

CREATING SUSTAINABILITY IN INDUSTRIES THROUGH GREEN HRM

SHIVA KUMARI

Department of Faculty of Commerce & Management, United University,
Prayagraj-211003

Dr. RICHA SINGH DUBEY

Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies,
IERT Prayagraj-211003

Dr. VIKAS SINGH

Assistant Professor, Faculty of Commerce & Management,
United University, Prayagraj

ABSTRACT

Sustainability in industries is not just about focussing social responsibility or maintaining triple bottom line criteria to maximise shareholders' short-term interests. This paper proposes that sustainability can only be created when business owners transform the way they currently think, challenge economic myths and adopt a systematic & holistic view. This will generate an ideology of leadership that embraces a set of sustainable values & principles. Sustainable practices will become encapsulated in corporate strategies, balancing hard and soft goals for the long-term interests of multiple stakeholders. To execute such sustainable strategies well demands effective implementation of green human resource management (GHRM) practices in industries. It refers to the policies, practices and systems that make employees of the organisation green for the benefit of the individual, society, natural environment and the business.

Sustainability in organisations/Industries are created when all the functions of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM)- Green Innovation, Green Job Design, Green Recruitment & Selection, Green Induction, Green Performance Management, Green Health & Safety and Green labour relations and management are effectively designed and executed for the long-term benefit of multiple stakeholders.

Key Words: Sustainability, Green Human Resource Management, Green Innovation.

INTRODUCTION

Modern humans are challenged with world problems of poverty, ecological destruction, hunger, global warming and population growth. Ecological footprint analyses show that for all who are alive today to live a Western lifestyle, we would need four or five planet Earths. How did we end up in this state? (Wong and Avery, 2008).

Sustainability in industries is not just about focussing social responsibility or maintaining triple bottom line criteria to maximise shareholders' short-term interests. This paper proposes that sustainability can only be created when business owners transform the way they currently think, challenge economic myths and adopt a systematic & holistic view. This will generate an ideology of leadership that embraces a set of sustainable values & principles. Sustainable practices will become encapsulated in corporate strategies, balancing hard and soft goals for the long-term interests of multiple stakeholders

METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative research based on the extensive analysis of existing literatures of sustainability in organisations and Green HRM. This paper employs a methodology to review the articles cited in the google scholar database. The other source of data include books, journals, e-papers and websites.

The research papers that were excluded from the review did not have an emphasis on environmental management in relation to managing, personnel, work organisations and the broader social scope.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is the ability to exist and develop without depleting natural resources for the future. The United Nations defined sustainable development in the Brundtland Report as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It assumes that resources are finite, and so should be used conservatively and carefully to ensure that there is enough for future generations, without decreasing present quality of life. A sustainable society must be socially responsible, focussing on environmental protection and dynamic equilibrium in human and natural systems. There are many benefits to sustainability, both short-term and long-term. We cannot maintain our Earth's ecosystems or continue to function as we do if more sustainable choices are not made. If harmful processes are maintained with no change, it is likely that we will run out of fossil fuels, huge numbers of animal species will become extinct, and the atmosphere will be irreparably damaged. Clean air and nontoxic atmospheric conditions, growth of resources that can be relied upon, and water quality and cleanliness, are all benefits of sustainability.

Basically, the concept of sustainability is composed of three pillars: environmental, social and economic—also known informally as profits, planet, and people. These are in particular relevant to corporate sustainability, and efforts made by companies. Environmental protection is the most frequently discussed element. It is concerned with the reduction of carbon footprints, water usage, non-decomposable packaging, and wasteful processes as part of a supply chain. These processes can often be cost-effective, and financially useful as well as important for environmental sustainability. Social development is about treating employees fairly and ensuring responsible, ethical, and sustainable treatment of employees, stakeholders, and the community in which a business operates. This may be achieved through more responsive benefits, like better maternity and paternity benefits, flexible scheduling, and learning and development opportunities. For example, business should operate using sustainable labour, which involves fairly-paid, adult employees who can operate in a safe environment. Economic development is probably the simplest form of sustainability. To be economically sustainable, a business must be profitable and produce enough revenues to be continued into the future. The challenge with this form of sustainability is achieving an equilibrium. Rather than making money at any cost, companies should attempt to generate profit in accordance with other elements of sustainability. Focussing on social and environmental sustainability in addition to economic performance is an approach frequently referred to as the Triple Bottom Line. Recently, the UN issued the Sustainable Development Goals as its main aims for the successful achievement of a better and more sustainable future. They address global challenges to sustainability. The 17 Goals include sustainable economic growth, no poverty, zero hunger, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, and responsible consumption and production, and it is hoped that they will be reached by 2030.

Sustainability through Green Human Resource Management (GHRM)

The globally growing concern for environment compels businesses to move towards sustainable operations and formulate green policies. The international standards for environment protection and preservation call for businesses to devise environment-friendly strategies. With everyone, from customers to employees to investors becoming more and more environment conscious, 'Green Human Resource Management (referred as green HRM or GHRM)' is emerging as a significant area in management (Mehta & Chugan, 2015). The incorporation of environmental objectives and strategies into the overall strategic development goals of a company helps in arriving at an effective environment management

system (Haden et al., 2009). Fayyazia et al. (2015), said that there is a requirement for the amalgamation of environmental management in Human Resource Management (HRM) because it is essentially or very important rather than just desirable. (Ullah, 2017)

Now-a-days it seems that a considerable number of organizations practice green human resource management practices in the global context (Opatha et al., 2015). There is a need for companies to adopt formal environmental practices due to growing global environmental concern and Development of international environmental standards (Daily and Huang, 2001; Ullah, 2017)

In general terms, the concept Green HRM is consisting of two terms- “Green” and “Human Resource Management”. The term ‘green’ has different meanings. However, mostly it means something relevant to nature or natural environment. Green means environmental. “Green” or “greening” has at least four meanings in the context of managing people at work / human resource management (Deshwal, 2015). Green Human Resources Management (Green HRM) is the use of HRM policies to support the sustainable use of resources within organizations (Deshwal, 2015). The term “Green HRM” is most regularly used to refer to the concern of people management policies and practices towards the broader corporate environmental schedule. In fact it refers to the policies, practices and systems that make employees of the organization green for the benefit of individual, society, natural environment, and the business (Opatha & Arulrajah, 2014; Ullah, 2017). The purpose of green HRM is to create, enhance and retain greening within each employee of the organization so that he or she gives a maximum individual contribution on each of the four roles, i.e., preservationist, conservationist, non-polluter, and maker. Thus, Green HRM is seen as a strategy of the green movements of organizations to ensure environment safety (Shaikh, 2012; Ullah, 2017).

Green HRM is directly responsible in creating green workforce that understands, appreciates, and practices green initiative and maintains its green objectives throughout the HRM process of recruiting, hiring, training, compensating, developing, and advancing the firms human capital (Mathapati, 2013; Ullah, 2017). It is necessary to determine the green human resource requirements in order to fulfil corporate environmental goals or greening. What are the demands on green human resources for corporate environmental management or greening? There are four categories of green human resource requirements, i.e. green competencies, green attitude, green behaviours and green results. As green employee inputs, green behaviours, and green results are provided as employee green job performance, which significantly contributes to the achievement of CSR by the firm, green competences and a green mindset are presented as green employee inputs.

Needs for Green HRM

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; Ahmad, 2015). Daily and Huang (2001), recommended that organizations essentially need to balance the industrial growth and ensuring that the environment where one lives is well preserved and promoted. The adoption of these practices has been presented with a number of different advantages which would ultimately benefit the firm which has led to the emergence of “green and competitive” mantra (Wagner, 2007; Molina-Azorin et al., 2009; Ullah, 2017). Some of the benefits associated with this adoption include improvements related to firms operational performance (Jackson et al., 2011; Ullah, 2017), promotion of teamwork (Jabbar et al., 2010; Ullah, 2017), improvements in organizational culture (Jabbar et al., 2012; Ullah, 2017) and reduction on overall cost (Hart 1997; Ullah, 2017). It is identified that the management of environmental systems will enable improvements in synchronization with other management strategies of the firm (Wagner, 2007; Ullah, 2017). From the above discussion it is identified that researchers give importance to adoption of environmental practices as a key objective of

organizational functioning to support human resource management practices (Jackson et al., 2011; Daily and Hung, 2001; Sarkaris et al., 2010; Ullah, 2017).

The organisation has been a target of green HRM for a number of reasons. According to the existing literature, there are many reasons. They are listed following by respective author's (Arulrajah and Opatha, 2016). The first reason is to protect the ecological aspects or environment (ecological lessons: e.g.: global warming, climate change, energy crisis etc) and to make work meaningful and the workplace safe /healthy within and outside the organisation (Shrivastava, 1994 ;Arulrajah and Opatha, 2016). A second reason to support the success of environmental activities of the Companies (Wehrmeyer,1996; Arulrajah and Opatha,2016).Thirdly, to innovate eco -friendly aspects such as products and behaviour (employee eco-innovation) (Ramus,2002; Arulrajah and Opatha,2016).A fourth reason to educate ,train and motivate(financially or non-financially) employees to conduct their activities in an environmentally responsible manner(Shrivastava,1995; Arulrajah and Opatha,2016). Fifthly, to become green employer (Philips, 2007; Stringer, 2009; Arulrajah and Opatha, 2016)

Sixthly,to increase or improve corporate environmental performance by certain HR Functions such as training, employee empowerment, and Environmental management System (EMS) rewards (Daily, Bishop, & Steiner,2007; Arulrajah and Opatha,2016).Eightly,to increase or improve corporate environmental performance (Govindarajulu & Daily,2004; Arulrajah and Opatha,2016).Ninth,to provide proactive corporate environmental management because employees are one of the major forces in proactive corporate environmental management and to train, recognize, reward and motivate employees in proactive corporate environmental management(Berry & Rondinelli,1998; Arulrajah and Opatha,2016). Tenth,to provide environmentally friendly products and operations(companies face increasing pressures for eco-friendly products and operations), to manage corporate environmental programs in successful manner(without failure) and to overcome implementation challenges of corporate environmental programs(Milliman & Clair,1996; Arulrajah and Opatha,2016) and finally,to motivate employees, to become involved (employees) in corporate environmental management activities and to develop green abilities and provide employees with opportunities to be involved in corporate environmental management initiatives and efforts (Renwick et al.,2008 & 2013; Arulrajah and Opatha,2016).

The above mentioned reasons require that industries do participated in adopting green HRM. Green HRM makes workers of the industries green so they lessen or dispose of wastes and afterward decrease generally expenses of the industries. Thus the organisation will be able to gain improvements in productivity, talent acquisition, employee retention, reputation, customer loyalty, and market expansion resulting in enhancing organisational competitiveness. Organisations cannot practice green HRM without a system or processes. In practicing green HRM in an organisation, HRM functions provide appropriate mechanism and processes.

Green Human Resource Management Practices

Green HRM has a multidimensional nature and consists of diverse groups of best practices (Renwick et al. 2013; Tang et al. 2018). These best practices resemble the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity model (Appelbaum et al. 2000), suggesting that human resource practices enhance firm performance through increases in employees' abilities, motivations, and opportunities. Applied to green HRM, the logic is similar. The goal is to achieve environmental sustainability through increases in employees' abilities (i.e., attracting and training employees with relevant environmental skills), motivations (i.e., rewarding employees for environmental achievements, performance appraisals including environmental issues), and opportunities (i.e., communication of environmental ideas, teamwork applied to environmental goals). (Fernandez and Rio, 2020)

Table 1 explains most commonly used green human resource practices.

Functions	Green Human Resource Management Practices
Green Recruitment & Selection	Using green employer branding to attract green employees (App et al. 2012)
	Improving organization's green reputation (Turban and Greening 1996)
	Recruiting employees who have environmental awareness (del Brío et al. 2007)
	Including environmental aspects in job descriptions and candidate specifications (Renwick et al. 2013)
Green Training & Development	Evaluating candidates' environmental knowledge, values, and beliefs (Renwick et al. 2013)
	Providing specific training to technical staff on issues such as more efficient technologies, new materials, recycling processes, waste treatment, or process redesign
	Developing training programs on broader, industry-specific environmental issues to enhance employees' awareness of the environmental impact of their organization's activities (Bansal and Roth 2000; Ramus 2001)
	Developing training programs which provide the necessary knowledge to develop preventive solutions (Tang et al. 2018)
Green Pay & Reward System	Implementing experiential practices with educational purpose, such as employee gardens (Jackson and Seo 2010)
	Implementing monetary benefits related to the attainment of environmental objectives
	Recognition-based rewards for environmental initiatives such as merit certificates, recognition in the organization's newsletter or the greening monthly award (Ramus 2001) including non-monetary rewards such as paid vacations, time off, and gift certificates (Govindarajulu and Daily 2004)
Green appraisal and performance management	Offering green benefits (transport/travel) in preference to give out prepaid cards to purchase green products (Tang et al. 2018)
	Using green performance indicators in PM system and appraisals (Zibarras and Coan 2015)
	Setting green goals and responsibilities for managers and employees (Milliman and Clair 1996)
Green Communication	Evaluating green outcomes of managers and employees (Tang et al. 2018)
	Providing employees with constructive feedback about environmental issues (Jabbour et al. 2010)
	Implementing environmental information and idea-sharing program (Spreitzer et al. 2005)
Green Communication	Using environmental reports or newsletters to get employees informed about environmental priorities and goals of organization (Ketokivi and Castaner 2004)
	Implementing a communication policy with several formal or informal communication channels (Renwick et al. 2013)

Source: Fernandez and Rio, 2020

DISCUSSION

This paper concentrates on creating sustainability in industries through Green human resource management. Primarily this study focussed on the concept and importance of sustainability in current business scenario. Sustainability means meeting our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In addition to natural resources, we also need social and economic resources. Industrialist doing their business in an unpredictable world. Climate change, dwindling natural resources, and ever-increasing demands on our energy and food supply are disrupting business operations and supply chains in unexpected ways. It's more important than ever for private and public organizations to fundamentally rethink the way they function. Transforming into a successful sustainable business requires new levels of resilience and agility, rooted in responsible practices that preserve our planet. Sustainability is a business imperative and should be core to the strategy and operations of every business. The reasons for this are both ethical and financial. In addition, a sustainable business strategy will try to balance the three general objectives of economic prosperity, social responsibility and environmental stewardship for all its stakeholders and itself (Placet, Anderson and Fowler, 2005; Wong and Avery, 2008). From a systems perspective, these goals are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Attending to the environmental challenges helps attain economic goals that in turn, provide the means to achieve social responsibility and meets more environmental challenges. (Wong and Avery, 2008).

Secondly focussed on GHRM, the Human Resource Department of an organization plays a significant role in the creation of their company's sustainability culture (Harmon, Fairfield, & Wirtenberg, 2010; Ullah, 2017). 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 et al., 2011; Ullah, 2017). Green HRM depends on the unique and identifiable patterns of green decisions and behaviours of HR managers (Jackson et al., 2011; Ullah, 2017). 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; Ullah, 2017). 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 et al., 2001; Ullah, 2017). Distinguished policies in the field of recruitment, performance and appraisal management, training and personnel development, employee relations, and reward systems are considered powerful tools for aligning employees with a company's environmental strategy (Renwick, 2008 ; Ullah, 2017). Several workers argue that in order to implement an effective corporate green management system, it is important to promote a great deal of technical and management skills among all employees of the organization (Daily et al., 2007; Unnikrishnan & Hegde, 2007 ; Ullah, 2017), whereas, others propose that organizations look at development of innovative tools and initiatives of environment management (EM) which will significantly impact sustainability of the firm and promote a competitive advantage (Hart, 1997; Lin, Jones, & Hsieh, 2001 ; Ullah, 2017).

At the end of the discussion, we are focussed on that the major goal of green HRM is to educate employees on the shades of environmental management, including what steps are necessary, how it works, and how it benefits the environment. The activity greatly inspires the staff and fosters a sense of pride in them for being an eco-friendly initiative participant.

CONCLUSION

Today, it's incontestable that instituting a sustainability strategy is good business. The benefits of this go beyond environmental and social security. That is, more and more studies indicate business sustainability delivers greater prosperity, and designs organizations to last.

Sustainability means to be maintained at a certain rate or level indefinitely. If we apply this definition in a business context, we define a sustainable business as an endlessly operational organization. Hence, becoming a sustainable business is no small feat, and it's one we've yet to concur. This makes the concept somewhat of an enigma. With no *type business* for comparison, the term's meaning has strayed

and become diluted over the years. Suddenly business sustainability is about climate change, ending poverty, and achieving gender equality.

Human Resource department plays very crucial role in translating green policy into practice (Renwick,2008, Ullah,2017) and the creation of sustainable culture within the company(Harmon et. al., 2010; Ullah, 2017) therefore such green practices help in fulfilment of green objectives throughout the HRM functions from recruitment to communication.

Thus, creating sustainability in industries through Green HRM benefitted to the organisation in different ways as - a Sustainable business creates business value, meets the needs of the customers, meets investor demands, attracts and engages top talent, business has reduced costs, business has an improved reputation and finally, business leverages new opportunity.

REFERENCES

- ☞ Appelbaum, E., Bailey, T., Berg, P., & Kalleberg, A. L. (2000). *Manufacturing advantage: Why high-performance work systems pay off*. Cornell University Press.
- ☞ App, S., Merk, J., & Büttgen, M. (2012). Employer branding: Sustainable HRM as a competitive advantage in the market for high-quality employees. *Management revue*, 262-278.
- ☞ Bansal, P., & Roth, K. (2000). Why companies go green: A model of ecological responsiveness. *Academy of management journal*, 43(4), 717-736.
- ☞ Bohdanowicz, P., Zientara, P., & Novotna, E. (2011). International hotel chains and environmental protection: an analysis of Hilton's we care! programme (Europe, 2006–2008). *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 19(7), 797-816.
- ☞ Boselie, P., Paauwe, J., & Jansen, P. (2001). Human resource management and performance: lessons from the Netherlands. *International journal of human resource management*, 12(7), 1107-1125.
- ☞ Daily, B. F., Bishop, J. W., & Steiner, R. (2007). The mediating role of EMS teamwork as it pertains to HR factors and perceived environmental performance. *Journal of Applied Business Research (JABR)*, 23(1).
- ☞ Del Brío, J. Á., Fernandez, E., & Junquera, B. (2007). Management and employee involvement in achieving an environmental action-based competitive advantage: an empirical study. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18(4), 491-522.
- ☞ Govindarajulu, N., & Daily, B. F. (2004). Motivating employees for environmental improvement. *Industrial management & data systems*, 104(4), 364-372.
- ☞ Haden SS, P. H., Oyler, J. D., & Humphreys, J. H. (2009). Historical, practical, and theoretical perspectives on green management. *Management Decision*, 47(7), 1041-1055.
- ☞ Harmon, J., Fairfield, K. D., & Wirtenberg, J. (2010). Missing an opportunity: HR leadership and sustainability. *People and strategy*, 33(1), 16.
- ☞ Hart, S. L. (1997). Beyond greening: strategies for a sustainable world. *Harvard business review*, 75(1), 66-77.
- ☞ Jabbour, C. J. C., & Santos, F. C. A. (2008). The central role of human resource management in the search for sustainable organizations. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 19(12), 2133-2154.
- ☞ Jackson, S. E., & Seo, J. (2010). The greening of strategic HRM scholarship. *Organization Management Journal*, 7(4), 278-290.
- ☞ Jackson, S. E., Renwick, D. W., Jabbour, C. J., & Muller-Camen, M. (2011). State-of-the-art and future directions for green human resource management: Introduction to the special issue. *German Journal of Human Resource Management*, 25(2), 99-116.
- ☞ Ketokivi, M., & Castaner, X. (2004). Strategic planning as an integrative device. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 49(3), 337-365.
- ☞ Milliman, J., & Clair, J. (2017). Best environmental HRM practices in the US. In *Greening people* (pp. 49-73). Routledge.

- ☞ Ramus, C. A. (2001). Organizational support for employees: Encouraging creative ideas for environmental sustainability. *California management review*, 43(3), 85-105.
- ☞ Renwick, D., Redman, T., & Maguire, S. (2008). Green HRM: A review, process model, and research agenda. *University of Sheffield Management School Discussion Paper*, 1(1), 1-46.
- ☞ Renwick, D. W., Redman, T., & Maguire, S. (2013). Green human resource management: A review and research agenda. *International journal of management reviews*, 15(1), 1-14.
- ☞ Placet, M., Anderson, R. G., & Fowler, K. M. (2005). *Strategies for Sustainability: The Role of Innovation and Customization* (No. PNWD-SA-6926). Pacific Northwest National Lab.(PNNL), Richland, WA (United States).
- ☞ Spreitzer, G., Sutcliffe, K., Dutton, J., Sonenshein, S., & Grant, A. M. (2005). A socially embedded model of thriving at work. *Organization science*, 16(5), 537-549.
- ☞ Shrivastava, P. (1994). Castrated environment: Greening organizational studies. *Organization Studies*, 15(5), 705-726
- ☞ Tang, G., Chen, Y., Jiang, Y., Paillé, P., & Jia, J. (2018). Green human resource management practices: scale development and validity. *Asia pacific journal of human resources*, 56(1), 31-55.
- ☞ Turban, D. B., & Greening, D. W. (1997). Corporate social performance and organizational attractiveness to prospective employees. *Academy of management journal*, 40(3), 658-672.
- ☞ Unnikrishnan, S., & Hegde, D. S. (2007). Environmental training and cleaner production in Indian industry—A micro-level study. *Resources, conservation and recycling*, 50(4), 427-441.
- ☞ Wehrmeyer, W. (Eds). (1996). *Greening People: Human Resources and Environmental Management*. Greenleaf Publishing, Sheffield: England.
- ☞ Wong, L., & Avery, G. C. (2008). Creating sustainability in organizations: beyond being green. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*, 3(2), 68-74.
- ☞ Zibarras, L. D., & Coan, P. (2015). HRM practices used to promote pro-environmental behavior: a UK survey. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 26(16), 2121-2142.