

Green Human Resource Management Practices in Selected Indian Companies: A Case Study

Sunita Rani *

*Research Scholar, Commerce, Baba Mastnath University, Rohtak

Abstract

These days, rapid glacier melting, rising temperatures, western disturbances, and forest fires are all too typical. People are becoming more aware of the need for sustainable development as global warming, pollution, and natural disasters become more common. Human resources are the only ones who can make other resources useful. Environmental protection and natural resource conservation are also important aspects of sustainable development. As a result, the focus of this research is on green (environmentally friendly) human resource management practices and environmental sustainability. According to the research, these organisations' employees are unfamiliar with Green hrn practices .The study's most important conclusion is that most HR managers still have little to no knowledge of the idea of Green (environmentally friendly) Human Resource Management. This paper comes at an opportune time as there is a great deal of increase in the level of environmental pollution and waste emerging from industries which has resulted in increase in implementation of policies by governmental and private sector with the aim of reducing the rapid destruction to the non-renewable resources and the ultimate negative impact it would have on societal consequences.

Keywords: Green HRM, Work life balance, Green practices

The Future of Business Organizations

Businesses currently grapple with the realities of skills shortages, managing people through change and creating an effective workforce. Given the context of future workplace and business environment, the report also estimates that the Human Resource function, which has been perceived by many as a passive, service oriented function, may go one of following three ways:

- *With a proactive mind-set and focused on business strategy, HR will become the heart of the organisation taking on a new wider people remit incorporating and influencing many other aspects of the business*
- *The function will become the driver of the corporate social responsibility agenda within the organisation*
- *The function will be seen as transactional and almost entirely outsourced. In this scenario, HR will exist in a new form outside the organisation and in house HR will be predominantly focused on people sourcing.*

Companies are likely to develop a powerful social conscience and green sense of responsibility as the consumers of today demand ethics and environmental credentials as a top priority. Societal and business agenda is thus likely to align. This forecast can be visualized in the progression given below:

Table 1: Companies Going Green

2010	2012	2013	2018	2020
UK launches the London Carbon Trading Exchange.	US signs the Kyoto II agreement and becomes a leading advocate for actions to reduce the rate of global warming.	India becomes a key player in the CSR agenda with a focus on preserving the Indian culture and heritage.	Hybrid or fully electric cars outnumber petrol-powered cars.	A group of scientists confirm that the rate of global warming is slowing.

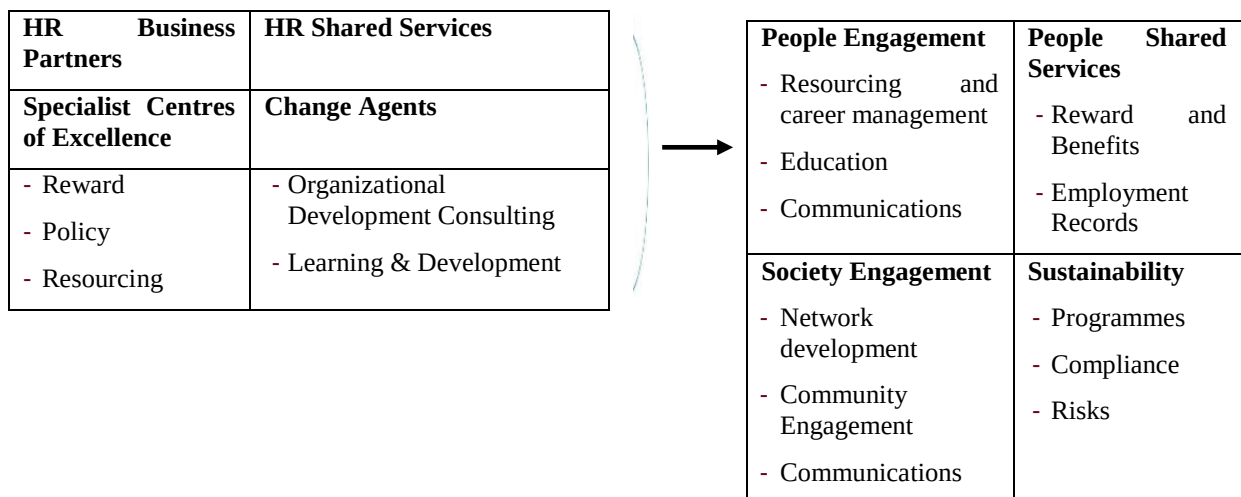
Source: PWC Report: *Managing Tomorrow's People*

In today's global business environment, businesses are facing increased competitive, regulatory and community pressures. Furthermore, there is also pressure for environmental sustainability, which requires strategies to be put in place to reduce the environmental impacts caused by the products and services offered. Clem (2008) adds that going green reflects a social consciousness around saving and advancing the Earth's natural resources, preserving and protecting them for the sake of civilisation. As customers become more aware of environmental issues, there is an increase in the demand for ecological products. This increased awareness of and sensitivity towards environmental issues places certain demands on business functions to become greener..

Figure1: Current HRM vs Future HRM

Human Resources: The Current Model

People and Society: The 2020 Model



Summary of Entry to Exit HR processes as seen involved in Green HRM

Recruitment - Green job descriptions for employees (and green goals included into managerial job descriptions) - Graduate perceptions of Green practises (applicants use green criteria) - Green job candidates - Recruitment of employees who are 'Green aware' becomes part of the interview schedule

engagement, reductions in labour turnover, and increasing workforce health
<i>Performance Management</i> - Green performance indicators into performance management system, and appraisals (PMA) - Communication of Green schemes to all levels of staff through PMA scheme, establishing firm-wide dialogue on green matters - Managers are set green targets, goals and responsibilities - Roles of managers in achieving Green outcomes included in appraisals - Writing & integrating green criteria in appraisals - Appraisals assess number of green incidents, use of environment responsibly, & successful communication of environmental policy
<i>Training and Development</i> - Introduce training on EM, & processes/material use - EM training needs analysis - Integrating training on instruction and generation of eco-values - Development of employee skills, and competence building in EM - Socialisation in Green values/management - Use of Green teams in EM - Train staff to produce green analysis of workspace - Job rotation to train green managers of the future
<i>Employment Relations</i> - Employee involvement & participation (EI&P) in Green suggestion schemes, & problem-solving circles - Staff independence to form & experiment with green ideas - Integrate staff EI&P into maintenance (cleaning) - Employee help-line for guidance in green matters - Tailor Green EI scheme to industry/company standards - Increase line/supervisory support behaviours in EM - Unions negotiating Green workplace agreements - Training of union representatives in EM

Source: Renwick et al, 2008

Green work-life balance (WLB) is also a concept that is being discussed, although the full potential of Green HRM in theory and practice has not yet been realized. One conceivable deficit which could hamper the greening process is that the green HR policies focus only on employees' working role. There is a need to acknowledge that environmentally relevant attitudes and behaviour are not learned exclusively at the workplace, but also in private life. People have distinctive modes of living. They practice specific consumption patterns in their everyday life. Therefore employees' private role as consumers is considered crucial for learning and practicing environmental attitudes and behaviour. Some actions that companies can take to go green include: Conducting an energy audit, recycle, reuse, reduce,

telecommuting, buying green, implement green manufacturing processes and implementing green policies.

Contemporary Green HR Practices in Selected Companies

Several companies have initiated the process of integrating environmental concerns with their business strategy, with HR taking centre stage. Google is leading the way not just in its environmental practices but also in publicizing their environmental record and approach. Like many emerging green companies, Google has hired a director who coordinates corporate environmental efforts in an attempt to match their corporate business strategy with their environmental efforts. Companies like Honda, S.C. Johnson, Goldman Sachs, Starbucks, Patagonia, Timberland, and GE have successfully used their environmentally friendly policies to sell their product and gain media exposure. In India, green movement and Green HR is still in a nascent stage with a few companies following green agenda. Green Toyota has made a public pledge that it would do business only with those concerns that are certified “Green”. The Tata Group has gone “Green” and has made a list of third parties, vendors and suppliers whom it deals with in the course of business without releasing toxic emissions that could harm the environment. There are many companies implementing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives which also have green projects. ITC Ltd. and The Associated Cement Companies Ltd. (ACC Ltd.) have since long practised CSR with emphasis on environment management.

IBM: Over the past decade IBM has undergone a significant and well-publicized transformation, turning a strong multinational business into a globally integrated enterprise.. To do that, HR has shifted to a globally based, process-driven model. IBM’s five building blocks provide the tools to operational savings and business growth. They have realized that by going green the pocketbook and the planet gets impacted. Double your IT capacity In the same energy footprint Reduce operational costs 40-50% energy savings \$1.3M / year savings Positive environmental impact 1,300 less cars or 3.5M less pounds of coal Diagnose Get the facts to understand your energy use and opportunities for improvement Build Plan, build, and upgrade to energy efficient data centres Cool Virtualize Implement virtualization and other innovative technologies Manage & Measure Seize control with energy management software. IBM Project Big Green Use has initiated innovative cooling solutions and has a holistic Green IT approach.

Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL): GAIL is one of the premier Navratna Public Sector Undertakings of India which has consistently maintained its position in Navratna list since 1997. The company is following the best of Human Resource Management practices which are prevalent and followed in top level international organizations. 3. It is ranked as the number one integrated energy company of Asia, by Platts, an international survey company based in U.K. which makes a survey of about 250 energy companies of the world every year. GAIL India Limited owes its success to TEAM GAIL, a name given to its employees. It has a vast potential of growth in the coming times as it is spreading its base in India for more use of green energy. It has been able to check the environmental pollution in the country to a great extent. Saving of Taj Mahal from air pollution, reformative steps in New Delhi, Surat, Mumbai and a number of other cities is a living example of its excellence. It is one of the safest public sector companies with no reported cases of industrial hazard or accidents in any of its plant over a number of years. It is because of the high level of

commitment of work in its human resources. It is contributing two percent of its Profit After Tax (PAT) to the social causes. It is a very big help to lakhs of poor and needy people of India. It is rated as one of the best employers in the nation as for the reports of Hewitt International which is an internationally recognized survey company. It has contributed significantly to the socio-economic development of the nation and its future prospects of growth are very high. The company has proved that following the best of Human Resource Management practices yields organizational excellence.

ITC: ITC is one of India's foremost private sector companies with a strong commitment to the triple bottom line. It has been a frontrunner in adopting eco-responsible processes, much ahead of legislation – setting benchmarks for the industry to follow. It has a market capitalization of over US \$ 22 billion and a turnover of over US \$ 5 billion with a diversified presence in cigarettes, hotels, paper boards and specialty papers, packaging, agribusiness, packaged foods and a whole range of other services. ITC Ltd Sustainable Initiatives at ITC Green Products are Premium Business Paper. For the first time in India ITC has launched an environment friendly multipurpose paper 'Paperkraft Premium Business Paper', for office and home use using a new technology 'Ozone Treated Elemental Chlorine Free Technology' replacing Elemental Chlorine which was conventionally used in the bleaching process during paper manufacture. ITC's Green Leaf Threshing plant in Chirala is the first in India and among the first 10 units in the world to bag the Social Accountability (SA 8000) certification. ITC as a responsible corporate citizen is doing many activities for the welfare of the society: Environment, health & safety (EHS) initiatives; Reaching out to society; Preserving national heritage and Supporting sustainable development. It is committed to protecting the environment in which it operates. It is equally committed to ensuring very high standard of safety at the work place. The Company believes that commitment to sustainable development is a key component of responsible corporate citizenship and therefore is accorded the highest priority. Accordingly, the Company is committed to Best Practices in environmental matters arising out of its business activities and expects each business to fully demonstrate this commitment. In addition to complying with applicable laws and regulations, they have established procedures for assessing the environmental effects of their present and future activities.

Conclusion

The Green Human Resources Management is based on the green movement, related to the protection of the environment and to save the planet Earth from future disasters. Subsequently to defend & improve the human environment for present and future generation has become an imperative goal for mankind. The companies taken for this study are leaders in their respective areas of operations and they strive towards green business management. In fact, not only in these corporations, but increasingly in other companies as well, Green HRM is all set to play an important role in the industry to promote the environment related issues by adopting it, in management philosophy, HR policies and practices, training people and implementation of laws related to Environment Protection.

REFERENCES

1. Clem, W. (2008), *5 Things you need to know about going green*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.greencar.com/articles/5-things-need-going-green.php>. Accessed: 8 September 2009
2. www.greencar.com/articles/5-things-need-going-green.php. Accessed: 8 September 2009
3. Smith, S.E. (2003), *What is green business?* [Online] Available at: <http://www.wisegEEK.com/what-is-green-business.htm>. Accessed: 16 February 2010
4. Friend, G. (2009), *The Truth about Green Business*, 1st edition. New Jersey: Pearson Education

5. Zsolnai, L. (2002), 'Green business or community economy?', *International Journal of Social Economics*, 29(8): 652–662
6. Gilbert, A.J. (2007), *The value of green marketing education at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.uwlax.edu/URC/JUR-online/PDF/2007/gilbert.pdf>. Accessed: 24 August 2009
7. Morebusiness.com. (2009), *How your small business can become a green business*. [Online] Available at: http://www.morebusiness.com/green_business. Accessed: 16 August 2009
8. Renwick, D, Redman, T, Maguire, S (2008), *Green HRM: A Review, Process Model, and Research Agenda*, Discussion Papers
9. www.walmart.com
10. www.ongcindia.com
11. www.itcportal.com
12. www.gail.nic.in
13. www.ibm.com