



Green Human Resource Management: Policies And Practice

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ABSTRACT

Recently, there has been observed an increasing awareness within business communities on the significance of going green and adopting various environment management techniques. As the corporate world is going global, the business is experiencing a shift from a conventional financial structure to a modern capacity-based economy which is ready to explore green economic facets of business. Today, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has become a key business strategy for the significant organizations where Human Resource Departments play an active part in going green at the office. The paper largely focuses upon the various Green Human Resource Practices pursued by the organizations all over the world and, explains the simplified meaning of GHRM. The study also adds to the extant literature by discussing future direction of some GHRM functions. Finally, the paper suggests some potentially prolific HR initiatives for Green organizations.

KEYWORDS

Introduction

Twenty-first century has been showing heightened interest in the environmental concerns all around the globe irrespective of related fields be it politics, public, or business. The recent interest in environmentalism globally has arisen from specific treaties to combat climate change, e.g. Kyoto 1997, Bali 2007 and Copenhagen

2009 (Victor, 2001). Owing to the harmful consequences of industrial pollution and waste materials, including toxic chemicals, governments and NGOs round the globe promoted regulations and policies with effect of slowing down and to some extent even reverse the destruction of natural resources and its negative effect on the mankind and the society as a whole (Christmann & Taylor, 2002; Shrivastava & Berger, 2010).

Given the present situation the organizations have also to find out ways and techniques to deal with reduction in ecological footprints besides dealing with the economic issues. In order to attain success within the corporate community and to facilitate attainment of profit by the shareholders, organizations nowadays have to concentrate on social and environmental factors along with economical and financial factors (Daily, Bishop, & Steiner, 2007; Govindarajulu & Daily, 2004). The successful implementation of these sustainable corporate strategies within an organization requires both strong leadership and a concrete process (Glavas, Senge, & Cooperrider, 2010). The sustainability issue is fast moving up on the list of priorities of the leaders of corporate world as the awareness on incorporating "green" into the corporate strategy is making its way in business, but still the topic is not comfortable with most practitioners in the HR environment (Wirtenberg, Harmon, Russell, & Fairfield, 2007).

To implement any corporate environmental program several units of an organization HR, Marketing, IT, Finance, and so on, work together to put forward a positive joint effort and among them, the most important contributor is the human resource management unit. made way for green management prospective.

Human Resource Management (HRM) is an important faction of management that deals with the most valuable assets of an organization which is human resources. The whole context of HRM is currently being considered in the light of sustainability all over. Expanding the statement, we contend that Green Human Resource Management is the most significant element of sustainability. In this paper, we exclusively focus on the topic Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) where the Human Resource Management (HRM) is engaged in managing the environment within an organization.

Objectives

The main purpose of this study is to:

- Provide with a basic understanding of green HRM to the readers, on green HRM by other workers, and
- Elaborate on various green practices that can be incorporated for building a Green workplace.
- Attempts to suggest some green initiatives for HR.

What is Green HRM?

The term Green HRM has become the buzz word within the business field at present and its significance is increasing manifold with the passage of time. This term has also its secured position as a hot topic in recent research works since the awareness on environmental management and sustainable development has been increasingly rising day by day all round the globe. Today the topic Green HRM not only includes awareness toward environmental affairs, but also stands for the social as well as economical well-being of both the organization and the employees within a broader prospect.

Need for GHRM

Last two decades of this century have witnessed a unanimous consensus for the need of a realistic environmental management drive all over the world. This effort was undertaken since the damaging effects of different pollutants among which the industrial wastes being the major culprit that has been deteriorating and depleting our natural resources very fast has been

evident. The "Magna Carta" on Human Environment was declared in the first United Nation's (International) Conference on Human Environment held in June 1972 in Stockholm declared that to defend and improve the human environment for present and future generation have become an imperative goal for mankind (Shaikh, 2010, p. 122).

The Green HRM literature is largely a western one and, given the importance of Asian economic development for environmental management, this is an important gap for future studies to reduce (Renwick, Redman, & Maguire, 2013, p. 3). Scholars of management around the world are now analyzing various managerial practices that can facilitate the achievements of the goals of GHRM and also have a significant impact on the environmental competitiveness of the organizations.

Literature review

The extant literature in the HR field on the topic of sustainability suggests that more and more HR executives are keen to modulate their corporation as such to become exclusive environmental champions. A great extent of empirical research highlights the impact of environment management practices on performance of the organization using different parameters (Iraldo, Testa, & Frey, 2009; Yang, Lin, Chan, & Sheu, 2010).

Literature has given importance to adoption of environmental practices as a key objective of organizational functioning making it important to identify with the support of human resource management practices. (Cherian & Jacob, 2012, p. 25). Haden, Oyler, and Humphrey (2009) comprehend that the integration of environmental objectives and strategies along with the strategic development goals of a company results in an effective environment management system.

Daily and Huang (2001) proposed that organizations essentially need to balance the industrial growth as well as preservation of the environment because it has been confirmed that by endorsing green practices, the companies may profit more than before (Murari & Bhandari, 2011).

The Human Resource Department of an organization plays a significant role in the creation of their company's sustainability culture (Harmon, Fairfield, & Wirtenberg, 2010). It is identified that the greater the strength of green human resource policies, the greater is the intensity of adoption of environment management systems (EMS) and policies by the different companies (Bohdanowicz, Zientara, & Novotna, 2011).

Various contemporary scholars have augmented the understanding and studies on Green HRM in recent years (Berrone & Gomez-Mejia, 2009; Jabbour, Santos, & Nagano, 2010; Mas-soud, Daily, & Bishop, 2008; Renwick, 2008; Stringer, 2009). Green HRM depends on the unique and identifiable patterns of green decisions and behaviors of HR managers (green signatures; Jackson, Renwick, Jabbour, & Muller-Camen, 2011).

The incorporation of environmental objectives and strategies into the overall strategic development goals of a company helps in arriving at an effective EMS (Haden et al., 2009). There are various researchers who support the HRM practices to be effective for promotion of human capital and results in providing to contributors of organizational performance and competitive advantage (Boselie, Paauwe, & Jansen, 2001).

GHRM functions future direction

GHRM is a manifesto which helps to create green workforce that can understand and appreciate green culture in an organization. Such green initiative can maintain its green objectives all throughout the HRM process of recruiting, hiring and training, compensating, developing, and advancing the firm's human capital (Dutta, 2012). The Human Resource Department of a company is capable of playing a significant role in the creation of sustainability culture within the company (Harmon et al., 2010). HR processes play an important role in translat-

ing Green HR policy into practice (Renwick, 2008); therefore, human capital and its management are instrumental to the fulfillment of EM objectives (Hersey, 1998). Huslid (1995) mentions the selection processes, incentive compensation, performance management systems, the employee involvement, and training to be central for the company's success. Consequently, the argument is advanced that the HR function is instrumental in realizing organizational change aimed at acclimatizing to the new-found requirements for corporations and therefore also a potentially important contributor to such a strategic issue.

Green performance management

Performance management (PM) is the process by which employees are prompted to enhance their professional skills that help to achieve the organizational goals and objectives in a better way. The recognition of the corporate strategy culminates into the PM. With the EM affecting global business strategy, PM is also being influenced by the green wave in a possible positive manner. Green performance management consists of issues related to environmental concerns and policies of the company. It also concentrates on use of environmental responsibilities. Epstein and Roy (1997) in their study concluded that when HR managers integrate environmental performance into PM systems they safeguard environment management against any damage. Today some firms deal with the issue of PM by installing corporate-wide environmental performance standards, and Green information systems/audits to gain useful data on environmental performance (Marcus & Fremeth, 2009).

Green training and development

Training and development is a practice that focuses on development of employees' skills, knowledge, and attitudes, prevent deterioration of EM-related knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Zoogah, 2011, p. 17). Green training and development educate employees about the value of EM, train them in working methods that conserve energy, reduce waste, diffuse environmental awareness within the organization, and provide opportunity to engage employees in environmental problem-solving (Zoogah, 2011). Green T&D activities make employees aware of different aspects and value of environment management. It helps them to embrace different methods of conservation including waste management within an organization.

Further, it sharpens the skill of an employee to deal with different environmental issues. Ramus (2002) in a survey of managers, on best management practices concluded that environmental training and education, along with establishing a favorable environmental culture for the employees where they feel that they are the part of environmental outcomes, were the most important HRM processes that facilitate the achievement of environmental goals. Liebowitz (2010), in his study on the role of HR in achieving a sustainability culture, suggests that the HR Department can offer leadership development workshops to help managers develop their "front wheel" soft, people skills, or behavioral competencies, in teamwork, diversity, managing change, and collaboration (p. 3). Future research that facilitate green training on one hand and helps organizations on the other to develop eco-friendly managers who without any hesitation can indulge as well as promote sustainability throughout the process would be particularly useful.

Green initiatives for HR

Lado and Wilson (1994) defines HRM system as a set of distinct but interrelated activities, functions, and process that aims to attract, develop, and maintain a firm's human resource. Organizations generally organize HR practices into systems that are consistent with their culture and business strategy (Boselie et al., 2001). We can say that green initiatives included in HRM manifesto is a part of corporate social responsibility in the long run. Today, organizations are implementing and integrating green initiatives in their agenda with the help of their human resource. Managers make sure that

their HR is utilizing green human resource practices in appropriate manner. As an addendum to the statement, several authors have suggested that it is important to promote a great deal of technical and management skills among all employees of the organization in order to implement an effective corporate green management system in companies (Daily, Bishop, & Govindarajulu, 2009; Unnikrishnan & Hegde, 2007).

Organizations across the world are incorporating and working toward implementing GHRM practices to gain competitive advantages among the corporate world. Complete adoption and integration of GHRM in business is not impossible but requires a changed approach toward the existing HR practices on part of both the management as well as employees simultaneously. A key role for HR environmental executives could be to guide line managers in terms of gaining full staff co-operation toward implementing environmental policies which means HR needs to nurture supporters and create networks of problem-solvers willing to act to change the current status quo (Sathyapriya, Kanimozhi, & Adhilakshmi, 2014, p. 32).

Conclusion

The future of Green HRM appears promising for all the stakeholders of HRM, be it the employers, employees, practitioners, or academicians. We propose that GHRM has substantial scope for research in management field but lacks behind in practice within academic arena; hence, there is a need to bridge the gap between professional GHRM practices and preaches in research and teaching environmental management. Studies that observe the overall impact of GHRM systems rather than individual practices would be particularly helpful in this respect. Such studies can help organizations to reduce degradation of the environment become healthier both physically and financially and, make the world a cleaner and safer place to live. On the concluding note, we would like to add that HR is the major role player in implementing GHRM practices and policies. Apart from this, they have a crucial role to play in recruitment of new employees who are more responsible toward green business practices thus, indirectly saving the Earth. HR has significant opportunity to contribute to the organization's green movement and plays important role in enthusing, facilitating, and motivating employees for taking up green practices for greener business.

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