Green HRM: An Innovative Way to Sustainable Development

Pankaj Thakur
Research Scholar at Himachal Pradesh University Business School Shimla
and Faculty in Department of Management
Govt. College Sarkaghat Distt. Mandi Himachal Pradesh-India
E-mail & Contact Number: pankajj25@gmail.com

Abstract: - The technological advancement across the globe has created the convenience for human beings and has increased the living standard. But on the other side this has also increased the ecological hazards which are posing threats to human being through the deterioration of ecological environment. Going green has now become the major concern of all the organizations across the globe for sustainable development. The climate conference which was held in Bonn in last year; where heads of different states emphasized to build a roadmap to rethink our habits and to make decisions which are benefitting the society in the long run. Sustainable development is the need of present scenario. The organizations whether they are public or private, can contribute to sustainable development by integrating ecofriendly initiatives in their operations. Going green in an organizational setup should be a pervasive function but it is not an easy task. The human resources should use green practices so they are called as good human resources of this green planet. The green HRM is making use of HRM policies to promote sustainable utilization of resources in the organizations. This conceptual article focuses on green HRM (GHRM) and green HRM practices and briefly explains their positive roles in going green towards sustainable development.

Keywords: Green HRM (GHRM), HRM, Sustainable Development

1. Introduction:

The importance of environmental issues and sustainable development has increased both in both developing and developed countries. The environmental experts and activists argue that the environment is deteriorating and large-scale floods, droughts and other climate alterations are due to phenomena of global warming. It is obligatory or we can say we are forced to change our habits and to make serious efforts to address environmental issues. The United Nation’s sustainable
development goals (SDGs) is a roadmap given to all countries and to comply with these goals by the year 2030. Sustainable development means development that has no adverse effects on resources and future generation is not going to suffer and they can enjoy the richness of good environment by fulfilling their needs. (Bruntdl and Commission, 1987).

Sustainable development is the prime need of the hour and every nation should seriously focus on the working mechanisms with public and private sector that protect and favour environment. Organizations under the corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities claim to pay back to the environment but they need to go beyond this and to adopt these activities in routine in order to implement green initiatives in a fruitful way and these initiatives can become the part of broader CSR function. (Mandip, 2012). With the growing concern for environmental issues the organizations are obliged to adopt green practices and they are aligning environmental management with human resource management i.e. Green HRM practices. The green HRM is making use of HRM policies to promote sustainable utilization of resources in the organizations. It involves endorsement of sustainable practices by human resources and increases awareness and commitment towards sustainability.

Green HR has two elements: Eco friendly HR practices and preservation of knowledge capital. It encompasses taking eco-friendly initiatives leading to reduced costs, better engagement of employees, greater efficiency which in turn help the organizations to reduce their carbon foot prints. Green HRM policies focus on developing a green corporate culture by collaborating green behavior of individual and groups. The green environmental behavior can be put in to the consumption patterns by the employees in their private life. (Muster and Schrader 2011). The researchers in the arena of GHRM are of the opinion that Environmental Management Systems (EMS) in the organizations can be effectively implemented if they have human resources with right skills and competencies. (Daily and Huang 2001). These initiatives require managerial and technical skills (Callenbach et. al., 1993) therefore Green HR initiatives can be implemented through recruitment & selection practices, compensation & benefits, performance-based appraisal, training & development and health & safety aimed at increasing green awareness among employees. Organizations should take these initiatives as an investment for long run
rather than considering it as a cost. Private sector is taking such initiatives in the commonly growing area so called Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM) that positively contribute towards sustainable approaches to the environment and according to (Lee et al. 2012) there is a clear relationship between the performance of business organization and GSCM. Moving beyond GSCM, multinationals are integrating green ideas in to their management practices and using them as a part of their strategic goals. As per (Ahmad 2015) the various areas Green Accounting, Green Retailing, Green Marketing and others have been introduced. Organizations adopting GHRM system have a competitive advantage over other organizations. (Sudin, 2011 Renwick, Redman and Maguire, 2013). The organizations focus more on the benefits they earn so there is need to focus on the outcomes they are going to facilitate by implementing green practices. This research study attempts to explore the practices involved in GHRM on the basis of literature available.

2. Literature Review:
The Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is now the area of concentration as there is vast literature on Green Marketing (Peattie 1992), Green Accounting (Bebbington 2001; Owen 1992), Green Retailing (Kee-hung et al. 2010) and Green Management in general (McDonagh and Prothero 1997). The concept of GHRM emerged in 1990s and it was globally accepted in 2000s (Lee, 2009). The concept of GHRM emerged with the initiation of green movement. Green movement is political movement it speaks about four principles: Environmentalism, Sustainability, Non-Violence and Social Justice. The growing awareness about green movement the management researchers across the globe started analyzing that how managerial practices can achieve sustainable development goals. The UN Global Compact in collaboration with several educational institutions has developed six Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME). These principles encourage scholars and managers to collaborate for the development of new knowledge to promote environmental sustainability across the globe. (PRME, 2010). Corporate environmental initiatives can be best implemented and executed by the human resources of the organizations. They are not only the internal stakeholders but also the constitute the source of competitive advantage. (Wright, Dunford & Snell, 2007). The implementation of ecological sustainability is linked with human sustainability. (Dunphy, Benveniste, Griffiths and Sutton 2000). Marhatta and
Adhikari (2013) and Zoogah, (2011) refer use of GHRM policies and practices for sustainable use of resources within business organizations and promote environmentalism. Green HRM is making use of policies, practices, and systems within the business organizations to make green employees for the benefit of the individual, team, organization, society, and natural environment. (Opatha and Arulrajah 2014). Different researchers have adopted different ways to describe the Green HRM but their intentions are common for sustainability. Literature surveys have explained the relationship of HR practices and organizational outcomes such as productivity, flexibility and financial performance (Ichniowski et al., 1997; Mendelson and Pillai, 1999; Collins and Clark, 2003). But there is no such importance on the relationship between outcomes and green initiatives regarding the performance. (Laursen and Foss 2003). The environmental management should be blended with human resource management as it is not desirable but it is very important (Fayyazia et al. (2015). The special efforts are needed by human resource management for the successful environmental management. (Rothenberg, 2003). HRM practices aligned with the objectives of environmental management can achieve desired result in environmental management expedition. (Jabbour ,2011). HRM plays a pivotal role in the execution of green practices that contribute towards green performance. (Harvey et al. (2012). There is need to pay much attention on innovations to meet the challenges of environmentalism and to develop the ways to sustainable development (Machiba & Tomoo,2010) and for these green teams are required to generate innovations and new practices. Now a days green teams are used by so many organizations but the interlink between green teams and change management is often overlooked. (Colin Beard Stephen Rees, 2000). Green HRM is a holistic application of sustainability to organization and its manpower. It involves green actions with a focus on increasing efficiency of organizations, elimination & reduction of environmental waste and renovate HR techniques, procedures and practices. GHRM various green practices and processes in different HR functions. The functional areas where HR has a green approach have been discussed in further section.

3. Green Practices:
A comprehensive green assortment of green practices from entry level to the exit level of employee in the organizations have been introduced by (Renwick, Redman,
and Maguire’s 2008). The adoption of green practices is quite helpful to remain in ecological, economical and practical at the same time. The eco-friendly solutions to stay green are as given.

- Green Printing
- Green Manufacturing
e-filing
- Teleconferencing and Video Conferencing
- Green Payroll
- Flexi Work
- Online Training
- Virtual Interviews
- Job Sharing
- Recycling
- E-Vehicles and Public Transport

4. Green Management & Green Behaviour:

The environmental awareness has been presented in the executive’s framework through organized activities during the last decade. (Haden et al., 2009). In such a way managers and administrator set a framework and also set guidelines to provide assurance towards going green. (Illic and Unnu, 2012). Green administration is a firm wise procedure of applying advancement to accomplish competitive advantage, sustainability and social responsibility. (Haden et al., 2009). The green management system is a dynamic arrangement of practices and procedures to avoid and control the pollutants of the nature. (Abbaspour, et al., 2006). Since green management may affect the competitive and economic advantage so it must be accepted on moral basis not on responsive procedure basis. (Molina-Azorin et al., 2009). There should be close alignment between the company’s core strategies and corporate social responsibility. (Walter and Bruch 2005, Porter and Kramer, 2006). The combined strengths of production processes and green programs can be used to improve the business performance. (Bergmiller and McCright 2009). Many organizations have re-branded their corevalues for environmental excellence. (Khan et al. 2013). The baseline of below mentioned framework signifies the performance of individual in the surrounding environment. The contextual factors play pivotal role
in shaping up individual, group and institutional performance and these shapes up performance-based behaviour of the individual within the streams of these contextual factors. (Norton et al. 2015). These factors also play crucial role in the performance related to employee green behaviour (EGB). “Between person” factors such as job attitude and “within person” factors such as motivation and intention play role in deciding EGB. Further as per this model the motivation states can be controlled or autonomous with reference to EGB. The autonomous state is quite considerable for EGB as it is free from self-interests. It is argued that controlled motivation state becomes the reason for required EGB in organizations whereas autonomous motivation is the basis for voluntary EGB. Outcomes of any of the situation proves to be fruitful. At organizational level the cost can be reduced by engaging in EGB. This can be done by effective leadership.

**Context Factors**
- Institutional
  - Normative, Regulatory, Cognitive, Cultural
- Organizational
  - Attitudes, Activities, Policies
- Leader
  - EGB, Leadership, Activities, Attitudes
- Teams
  - Attitudes, Behavioural Beliefs, Norms Activities

**Motivational States**
- Controlled
  - e.g. “I have to ....”
- Autonomous
  - e.g. “I want to ....”

**Person Factors**
- Between Person
  - Environmental Attitudes, Behaviour, Job Factors, Personality
- Within Person
  - Motivation, Intention

**Outcomes**
- Institutional
  - Competitive Advantage
- Organizational
  - Cost Savings
  - Leader Effectiveness
  - Team Positive Social Norms
  - Employee Future Intentions

**Required EGB**

**Voluntary EGB**

5. Green HRM Functions and Practices:

The green aspects of an organizations can be achieved by HRM functions. (Mondy and Noe, 2005). These functions are recruitment, selection, training & development, performance management, compensation & benefits and safety & health. The green employee of the organization are indispensable to achieve the green objectives of the organization. (Opatha and Arulrajah 2014). In this section of paper, few specific functional HRM activities which are in consistency with sustainability at the work place have been described.

5.1. Green Recruitment & Selection

Recruitment is selecting suitable candidates from the pool of candidates available to the firm. (Schuler, 1987). But attracting good quality staff is major HR challenge in the “war of talent”. (Renwick et al. 2013). Now firms are valuing the fact that gaining reputation as a green employer is the best way to attract the new talent. (Phillips, 2007; Stringer, 2009). German firms such as Siemens, Bayer, BASF use their green image to attract high quality workforce. The Rover Group car maker of Great Britain makes green responsibilities and qualification as a part of almost every job profile. (Wehrmeyer, 1996). In the job description agenda green aspects are now included for employees. Green recruitment is the process of hiring the individuals having knowledge, skills and approaches that identify with the green management systems within the organizations. Green recruiting is a system where major focus is given to environment and making it an important part of an organization. the information about the environmental activities of the organization is provided by European employers. (Ehnert 2009). According to Dolen’s(1997 ) study on MBA students of US it was found that half of the students were ready to work on low salary with environmentally responsible organizations. Candidates preferences for green organizations are putting impact on organizational practices and they are planning their recruitment strategies accordingly. (Brockett 2006, p. 18). The green agenda has impact on criteria of new hires by employers. In a survey on 94 Brazilian firms it was found that employers are preferring the candidates having environmental knowledge and motivation. (Jabbour et al. 2010). Considering these statements, it is concluded that green recruitment provides an opportunity to employer to go ahead of the crowd and increases the chances of attracting & retaining good quality staff.
Green selection involves evaluating candidates on the basis of environment related questions. (Revill, 2000). This helps the selection panel to find out person’s attitude towards the greener approach. Further this also involves the paperless work for selection process.

5.2. Green Performance Management

Performance management function of management evaluates the performance of employees in terms of organizational goals. Green HRM includes the evaluation of employees with reference to achievement of environmental goals of the organization. Environment management is safeguarded against the damage by integrating environmental performance to performance management. (Epstein and Roy, 1997). Some firms deal with the performance management issues by establishing green performance standards and green information systems organization wide and get information about the green performance. (Marcus & Fremeth, 2009). By integrating environmental performance in to management performance system, the quality and value of environmental/ green performance can be improved. (Jackson et al., 2011; Renwick et al., 2013). The HR staff should alter the appraisal system and they must include environmental stewardship as a core competency with other behavioural and technical competencies. Such competencies are going to reinforce the core values of the organizations. (Liebowitz, 2010, p. 53). Managers should discuss and give feedback on the performance appraisal throughout the year. This practice will help the employees to broaden their skills and knowledge.

5.3. Green Training & Development

Training & development is a practice that enhances the knowledge, skills and attitude of employees and prevents the deterioration of green management skills, knowledge and attitudes. (Zoogah, 2011.). Green training & development activities create a sense of awareness among employees about different aspects and value of environmental management. It helps them to adopt different methods of conservation such as waste reduction within the organization. it further enhances the skill of employees to deal with different environmental issues. Training is used as an intervention of GHRM to broaden the staff awareness of environmental impact of their activities. (Bansal and Roth, 2000). Training is used to increase the eco-literacy and environmental expertise (Roy and Therin, 2008) and to equip staff with core competencies such as how to collect relevant waste data. (May & Flannery, 1995).
Training on green issues and aspects is widespread among some countries. Studies on employees in America and Japan reveal that HR practices encourage environmental training and develop skills for waste reduction. (Rothenberg et al. 2001, p. 241). Trade unions play an active role in environmental training initiatives in developed countries of Europe. (Madsen and Ulhoi 2001). Green training programs should enhance the knowledge, skills and abilities of employees about green management so that the organization has long-lasting impact. (Liebowitz 2010)

5.4. Green Compensation

Compensation is one of the major areas of challenge. It involves processes in which employees are rewarded for their performance. Compensation is a driving force which is used to attract, retain and motivate employees. (Mondy and Noe, 2005). Compensation and rewards influence employee’s attention to work and make them give their best towards organizational objectives and goals. In context of GHRM compensation, rewards and incentives are used as tools to support green activities of the organization. The organization are using reward system as a strategic approach to promote eco-friendly initiatives to be taken by their employees. This statement is supported by a survey study conducted in UK by CIPD/ KMPG that found that 8% of the firms of UK are rewarding green behaviours with financial rewards and other type of incentives (Phillips, 2007, p. 9) and these practices are effective in motivating the employees to adopt and generate green initiatives. (Ramus, 2002). As per the study of Taylor et al. 1992 on 16 companies from 5 different countries it was examined that companies offering green rewards to their employees are inclined towards green practices. Employee commitment towards green practices got increased when they were given rewards to take environmental responsibilities. (Forman and Jorgensen, 2001). Dow Chemical is a good example of it. Berrone and Gomez-Mejia (2009) studied the efficacy of green compensation on 469 US firms and found that firms having eco-friendly performance paid higher compensation to their CEOs than non-eco-friendly firms. Green compensation is a powerful tool to support environment management activities which are helpful in attainment of environmental goals of an organization. (Milliman and Clair, 1996). To encourage green culture in the organization, green rewards & compensation should
be aligned with the process of HRM. Incorporation of elements of green management in to compensation programs, the managers can bring green behaviour in the employees. Further managers can ask the employees to bring some innovative ideas that can add value to the green management system of the organization. There should be more focus on the researches which can bring innovative approaches that will help in designing and implementing green compensation practices and may lead to attainment of organizational environmental goals.

5.5. Health & Safety

Providing a healthy and safe working environment to its employee is the prime responsibility of the employer. “Green workplace” is a “workplace that is environmentally sensitive, resource efficient and socially responsible.” (Society for Human Resource Management, 2009). Providing a green environment at the workplace improves the health of employee and reduces the medical costs which a firm may incur at a point of time due to the unsafe and unhealthy working conditions.

5.6. Employee Participation

Employee participation enhances the green management in the organizations as it aligns the motivation, attitudes, perception and goals of employees with green management activities and practices. The involvement of employees in environmental management makes efficient use of resources (Florida & Davison, 2001); reduces waste (May & Flannery, 1995); and reduces pollution from workplace. (Kitazawa & Sarkis, 2000). By seeking eco entrepreneurs within the organization employee involvement and participation can be increased. (Mandip, 2012, p. 246). Eco friendly ideas should be welcomed and appreciated irrespective of the designation of the employee. This can be done by HR staff by pressurizing the management to a participative management where employees feel free to share their green ideas and they are the one who can create green and ethical culture for sustainable development. The green outcomes can be simply achieved when employees are willing to collaborate (Collier & Esteban, 2007), as the best ideas are generated by those employees who are working in that particular field. (Casler, Gundlach, Persons, & Zivnuska, 2010). The scope of employee participation can be increased by starting a suggestion scheme, where every employee from top to bottom can contribute towards green management. This practice will create more
awareness about green issues and besides his ideas can emerge out from varied sources. IBM UK, gives grants to employees and their families to take part in local environmental projects. (Wehrmeyer, 1996, p. 31). The employee involvement results in employee and organizational health & safety as well as in the development of eco-friendly staff. This builds the long-term trust between employees and management and it provides an opportunity to employees to share their personal ideas and views at workplace and help to create green management practices and systems.

6. Conclusion

This article provides knowledge that how Green HRM has influence on the employee and their organization and behaviour against the environment which is needed for sustainable development. Employee learns from his professional life and private life and this learning also influences individual behaviour towards the environment and sustainable development.

This It is a fact that human resource is the most important asset of an organization that plays a crucial role in managing employees. It manages employees from entry to exit. The recent trend in business world is on going green for sustainable development and modern managers are assigned with additional responsibility of incorporating the green philosophy in to corporate mission along with the business policies. The environmental initiatives can be now seen in policy statements, job titles, production processes, new product design & development, capital investments and auditing practices. (Molina-Azorin, Claver-Cortés, Pereira-Moliner, & Tari, 2009; Sharfman & Fernando, 2008). The GHRM is of nascent origin. The majority of employee feel that there is need to adopt a change towards going green and they exhibit a strong commitment towards going green for sustainable development. The green HRM policies and practices are aligned with three pillars of sustainability: environment, social and economic balance. (Yusliza, Ramayah, & Othman, 2015, p. 1). The responsibilities of today’s HR managers are to create awareness among youngsters and employees about the Green HRM, green movement, optimum utilization of natural resources and retaining natural resources for future generation. i.e. sustainable development. (Mathapati, 2013, p. 2). The literature pertaining to GHRM is mostly available in developed economies than that of developing ones. So, it is the high time that developing economies should acknowledge the importance of
green and sustainable development issues make the counter strategies to fight with the issues arising out of global warming. Despite of several advancements there is still gap in theoretical and practical development of the subject. (Hosain and Rahman 2016). As for research implication further research needed to be carried out to empirically test the current application of this concept along with the factors which may facilitate and may create obstacles in the implementation of GHRM strategy as a whole in different organizations. A tool developed by Tang et al. (2017) can be used to test and measure GHRM concept and further research can be carried out in this subject. Last, but not least, the HR plays a significant role in motivating employees to take up green practices for greener business and sustainable development.

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