

Green HRM: An Approach towards Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To conduct a systematic review of collected literature regarding various green components which can be incorporated into basic HR practices and attempts to highlight the present position of Green HRM practices implemented in select green banks in India which have been able to make a position among “Top Green Companies in the World 2016” list of Newsweek Green Score, namely ICICI Bank at rank 437, HDFC Bank at rank 445 and SBI at rank 449.

Methods: A search was conducted using seven databases: Emerald Insight, Springer, Elsevier, IEEE Xplore, Sage, Durham Research Online, Rainer Hampp Verlag. The year range was 2008 to April 2017. An additional manual search of reference lists was conducted to ensure relevant articles were not overlooked, which also involves sustainability reports of select green banks.

Results: Of 83 potential results, there were only 9 articles covering all green components that can be included in HR practices. The other papers have discussed one or two components at a time. Most of these limited studies have been conducted to study Green HRM practices in health sector, sports centre, IT companies. Only 5 studies have been conducted to study Green HRM practices implemented by green banks. In particular, there is limited literature regarding green turn taken by green banks in India. Further studies need to be conducted to study Green HRM practices with respect to different perspectives.

1. Introduction

Research suggests that the green ways of management refers to the unification of enterprise behaviour and environmental consciousness (Wu and Wu, 2014). It requires a corporation to take specific actions to prevent pollution and wastage of resources in the process of production, to minimise environmental impact. Moreover, it demands inclusion of environmental considerations into different functions of HR role like Recruitment, Performance Management (PM) and Performance Appraisal (PA), Training and Development, Employment Relations – Employee Involvement (EI) and Employee Participation (EP), Pay and Reward and Exit procedures (Renwick et al., 2008).

On a more positive note, there is literature to suggest that the Green Human Resource Management practices involves both traditional “HR practices” aligned with environmental goals and “strategic HRM” dimensions (Gholami et al., 2016). Green management is based on systematic approach of incorporating environmental theme at every level of the organisation (Jabbour et al., 2013). Green initiatives within HR corresponds to a much wider area, that is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) of a corporation. This is an interdisciplinary and emerging field of study which requires greater understanding and awareness for effective implementation of Green HRM practices (Teixeira et al., 2012).

It has been suggested that the role of HR professionals in this regard is the most crucial, as HR practices serve as a value-added function in implementing the green practices at the

root level in every sector. The eco-friendly culture within a corporation can be achieved by engaging employees in sustainable practices at work. HR is the key resource of any organisation and can have a significant impact on how the organisation operates (Singh and Goyal, 2015). The process of support from Human Resources (HR) to Environmental Management (EM) objectives is called Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) (Renwick et al., 2008).

Though, there is little research on the role of Green HRM practices implemented in the banking sector, but still the limited literature throws enough light on various green initiatives taken by green banks in recent years in order to adopt “go green” concept.

According to Indian Banks Association (IBA, 2014) “Green Bank is like a normal bank, which considers all the social and environmental/ecological factors with an aim to protect the environment and conserve natural resources”. It can be characterized as a bank which takes up sustainable activities as its moral obligation (Nath et al., 2014). There have been three green banks in India which have got ranked among the “Top Green Companies in the World 2016” list of Newsweek Green Score, namely ICICI Bank at rank 437, HDFC Bank at rank 445 and SBI at rank 449. The Newsweek Green Rankings are one of the world’s foremost corporate environmental rankings. The project ranks the 500 largest publicly-traded companies in the United States (the U.S. 500) and the 500 largest publicly-traded companies globally (the Global 500) on overall environmental performance (newsweek green rankings final methodology

2017). The Global 500 consists of the 500 largest publicly-traded green companies in the world as on 31 December 2016.

1.1. Aims and objectives of the study

To investigate the extent and quality of Green components embedded in traditional HR practices in the select banks with an aim to provide an insight to the existing literature and enhance the knowledge in this field.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Systematic approach

A search was conducted using seven databases: Emerald Insight, Springer, Elsevier, IEEE Xplore, Sage, Durham Research Online, Rainer Hampp Verlag. The year range was 2008 to April 2017. An additional manual search of reference lists was conducted to ensure relevant articles were not overlooked.

The keywords used in the search were: Green human resource management, sustainable development, green banks, environment management, waste minimization, energy conservation, resource efficiency, cleaner production, go green. Search terms were used in various combinations in order to include the maximum amount of relevant articles.

2.2. Inclusion criteria

Studies were included in the current review from 2008 through until the end of 2017 (as the term Green HRM was first coined in 2008). Literature was only included if it pertained specifically to Green HRM and its various implications, and also discussed the role of Green HRM in the advancement of green banking.

2.3. Exclusion criteria

Studies were excluded if they were published prior to 2008 (as there was no in-depth work done in this field before this), in order to canvas the most relevant literature that could meet the criteria and purpose of this research. Articles were also excluded if they were not in English language, or if the article lacked sufficient detail to be clearly relevant.

3. Results

3.1. Database search results

Initially, 91 articles met the criteria through electronic database searching, with an additional 4 articles sourced through searching reference lists of eligible articles. The screening process was carried out by removing 3 duplicate articles and examining the remaining 92 article abstracts to remove further irrelevant articles. Following this process, a full review of 41 articles was carried, from which there were only 9 articles covering all green components that can be included in HR practices. The other papers have discussed one or two components at a time. Most of these limited studies have been conducted to study Green HRM practices in health sector, sports centre, IT companies. Only 5 studies have been conducted to study Green HRM practices implemented by green banks. 15 of the fully reviewed articles have been

included in this review due to their in-depth discussion on Green HRM practices in relation to sustainable development. In particular, there is limited literature regarding green turn taken by green banks in India. Further studies need to be conducted with special reference to recent years' Sustainability Reports of the select banks in India.

The articles included after the screening process ranged from behavioural studies, pilot studies and longitudinal studies with both qualitative and quantitative results. Articles were studies from Canada, the United Kingdom, the USA, India, Brazil, Malaysia, China and Italy.

Themes that emerged from the articles were green recruitment solutions, green performance management and performance appraisal, green components of training and development, innovative green solutions through employee involvement and employee participation, greening of pay and rewards, and greening of exit process.

3.2. Green Recruitment Solutions

It is estimated that green recruitment solutions forms the basic foundation for any organisation which plans to go green with its operations. Green recruitment means using online methods and hiring candidates who have knowledge and skills that converge with environment management systems within an organisation. It takes into account the approaches and behaviours of the new recruits (Renwick et al., 2008). Renwick and colleagues (Renwick et al., 2008) has taken a coherent view of the literature in Green HRM, using it to organise the literature on the basis of entry-to-exit processes in HRM (from recruitment to exit), revealing the role that HR processes in providing supportive framework to Green HR policy in an organisation. The contribution of this research study has provided a concrete base for better understanding of Green HRM practices by proposing a new process model and research agenda in Green HRM.

The article by Ehnert and Harry (2012) suggests that the main components of green solutions for recruitment may include online recruitment which involves usage of online application forms, online uploading of requisite documents by the candidates which will help in reducing paper wastage; green job descriptions which consist of activities that would substantially contribute to preserve or restore environmental quality; green employer branding because a green employer attracts high quality staff in the war of talent. It is estimated that the recruits are always more passionate to work for an environment friendly organisation as it would provide them with safe and healthy work environment to work in. Specifically, this paper drew attention to a variety of definitions of 'sustainability' and to various different approaches to Sustainable HRM. Finally, there are suggestions provided regarding avenues for further research in this recently emerging field of study – for academics, for practitioners and for humanity in general. In addition to these, green job vacancies which are related to environmental reporting roles or roles that deal with recycling and waste reduction such as Environment Specialists, Solar cell technicians, Green design professionals etc. forms a part of green recruitment solutions (Jabbour and Jabbour, 2016). On a more positive note, there is literature to suggest that 'Green

awareness' questions can become a part of interviews to analyse environmental competencies; and online selection methods that are undertaken remotely such as conducting online tests in nearby centres to reduce the need of commuting to longer distances, and it also helps in reducing paper wastage and conducting online interviews through video conferencing/ video chatting (Wu and Wu, 2014).

3.3. Green Performance Management and Performance Appraisal

Gholami et al. (2016) conducted research work on "Green Human Resource Management" practices, in combination with the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity theory to bring about sustainability in the sports centers through performance management. This paper defined key practices to implement a cleaner sustainability strategy within the sports centre that produce multiple effects at the macro, meso, and micro levels of society. Research suggests that Greening of Performance Management and Performance Appraisal takes into account environmental concerns and environmental policies. It is to make formal assessment of environmental responsibilities of managers and staff which will help in developing a learning culture in long run, with required motivation at each step. This may include some specific parameters while making appraisal decisions such as implication of new strategies/facilities; waste management; communicating environmental concerns and policies effectively and managers to be held accountable for this (Gholami et al., 2016). The article by Pinzone et al. (2016) closely correlate to the findings of Gholami and colleagues. It suggests various performance management practices which can help in the advancement of green movement within an organisation, which involves establishing firm-wide dialogue on green matters; checking compliance of green directions by conducting environmental audits known as 'green audit programs'; implication of GIS (Green Information Systems) which provide predefined set of green performance standards for managers and staff, to compare with actual performances; green action plans designed for staff and their compliance, and associating appraisal and rewards with green performances of the staff; including green performance indicators into performance management and appraisal; managers to be assigned green goals and responsibilities and same to be included in their appraisal reports; penalties for non-compliance of EM policies; to establish a Performance Management System to monitor and review performance, productivity, quality, wastage and accidents/green incidents (Pinzone et al., 2016). Even though considerable effort has been put into developing these green components, further study is needed to determine, among other things, the importance and proper weighting of each of the dimensions included, which in return may skew the findings in the study by Pinzone and colleagues.

3.4. Green components of Training and Development

Teixeira et al. (2012), comprehends the relationship between green management and environmental training in Brazilian companies, depicting how this relationship takes place and its underlying factors. It proposes for a theoretical framework relating the evolutionary stages of green management and the characteristics of environmental training, and ascertained that organizational culture and teamwork, top

management support and more technical green management practices are the factors that seem to connect and convert environmental training into more proactive green management, especially for companies in the proactive green management stage. The research reported on the capability of green components of training and development in educating and training employees about how to conserve energy and reduce waste. It is about increasing employees' awareness regarding value of EM, because the most successful environmental reforms are people intensive and work through employee development. These may involve Total Waste Minimization which includes training on environmental management which would emphasize an efficient use of process and material; education initiatives in general waste minimization which helps in inculcating Eco-values among employees; train Green Executives to make them aware of regulatory compliance and possible consequences in case of negligence and violation of the same; integrated training that focuses on employees' skills and competence building in EM; Green Induction training to familiarize with the ongoing green projects and efforts of the organisation to build a serious attitude among new hires from the beginning itself; training on TQEM (Total Quality Environmental Management) which trains an organisation's management and employees on how to work systematically and achieve desired green goals by timely identification and elimination of potential environmental problems; Environmental training related to hazardous waste/ dangerous substances (in-house training elements) (Jabbour and Jabbour, 2016); train staff to conduct green analysis of workspace; inculcating Green Culture in which induction training can be organised for new hires familiarizing them with ongoing green projects, awareness training for more experienced employees can be conducted to make them aware of new facilities and greener strategies, and training on specific green topics can be conducted for staff specifically associated with environmental reporting roles, to instigate a link between organisational eco-literacy and success of Environmental Management. Jabbour and Jabbour (2016), has proposed a consolidated framework for the GHRM-GSCM relationship and also proposed a research agenda for the same. This paper draws attention to the implications of GHRM-GSCM integration for scholars, managers, and practitioners in the fields of organizational sustainability and truly sustainable supply chains, through proper implication of training and development. The research suggests that Corporate Environmental Committee can be constituted to make sure that green components are added into job descriptions; environmental awareness is made part of induction training; to decide upon timing and sequence of training on green elements; and Health and Safety training and MDPs include environmental considerations. Constituting 'Green teams' in each department to prepare EM departmental agendas so as to evaluate and review success of trainings provided (Teixeira et al., 2012). These teams also work on new innovative ideas to address environmental concerns; training related to safety, energy efficiency and recycling; and re-training of staff who worked previously in relatively polluter industries. Wu and Wu (2014) completed their research on green components of training and development by applying the theory of planned behavior (TPB) to examine the awareness of green management among executives in the Top 5000 corporations (as listed in the China Credit Information Service (CCIS)). Perceived risk, perceived

benefit, justice, moral obligation, control force, and control beliefs have been considered as antecedents to the three components of the TPB (attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavior control, PBC).

3.5. Innovative Green Solutions through Employee Involvement

The way green components are incorporated in the basic HR practices has also been associated with successful strategies for involving employees into this. Research suggests that Green Employee Involvement and Employee Participation will boost up "employee environmental creativity". To support this, Boiral and Paille (2012) have put forward and validated an instrument for measuring organizational citizenship behaviour for the environment (OCBE) and specified that there are three main categories of OCBEs defined as eco-initiatives, eco-civic engagement and eco-helping which are required from the employees' for effective implementation of green strategies. Further analysis of these three types of OCBEs highlighted various voluntary initiatives that must be taken for the protection of environment at workplace. Boiral and Paille (2012) also found that using EI in EM not only generates innovative ideas and better practices, but also increases employees' pride and commitment towards their work, accompanied with greater levels of motivation to generate enhanced green performance. This allows workers to make timely contributions towards EM and helps organisation to tap the advantages of workers' know-how and creativity. It helps in promoting feedback and improving internal communications, thus giving enough space for creative solutions to address environmental concerns. It might involve components such as 'Pollution Prevention Pays' programme, also known as 3P/PPP programme. Similar findings have been put forward by Renwick et al. (2012). This intends to encourage employees to propose changes to generate revenue and reduce pollution; Productive Maintenance Approach which emphasize regular employee inputs in maintaining and improving production efficiency, and quality of machines, processes and materials, as they are closest to it; Suggestion programmes through which employees can suggest green solutions; constituting problem solving circles specifically to work on environmental concerns; staff independence to form and experiment with green ideas; employee helpline for guidance in green matters; green forms of transport that will encourage employees to use electric vehicles, or hybrid vehicles to commute as these modes of transport make use of rechargeable batteries. Another best option is car pooling which helps in reducing each person's fuel consumption and related pollution; set up low carbon chiefs to increase action in EM which emphasizes to involve organisation's CEO and Board of Directors in the EM planning; introducing green whistle-blowing helplines which encourages internal whistle blowing regarding environmental breaches; and Discipline and dismissal for EM breaches under which disciplinary procedures are attached to environmental rules and duties where non-compliance occurs (including clauses in staff contracts too) and breach of contract may create possible ground for dismissal (Singh and Goyal, 2015). A study conducted by Pinzone and colleagues investigated the mediating role of collective commitment to change and EM with regard to the relationship between 'Green' HRM practices and collective voluntary behaviours towards the environment. The results have shown that Green HRM

practices are helpful for generating voluntary behaviours for environment protection at the collective level. Moreover, employees' willingness to support their organisation in its EM endeavour mediates this relationship (Pinzone et al., 2012).

3.6. Greening of Pay and Rewards

It deals with establishing a pay and reward system which is directly connected to green activities developed by green teams/individual staff. There is a constant need to develop reward systems to produce desirable behaviours in EM and it requires effective employment of both incentives and disincentives. Renwick et al (2012) has classified the existing literature on the basis of Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) theory exhibiting the role human resource management practices in implementing Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) processes. This paper contributes in identifying certain gaps in the existing literature and suggesting some potentially productive future research agendas. The paper has explored the role of Green Pay/Reward system for encouraging employees to come forward and participate in the green initiatives taken by the organisation. It may involve establishing a reward system for waste reduction practices that green teams develop; 'Environmental Respect Awards' for employees' environmental achievements and awards for suggestions; tailoring Reward packages related to acquiring designated skills and competencies (and not just for performance), as these are seen as important factors in performance over long term (Renwick et al., 2008). Example: knowledge of environmental legislation may prevent serious accidents or illegal emissions; Monetary based EM rewards which involves Greening of Performance Related Pay (PRP) in which an important proportion of monthly managerial bonuses are dependent upon performance outcomes in EM. That is, including EM issues into PRP systems, as an extra performance criterion or as a baseline standard to be met to qualify for PRP; Non-monetary recognition and rewards which may involve conferring recognition in public meetings, via news articles, delegating more important external roles, providing sabbaticals, paid vacations, time off, gifts, dinners and favoured parking; Disincentives for developing negative reinforcements in EM that may involve criticism, warnings and suspensions for lapses; link suggestion scheme to reward system; providing green tax breaks; and link participation in Green initiatives to promotion/career gains such as managers advance through supporting staff in EM (Gholami et al., 2016). The article by Ehnert and Harry (2012) has explored the need of Green HRM taking into consideration the previous and current state of studies in the field of sustainability. It involves various green components that can be made part of the Pay and Reward systems of an organisation which would in turn lead to greater participation of employees in the eco-friendly initiatives of their organisation to achieve the goal of sustainability in long run. Specifically, this paper drew attention to a variety of definitions of 'sustainability' and to various different approaches to Sustainable HRM. Finally, there are suggestions provided regarding avenues for further research in this recently emerging field of study – for academics, for practitioners and for humanity in general.

3.7. Greening of Exit process

An exit interview is an invaluable source of information which can be utilised by HR department to improve quality of work life, encourage employee involvement and reduce labour turnovers. The information about green elements and its implementation can be obtained from exiting employees. The studies conducted by Pinzone et al. (2016) and Jabbour and Jabbour (2016) have explored the role of exit interviews in this regard. The studies suggests that debriefings can be carried out to gather information about greener reforms being made in the organisation; Legal protection for green whistle blowers is must as there are no safety provisions for them. Employees' perceptions and expectations regarding this can be gauged through an exit interview.; employees should be enquired if green issues are the reasons for their resignations, for example, they might be moving to a more green employer; and to get an idea about their perceptions about taking a green turn (Renwick et al., 2012).

4. Conclusion

The paper has reviewed the literature on GHRM practices and discussed the relevant studies which have been conducted by various researchers to understand the role of HR professionals in effective implementation of environmental considerations. Green policies and strategies have now become a part of HR agendas which helps in inculcating a green culture within an organisation to achieve sustainable growth. Even though considerable efforts have been put into to suggest various green components that can be made part of Green

HRM practices, further studies needs to be conducted to identify key parameters to measure environmental performance of managers against a set of green standards (GS); the awareness among employees and top executives regarding Green HRM training and practices can be examined; it would be interesting to investigate whether green corporations are able to attract more customers for their products and services; and to evaluate key challenges that an organisation may face while taking a green turn, as there is limited work done in this regard.

4.1. Limitations

This review is potentially limited by exclusion of articles that were not in English. Another limiting factor is that articles were excluded if they were published before 2008, but it won't affect the quality of this study as the term Green HRM was formerly coined and recognised in the year 2008 by Renwick and colleagues (Renwick et al., 2008). Furthermore, there are concerns around the power of the findings derived from the papers reviewed due to limited studies, small sample sizes, and selection bias in some studies.

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