and needs to include conceptual tools such as pollution prevention, product stewardship and corporate social responsibility. Lee and Ball (2003) green management refers to the management of corporate interaction with, and impact upon, the environment,

The use of technical innovation could alleviate the deteriorating environment by innovating biotech products, alternate sources of energy to reduce the use of scare natural resources. Liu (2010); Ozen and Kusku, (2008) business should put more effort into the research on innovative technology to minimize the impacts of environmental destruction by creating products that are nontoxic and less pollution to environment. Green initiatives in management like cut down of business meetings by internet facility, reduce the printing cost by using e-documents and mails, reducing the use of papers by using mails and electronic medium, implementation of “Telework” work from home, ride/share programs for low use of vehicle’s, proper utilization of lights, water, time, and electricity and the most important is focusing on renewable source of energy. Practices like electronic filing, car sharing, job sharing, teleconferencing and virtual interviews, recycling, telecommuting, online training are also used as green hrm practices.

Green HRM Practices

Green hrm is a strategy used primarily for reducing the carbon foot print of each employee and talent retention. This term is combined by traditional concepts with longer term renewable approach to business practices. It involves undertaking environment friendly HR initiatives resulting in greater efficiencies, lower cost and better employee engagement and which in turn help the organization to reduce employee carbon.

The organization need to incorporate green/environmental objectives to overall strategy of the organization aiming to meet green management issues. Organization need to consider various factors which create impact on adopting green strategy i.e. financial outcomes, impact of stakeholder, goodwill of the enterprise are few of the important reasons. Crowe and Brennan, (2007) Yang et al, (2010); Iraldo et al. (2009) there is also a great deal of empirical research which highlights the impact of environment management practices on performance of the organization using a number of different indicators.

Enterprises need to inculcate and furnish technical and management skill package among employees to implement an effective corporate green management strategy. Innovative tools and initiatives for green management should be considered as competitive advantage by organizations which will significantly influence the
sustainable development of the business. Hence for developing such kind of framework it becomes necessary to design sound human resource management practices i.e. strict procurement strategies, appraisal and reward systems creating environmental awareness and implementation of evaluation process, and training and development strategies to enable the development competent skill package and competencies to promote “go-green” concept. Many of the researches focused to promote the ideology that is important for proper alignment of human resource management principles with objectives of green management in an organization. Bohdanowicz et al. (2011) it is identified that the greater the strength of green human resource policies the greater is the intensity of adoption of environment management systems and policies by the different companies.

HR Procurement

Human resource department need to design green job description, the department should take greater responsibility for green initiative. Green recruitment means paper free recruitment process with a minimal environment impact. Applications invited through online mediums like e-mail, online, application form or the Global talent pool. If possible, telephone or video based interviews are conducted to minimize any travel-related environment impact. Ecological/ environmental concern should be taken as one of the core competencies required to get on roll in the organization. Companies must practice green management to create green employer brand image in corporate world. Green employer brand image comparatively more likely to attract competent talent than those who don’t have such concern. These include environmental reporting roles and health and safety tasks, which staffs are exposed to harmful substances/potential emissions and matching personal attributes to needed environmental competencies. In the interview questions should be tailored to flesh out potential compatibility with the company's green goals. Recruitment of employees who are ‘Green aware’ becomes part of the interview schedule.

Anthony; in Mandid, (2012) Induction for new recruits is seen to be needed to ensure employee understand and approach their corporate environmental culture in a serious way. Hence there should be integration of green environmental issues into the process of procuring human resources. At the time of orientation of newly recruited employees there should be proper integration of green consciousness about corporate culture. It must highlight organizational concern aimed at green issues of employees like their health, safety and green working conditions. Therefore, it can be concluded by being green employer, it will help and increase employee motivation, engagement and attitude of green.

Grolleau et al., (2012) discussed the impact of environmental standards of a company on recruitment of an employee. The study results indicate that environmental commitment of the company adds to profile of a company. They were able to differentiate and identify those professionals more than non-professionals were concerned with respect to the environmental stance of a company.

Frank (2003) studied the importance of ethical behavior of a company and its impact. As apart of this survey it was identified that most of the respondents would prefer to choose an ethically and environmentally responsible firm which serve the community welfare like health.
organization instead of for one like Tobacco company even if there is lesser facility.
Bauer and Aiman-Smith (1996) deliberated the effect a pro environmental stance on recruitment efforts. Their findings suggested that when firms present a proactive stand towards protection of the environment then it would help improve the attractiveness of the firm. The study also specified that intention to pursue employment with the pro environmental company will be higher along with acceptance of a job offer.

**Training and Development**

Training a key intervention to manage waste (in terms of both prevention and reduction), employee training and development programs should include social and environmental issues at all levels, from shop floor, to executive management and board level. The training program should be designed in such a way that it create awareness about green procedures and policies, vision and mission statement of the organization, sustainability oriented benefits, initiatives like reducing greenhouse gases and creating green products etc.

The department needs to conduct a specific environmental training need assessment (what environmental knowledge and skills staff need to learn) for designing a specific training in environmental management. HR manager can buildup green teams just by creating general awareness in environmental management. To entertain “go-green” concept there should be extensive use of online and web-based training programs and interactive media to deliver training rather than printed material to reduce the use of paper. Basic aspects of green training can be some environment-related aspects of safety, energy efficiency, waste management and recycling management etc.

Perron et al., (2006) examined the importance of environmental training in promoting business value. It was observed that one company developed a training program for all their employees while the other was considered as a control which offered no training. Despite training presented one group the level of knowledge of environment management system was similar among employees of both companies. This is despite the amount of investment that has gone into green training for employees of one company. It is vital to develop specialized and customized environmental training programs to suit the needs of the organization and also identified the need for development of validated instruments to evaluate the resultant training.

Unnikrishnan and Hedge (2007) analyzed the importance of environmental training and its relationship to cleaner production strategies. Environment management training was focused however learning processes were not very strong. The study observed a lack in top management commitment, lack of suppliers of cleaner technologies and a gap between academic institutes and industries with respect to implementing green training policies as the key areas which Indian manufacturers should focus on to improve their green training programs.

Daily et al., (2007) identified that the formation of an effective green management system was directly dependent on environmental training. The study concluded that in order to manage effective green HR practices it is vital to promote environmental training in an organization as it presents
essential knowledge for promoting green teams in an organization and presents them with the ability to deal with the different issues which emerge as a result of problems related to environment and the associated opportunities.

**Compensation management system**

Compensation management system should be aligned with green performance appraisal system. Some of the incentives based on environmental performance and contribution can be included in package like environmental awareness incentive, acquiring designated skills and competencies in green performance over the long-term, desirable behavior in green performance and incentive on accomplishment of green objectives on the job etc. Green HR department can also implement negative and positive reinforcements to encourage employees to perform green objectives. Negative reinforcement can be by the way of warning, criticism and suspensions. Positive reinforcement may be in terms of verbal feedback from supervisors, recognition certificate as green employee of the year recognition for contribution in accomplishment of green objectives of the organization might motivate employees towards environmental improvements.

Denton (1999) examined the impact of employee involvement in pollution control. It was observed that employees were motivated and given rewards when they came up with innovative waste reduction ideas.

Forman and Jorgensen (2001) studied the participation of employees in environmental work programs in different companies. The study presented a theoretical framework of which provision of rewards or compensation to employees in order to undertake the additional responsibility of participating in environmental efforts was undertaken.

Taylor et al., (1992) presented a generic view on importance of green management. It was seen that when companies offered an incentive in terms of green awards employees were more inclined to follow principles of green management.

Ramus (2001) identified the importance of non-financial incentives on impacting environmental policy implementation. It was identified that when there was perceived supervisory support and better acknowledgment in terms of praise letters and plaques there was an increased commitment from employees towards upholding environmental policies. Green movement and Green HR is still in embryonic stage in our country rare companies have implemented green management concept. Green The Tata Group has initiate go-green concept in its companies. Many organizations are adopting green projects as a part of corporate social responsibility.

**Corporate culture and green culture**

Corporate culture represents an active, living, phenomenon by which key members of the organization, such as executives, create share meaning (Morgan, 1997). The meaning of the corporate culture differs from company to company and based upon differently of industry, business and leadership style (Shih, 2000). Sound corporate culture is necessary to the way of excellency of organization, the corporate culture gives a sense of identity to employees, it provides a collaborative commitment, provide stability in social
system and shape the behavior of employees by helping members make sense of their surroundings. To achieve go-green objectives organizations should focus on the integration of environmental management into corporate culture. For making green culture at work place, the organizations need to inculcate green values and belief. That can be done by providing green knowledge, Green habits and so on and reflects specific spirits of times. Green values is the deepest hierarchy of green culture and the most basic value target that green culture pursues, as well as fundamental mark distinguished from other culture, which comprises of the core link of green culture structure (Li et al., 2011).

Performance management system

Performance measures, standards and indicators for appraising environmental performance is a difficult task. Success of green performance management system in the organization depends on gaining useful data on environmental performance and processing to get green results. The system should be associated with the job descriptions mentioning the specific green goals and expectations. Electronic HR system can be introduced to be able to help management and employees track their own carbon. The HR manager plays a strong role in achieving green outcomes such as familiarization towards green management and encourages green HR learning and inviting green ideas from employees. HR manager should design green performance standards and green behavior indicators as yardsticks in performance appraisal of employees at all levels. There should be green targets, goals and responsibilities for managers and achievement of managers in accomplishing green objectives of the enterprise.

Employee involvement and participation

Through employee involvement activities organizations create an environment where employees have influence on decisions that affect their jobs. Encouraging employee involvement and participation at workplace will build entrepreneurial competencies aiming social and ecological orientation. Employees must be engaged in formulating environmental strategy to get and expand the knowledge needed to market green products.

Employees can be involved by the way of suggestion schemes and problem solving units. Employees with special skill set are required to perform designing and innovation of green projects, operational workers just need to participate for implementation of green projects. Employees can also be encouraged for green commuting habits like cab pooling transport, allowing flexible assignments, flexible work weeks, offering free or discounted transportation passes, adding car sharing as a employee benefit and setting up transportation savings account. Telecommuting, e-work arrangement, telecommunication link are some of the modes to minimize the variable cost of organization.

Other Practices-

Organizational basic functioning requires a lot of consumables, such as paper, plastic, envelope and ink toner and so on. In spite of both ecological and economical concerns, it is difficult for the organization to minimize the use of this as these are integral part of basic operations. Apart from general green HR practices, some environment-friendly solutions are also popular among
organizations to stay green. Green printing of documents and formats, reducing the rate of un required printing of papers, increasing the use of online data sharing instead of printed, green design for payroll and required formats, green manufacturing & disposal of staff ID Card.

Examples of Companies who adopted GREEN HRM

- General Electric’s: Uses six sigma techniques for optimizing their operations to improve environmental and social outcomes in a manner that increase overall performance
- Google: Uses green recruiting technique- believes that most talented people get attracted because of it
- Infosys: e-recruiting staffing solution
- Hewlett Packard: Product take-back programs, green packing and integrating design

Conclusion

Green human resource management has a large stake in organizational strategies to accomplish organizational green goals. Present conceptual paper focuses on the incorporation of green HR practices for overall organizational development. Researchers have proven in findings that HR department plays very important role for implementing go-green concept in organizations. Implementation of green initiatives is only possible through employee engagement and participation and that is only possible trough strong HR. Green initiatives create a sense of loyalty among the employees towards the organization, boost up employee morale and also build strong commitment as well. Organizations which are able to minimize their cost and affluence their profitability via green HRM and sustainability initiatives, the organizations have given more focus on such aspects. Organizations mainly focused on increasing green competency, reducing and eliminating environmental desecrate, and restoring HR products, consequential in greater efficiency and lesser costs. Most popular outcome of green HR practices included: electronic filing, teleconferencing and virtual interviews, ride sharing, job sharing, recycling, telecommuting, online training, and developing more energy efficient office spaces. With society becoming more environmentally conscious, businesses are starting to include green proposals into their everyday work environment.

References


