

“Green HRM – An Innovative Approach to Environmental Sustainability”

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Abstract

In our day to day lives we come across many slogans regarding Go Green. As the world is moving towards green economy, the sensitivity of corporate has expanded to go green. The corporate world is changing its view from business oriented economy to a competency based and green based economy. Green HRM is the emerging topic in the current scenario which refers to the combination of environmental management and Human Resource Management. Adoption of environmental practices is a key objective of organizational function and it becomes more significant when it is supported by human resource management practice. It encompasses all activities aimed at helping an organization to carry out its plan for environmental management and reduce carbon foot print in areas concerning on recruiting and selection of human resources, their induction, performance management, training and development and compensation and reward management. It can play important role in promoting environmental issues by adopting and following Green HR policies and practices. Green HRM can build corporate image and brand. It also plays significant role in making employees aware and concerned towards natural resources and there by contribute in pollution control, waste management and manufacture of eco-friendly products. Environmental issues can be solved by implementing it, in management philosophy, HR policies and practices, training people and implementation of laws related to environment safety. The paper mainly focuses upon the Green HRM; various Green HRM practices adopted by different companies and the role of green human resource process in going green. It throws light on social implication of Green HR practices for green organization. And paper extends giving suggestions to HRD about initiative to make the organization green and utilization from those values.

Key words: Green HRM, Green HR policies and practices, Green HR process

Introduction

Green HRM is about focusing on recruiting, managing, giving direction to and finally retaining people while eliminating or reducing workplace inefficiencies. Today, the go green policies are implementing in each sector to reduce environmental issues Companies now realize that they have to develop a powerful social conscience and green sense of responsibility where corporate responsibility is not just a tool for brand building but a factor essential for business development. Many companies, which are taking a greener approach inside their organization, are experiencing a positive and congenial effect on the patterns of employee relations in the organization. This also has a positive influence on the mindset of employees as they feel that apart from their functional contribution on the job, they have an important responsibility in preserving the environment.

What is Green HRM?

The term Green HRM is most often used to refer to the contribution of people management policies and practices towards the broader corporate environmental agenda. Typical green activities include video recruitment, or the use of online and video interviews, to minimize travel requirements. Green rewards can include the use of workplace and lifestyle benefits, ranging from carbon credit offsets to free bicycles, to engage people in the green agenda while continuing to recognize their contribution.

Need of Green HRM

- To build healthy work environment.
- To incur less Cost
- To increase the desirability
- To build employer brand
- To conserve the time
- To maintain Flexibility
- To have Ecological balance

Importance of Green HRM

The importance of green HRM practices is vital to promote employee morale and this may help in arriving at a great deal of benefit for both the company and the employee. For example, some of the benefits that an organization can attain as a result of introducing green HRM principles in the organization include:

- Improvement in retention rate of employee
- Improvement public image
- Improvement in attracting better employees
- Improvement in productivity and sustainability
- Reduction in environmental impact of the company
- Improved competitiveness and increased overall performance

HRM plays a critical role in embedding sustainability strategy of the organization for creating the skills, motivation, values and trust to achieve a triple bottom line. It ensures long-term health and sustainability of both the organization's internal and external stakeholders. Thus there is a growing need for the integration of environmental sustainability into human resource management.

Advantages of Green HRM

Many employers now recognize that green programs at the workplace can promote social responsibility among workers and help retain top talent. Many green companies boast low employee turnover rates compared to their non-sustainable counterpart which states the several advantages of green workforce such as:

- **Environment-friendly business decisions:** Having employees who understand the importance of sustainability, enables to make business decisions with a broader perspective that helps bring innovative solutions to pressing and/or emerging environment-related problems.
- **Desirability as an employer:** Green employers become the most preferred choice of the green talent pool, i.e. potential employees who not just understand sustainability but have also put it in practice in business previously. Green workforce gives the company a competitive edge.
- **Employee retention:** Green companies are known to have lower turnover rates compared to their non-sustainable counterparts as found out from the SHRM Green Workplace Survey 2. 61% of respondents working for an environment-savvy company said they were "likely" or "very likely" to stay in the business because of the practices.
- **Improved sales:** According to the findings of the 2013 Cone Communications 3 Green Gap Trend Tracker Survey⁴, 71 % of Americans consider the environment when they shop. The findings of this survey restate that good environment management practices followed by companies go a long way; it can improve sales and reduce costs.

Green HRM function and process Human resource department plays very crucial role in translating green policy into practice and the creation of a sustainable culture within the

company, therefore, such green practices help in the fulfillment of green objectives throughout the HRM process from recruitment to exist. There are certain factors which contribute a specific role in employee implementation of green principles these factors are recruitment, training, motivation and green pay/rewards in order to make sure that the organization gets right employee green input and right employee green performance of the job.

1. Green recruitment:

Green Recruitment has not got any particular definition, but somehow it means recruitment without the use of paper that minimizes the environmental impact. To complete the paper free recruitment process digital method like online application form, online interviews or telephonic interviews are conducted to decrease the waste of paper, fuel consumption and travel related environmental impacts. Recruitment practices can help to improve environmental management systems by ensuring that environmental culture and values are very well clear to the new recruits. Companies must practice green management to create green employer brand image in the corporate world. Green employer brand image comparatively more likely to attract competent talent than those who don't have such concern. There are a number of companies who adopted green recruitment process, Google is a very good example of a company who adopted green recruitment few other companies are Timberland, and yes.

2. Green training and development:

Green training and development train the employees on working methods that minimizes wastage, optimum utilization of resources, safeguarding of energy and reduces the causes of environmental degradation, it provides an opportunity to employee engagement in environmental problem-solving. Numbers of companies are providing environment training to their employees The Land Rover Group is one the example that company. The Land Rover Group provides environment training to their employees according to their job. They take regular briefings and circulate newsletters to communicate with their staff about environmental issues. They displayed Environmental sustainable development policy, key objectives and environmental practice boards at all sites. They encourage employees to come up with new ideas that reduce the cause of environmental degradation.

3. Green performance management

Measuring the environmental performance of people in an organization is challenging. A Performance management system to supplement green HR practices is, therefore, required to develop environmental performance standards and indicators. This can be initiated by linking performance evaluation to green goals and tasks specified in the job description. For example, Infosys has moved to performance-based contracts, effectively forcing project teams to practice integrated design by withholding fees if performance goals¹⁰ are not met. If the work is not done as required by the contract, they lose 25% of their fee. Green goals of Infosys include 100% of its energy from renewable sources by 2017, 50% reduced energy consumption, carbon neutrality and net-negative water consumption by 2018

4. Green compensation and reward

Green Compensation and reward is another potentially powerful tool for supporting environmental management activities this may help to make effort for the attainment of environmental goals. It is the most important for maintaining employee interest to that of the organization. The reward policies are focused on attracting, retaining and motivating the employee which lead to the achievement of the organizational goal and improve the organizational commitment. Rewards motivate the environmental behaviour and attitude of the employee. Green Compensation and reward can be given in many forms such as

- i. Tailor packages to reward green skills acquisition
- ii. Use of monetary-based EM rewards (bonuses, cash, premiums)

- iii. Use of non-monetary based EM rewards (sabbaticals, leave, gifts)
- iv. Use of recognition-based EM rewards (awards, dinners, publicity, external roles, daily praise)
- v. Develop negative reinforcements in EM (criticism, warnings, suspensions for lapses)
- vi. Develop positive rewards in EM (feedback)
- vii. Link participation in Green initiatives to promotion/career gains (managers advance through supporting staff in EM)

Dow chemical is a very good example of reward and compensation; employees were motivated and given rewards when they came up with innovative waste reduction idea.

5. Employee involvement and participation in green HR practices

Employee Involvement is defined as “creating an environment in which people have an impact on decisions and actions that affect their jobs”. The involvement of employees at the level of formulating environmental strategy would equip them better to market green products. Employee involvement contributes to optimizing work processes by better co-ordination. It also helps manage the health and safety concerns of workers better. The use of employee participation in green HR has been noted to help prevent pollution from workplaces. Employees who pursue programs like ‘car-pooling’ should be encouraged by offering benefits. Such green commuting habits should be lauded so that more and more employees engage themselves in green commuting behaviour. Allowing for flexible work weeks would also constitute green commuting habits.

Green HR Practices in different companies

With India making rapid progress in the field of industrialization, concerns have also been made by various sections of environmentalists regarding the repercussions on the environment. The companies themselves are now more aware of the ways in which their factories often affect the ecosystem and have taken a greener path to success. Here are the top ten green companies in India which Innovation believes, are showing the path of sustainability to others.

1. LG: LG India has been a pioneer is making electronic gadgets that are eco-friendly. Recently, it has launched a LED E60 and E90 series monitor for the Indian market. Its USP is that it consumes 40% less energy than conventional LED monitors. Also, they hardly used halogen or mercury, trying to keep down the use of hazardous materials in their products.

2. HCL: HCL is another brand that is trying to introduce eco- friendly products in the market and it has recently launched the HCL ME 40 notebooks. These notebooks do not use any polyvinyl chloride (PVC) material or other harmful chemicals and the Bureau of Energy Efficiency already given it a five-star rating.

3. Haier: Eco branding is a part of Haier’s new green initiative and they have launched the Eco Life Series. They have semi-automatic and automatic refrigerators and washing machines, split and window air conditioners and a lot more.

4. Samsung: Samsung India has always had a roaring range of LED TV screens and now they have come up with eco- friendly LED backlight. They use 40% less electricity have also no harmful chemicals like mercury and lead.

5. Tata Consultancy Services: TCS has a globally recognized Sustainability practice and has already topped the Newsweek’s top World’s Greenest Company title. It also has a global green score of 80.4% and this has mainly happened due to their initiative of creating technology for agricultural and community benefits.

6. Oil and Natural Gas Company: ONGC, India’s largest oil producer is all set to change the way with the invention of green crematoriums, that would serve as a perfect replacement for the funeral pyres that emit so much smoke and uses excess oxygen.

7. IndusInd Bank: One of the first banks in India to discourage the use of paper for the counterfoils in ATMs, and sending electronic messages, it has contributed a lot towards saving paper and reducing deforestation.

8. ITC: ITC has adopted a Low Carbon Growth Path and a Cleaner Environment Approach and has already introduced ozone treated elemental chlorine free bleaching technology that has improved the lives of millions worldwide.

9. Wipro: Wipro, has not only helped in the creation of technology that helps in saving energy and preventing wastes, but its corporate headquarters in Pune is the most eco-friendly building in this sector all over India.

10. MRF Tyres: MRF has launched the ZSLK series and this is all about creating eco- friendly tubeless tyres made from unique silica- based rubber and also offers extra fuel efficiency to those who drive their vehicles.

The world top 10 green companies

American weekly news magazine Newsweek has come out with its annual rankings of the world’s largest companies on corporate sustainability and environmental impact called the Newsweek Green Rankings. The 2016 rankings are based on eight key performance indicators that are used to assess and measure the environmental performance of the world’s largest publicly-traded companies. These indicators include combined energy productivity, combined greenhouse gas productivity, combined water productivity and combined waste productivity.

List of top Green Companies in the world

Rank	News week green score	Company	Country	GICS sector
1	87.7%	Shire PLC	Ireland	Health Care
2	83.9%	Reckitt Benckiser Group PLC	United Kingdom	Consumer staples
3	83.2%	BT Group PLC	United Kingdom	Telecommunication Services
4	82.9%	Swisscom AG	Switzerland	Telecommunication Services
5	82%	Essilor International SA	France	Health Care
6	81.9%	Nike Inc	United States	Consumer Discretionary
7	81.8%	Unilever PLC	United Kingdom	Consumer staples
8	80.7%	Sky PLC	United Kingdom	Consumer Discretionary
9	79.6%	Siemens AG	Germany	Industrials
10	78.8%	Schnider Electric SE	France	Industrials

Source Newsweek

The number one company with a green score of 87.7% is Dublin-based Shire Plc., a global biopharmaceutical company known for developing attention-deficit drug Adder all. In recent years, Shire has worked to minimize its environmental impact. Since 2010, the

company has reduced its paper usage by 22% and its landfill waste by 20%. The company has also increased its waste diversion rate by 45%.

In 2014, the company achieved carbon neutrality at all its North American facilities, a year ahead of its goal. At number two is consumer products company Reckitt Benckiser Group Plc. with a green score of 83.9%. The company has set strict environmental risk-reduction targets for 2020, including zero waste-to-landfill, cutting water use by 35%, waste by 10% and energy by 35%.two telecommunication companies, the London-Based BT Plc and Switzerland-based Swisscom AG, follow at the third and fourth places, with green scores of 83.2% and 82.9%, respectively. At number five is Essilor, a leader in ophthalmic optics. The company designs and manufactures an extensive range of lenses, as well as equipment and services for eyecare professionals. Essilor's products and services have a light environmental footprint, and they use technologies and processes that preserve natural resources and promote reuse and recyclability. The company applies the 3 Rs approach—reduce, recycle and reuse—as a pragmatic daily tool in improving materials, consumables, and packaging. Their green score is 82%.

Nike is at the sixth place, with a green score of 81.9%. The footwear and apparel company has been working towards inventing closed-loop products and is moving to 100% renewable energy. Nike has seen an 18% decrease in carbon emissions per unit since 2011 and is setting aggressive targets to achieve a 25% decrease in carbon emissions per unit in key operations by 2020.

Consumer goods giant Unilever and Sky Plc, Europe's leading entertainment firm are at the seventh and eighth positions, with scores of 81.8% and 80.7%, respectively. At number nine and ten are two industrial companies: Siemens AG and Schneider Electric SE with scores of 79.6% and 78.8%, respectively. Siemens aims to be the world's first major industrial company to achieve a net-zero carbon footprint by 2030. Its goal is to cut carbon dioxide emissions—which currently total about 2.2 million metric tons a year—by half by as early as 2020. Schneider Electric, on the other hand, aims to bring products and solutions to the market that waste less energy and promote environmentally sound production and consumption. It's committed to providing energy to the 1.1 billion people who have no access to electricity and provide sustainable economic development. Its goal is to achieve a carbon-neutral balance across all of its sites within the next 15 years.

Domestic companies Rankings

There are a bunch of Indian companies that are also part of the green rankings. These include IT firms Tata Consultancy Services and Infosys, with ranks of 151 and 182 and scores of 56.10% and 52%, respectively. TCS's initiatives towards environmental sustainability have created significant benefits for the organization, environment, and community at large. Its target for 2020 includes achieving 50% reduction in per capita Scope 2 emissions and reducing the carbon footprint (per capita) by 50%. Similarly, Bengaluru-based Infosys is pioneering new technologies while investing in measures to renew its existing infrastructure to improve performance and enhance resource efficiency.

Rank	Newsweek green score	Company	GICS sector
151	56.1%	Tata Consultancy Services	Information Technology
185	52%	Infosys	Information Technology
351	27.2%	Housing Development Finance Corp	Financials
352	27.2%	Sun Pharmaceutical Industries	Health Care
357	26.4%	ITC	Consumer Staples
373	24.5%	Hindustan Unilever	Consumer Staples
437	17.7%	ICICI Bank	Financials
438	17.6%	Reliance Industries	Energy
445	17%	HDFC Bank	Financials
449	16.3%	State Bank of India	Financials

Source News week

These are followed by Housing Development Finance Corp., Sun Pharmaceutical Industries, ITC, Hindustan Unilever Ltd, ICICI Bank Ltd, Reliance Industries Ltd, HDFC Bank, State Bank of India,

Actions adopted by the organizations to go green:

1. Stock reusable pens: U.S. citizens alone throw out over four million disposable pens daily. Consider stocking the office with reusable pens instead. Stock the supplies cupboard only with refills for these pens. This creates incentives to keep track of and use their pens, and they're actually cheaper in the long run and usually much nicer to use.

2. Eliminate waste in printing: All too often we print a document to discover that the last page only has a web address at the bottom, or other printable space is wasted. Green Print and Eco Print² are software programs that identify these areas of waste in printing, alert the user of possible wasted space, and recommend how to eliminate it. The user can then decide whether or not to accept the program recommendations before printing. Green Print claims to save businesses 17 percent on printing materials.

3. Go digital:Is it necessary to print out a meeting agenda for every member? Or can you incorporate it into a slide show, or simply send it via email? How about posting employee manuals and other materials online rather than distributing — and onerously updating — print copies? Increasing numbers of digital storage devices and systems for businesses make going digital very easy to do.

4. Buy Environment-friendly papers: Try as we may go digital, we still need paper, so try to go with the least of the evils. Insist on chlorine-free paper, and look for high amounts of post-consumer recycled content. You can also look for paper that has been made with more sustainable substances like bamboo, hemp, or organic cotton.

5. Photo Copier and Printing Settings:Ensure the photocopier and printer defaults back to single copies after somebody has used it. You may also want to set them to print double-sided by default. Use the draft printing mode whenever possible (which is more than you think), and avoid colour printing.

6. Use Smaller Font: Although you don't want to make your employees blind, reducing the font size in documents can save reams of paper each week.

7. Go Casual: Not every industry permits this, but if you can, set a business casual policy for the office. Not wearing suits means much less dry cleaning, which is not only better for the environment, but also your health and everybody's finances.

8. Telecommute: Employees can be just as — if not more — productive when working from home. Most also consider it a perk to telecommute, even if only for a few days per month. The environmental effects of commuting are reduced, employees save the expense (and time), and even air quality and road maintenance take less of a hit.

9. Power down: Would you believe that the majority of office power is consumed by machines that are off, but still plugged into a live outlet? Standby power (or phantom power) is a huge and hugely unnecessary environmental culprit and expense. You can improve this process and automate it with programs like Surveyor, which automatically powers down company computers at night.

10. Eliminate Screen Savers: Set a company policy that disallows the use of screen savers. Instead, set monitors to power off after the same amount of time; it's just as easy.

11. Consider Solar Power: Yes, solar energy systems can be expensive and aren't always practical depending on your office location and setup. But you can reap some long-term savings from your initial investment, and many states now offer incentives (like rebates and the ability to sell excess energy to the power company) for solar energy users.

12. Use Natural Light: Artificial lighting represents 40 percent of electricity consumption in a typical office building and almost a quarter of all electricity in the States. And so often this is unnecessary. Open the blinds and let daylight in wherever possible. And of course, don't leave the lights on at night when everybody is gone.

13. Install Motion Sensors: Instead of leaving it to employees to turn off lights as they leave rooms, install motion-activated light switches. They will turn the lights on for a designated period of time (e.g.: 15 minutes) whenever somebody passes in front of the switch or moves about the room.

14. Decorate with light colours: By using light wall colours and high-gloss sheens, daylight is more easily reflected off the walls, and less artificial light is necessary.

15. Use Compact Fluorescent bulbs: Compact fluorescent bulbs use 75 percent less energy than incandescent bulbs, and they last about 10 times longer. So you'll save on energy costs, replacement bulb costs, and reduce waste by using them.

16. Buy remanufacture ink and toner cartridges: Not only do remanufactured cartridges cost about 15 percent less than brand new ones, but each reused cartridge saves about 2.5 pounds of metal and plastic and about half a gallon of oil, all of which is wasted in the manufacturing process.

17. Use Multi-Purpose Machines: Each piece of office equipment you buy produces heaps of toxic substances in both the manufacturing and disposal stages. So the fewer office machines you buy, the smaller your footprint will be. Consider using multi-purpose machines that handle copying, scanning, faxing, and printing, as well as other multi-tasking machines.

18. Buy Second-Hand: It's not always possible, especially if you have appearances to keep up, but every time you buy something for the office that's second hand, you'll save by-product wastage in the production of a new appliance (and you'll save money too).

19. Eliminate Paper Towels: We discussed the benefits of going to cloth napkins and towels in the kitchen but even in the bathroom, you can use cloth towels or hand dryers.

20. Reduce Toilet Water Consumption: Reduce the amount of water used per flush by putting a brick in the tank. If you are replacing toilets, look for low-flush models, or ones with a half-flush option. Toilet flushing is the largest water consumer in office buildings.

21. Install Aerators: Make sure all taps have low-flow aerators installed to reduce water wastage.

22. Buy in bulk: Instead of buying individual packets of coffee, creamer, sugar, pepper, salt, jam, and other consumables, buy these items in bulk instead. Think creatively about using jars or dispensers for these items that make it easy and sanitary for all to use.

23. Use Green Cleaning Products: Environmentally friendly cleaning products protect the health of not only your cleaning staff but also your employees, by eliminating harmful substances and odours from the office.

24. Go Green — Literally: Make your office literally green with plants! They absorb airborne pollutants (which are rampant with off-gassing office furniture) and emit healthy negative ions and oxygen into the air. Having some green plants in the office also reduces that "sterile" look, making it more comfortable for everybody.

Social Implications

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 most important asset or part of any organization that can never be ignored i.e., employees. Some of the benefits that an employee and organization can attain by implementing green HRM in the organization include:

1. Improvement rate of retention in employee- Organizations that are not aware of the green concept, green practices and policies may lose their talented or innovative employees to companies that have implemented Green Practices or make their image as an eco-friendly company and offer socially responsible incentives. Some of the incentives include giving subsidies for buying hybrid cars, on the solar power system. Among the benefits of this approach is improved employee commitment toward company and job retention.

2. Improved public image- By using environmentally friendly practices and product, implementing the Green concept, Most of the persons are much aware of eco-friendly practices and they attract toward organization adopting green management practices better as compared to an organization that is causing harm to the environment.

3. Improvement in attracting better employees- In the race of attracting most creative and innovative employees, companies increase their recruiting potential and they are trying to attract the talented employee by providing environmentally friendly practices like GE are painting themselves in green.

4. Improvement in productivity- Green HRM practices specifically focus on practices for sustainable use of resources that resulting in more efficiencies, less wastage, Improved Job-Related Attitude, Improved Work/Private life, lower costs, improved employee performance. So it improved employee commitment and job satisfaction toward an organization that improved the productivity of both.

5. Improvement in the sustainable use of resources- By increasing the awareness among the individuals working in the organization about the Green HRM concept, Green practices, proper utilization of natural resources and retain the natural resources for our future generation.

6. Reduction of practices that cause the degradation of the environment- By implementing Green HRM practices in both the life domain, avoiding misuse of resources.

7. Reduced Utility Costs- By using technologies those are energy efficient and less wasteful. Using Energy Star-rated CFL bulbs, energy-efficient windows and doors decrease heating and cooling costs, water conservation system, and low-flow toilet and reduce landscaping watering to reduce your water usage.

8. Save Environmental Impact- By Recycling and using long-lasting/Green products reduces the amount of energy needed to produce replacement products.

9. Rebates and Tax Benefits – Central Government and State government give subsidy and offer tax incentives and rebates

10. Increased Business Opportunities – Organizations/agencies, a Commercial business organization to do all those meet specific green Some Government/ semi-government and nonprofits institutions only approach those standards.

Conclusion

Green ideas and concepts are beginning to gather pace within the HR space often complementing existing sustainability-based initiatives. Increasingly they are delivering tangible benefits to the business, rather than simply adding a gloss to brand and reputation. These new processes, policies, products and tools are actually helping to ensure compliance and improve productivity too. In this regard, the paper thus brings out how the HRM function by its policies and practices, can contribute to the environmentally sustainable business.

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