GREEN HRM – A SUSTAINABLE STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND
At present many organisations have started realising their accountability towards preserving the environment in all their business activities. Green HRM involves the organisation’s initiative towards reduced carbon footprint in Human Resource Management Activities. The objective of this paper is to inform the readers the ways in which Green practices can be implemented in HR activities.

KEYWORDS
Green HRM, Sustainability, HRM Practices, Environmental Protection, Green Initiatives.

Theoretical Background
Green Movement promoted the Green ideology which includes sustainability, environmentalism, Non-violence and Social Justice. Earlier, the success of an organisation was measured in terms of its economic value. Today, organisations are focusing on environmental factors to reduce ecological footprints and on financial factors to attain profit and become successful by generating value for the stakeholders (Sroufe et al, 1998; Daily et al, 2012; Govindarajulu and Daily 2004). As financial outcome and growth of organisations are clearly computed, the ecological outcome of organisation’s activities could also be computed by drawing a correlation between the existing policies and practices and Green HRM principles (Ahmad 2015). As most of the Green HRM initiatives taken by the organisation are highly influenced by the stakeholders, they are the primary force of pressure in adopting environment management system (Gonzalez-Benito and Gonzalez-Benito, 2006).

On the other hand, the intensity of environmental pollution from the industries both manufacturing and service has resulted in emergence of governmental policies to reduce the swift devastation of non-renewable resources and its hit on the society (Martinez- Fernandez, & Hinojosa, 2010). UN Global Compact in collaboration with several educational institutions had developed Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) to add new knowledge in promoting environmental responsibility (PRME, 2010).

The way most organisations look in the environmental protection has seen a tremendous change and the balance between industrial growth and environmental protection is considered as a necessity. This balance can be maintained if and only if employees of the organisation think and act Green in all their activities. According to Daily and Huang (2001), Green initiatives can be effectively implemented when the companies have the right people with the right skills and competencies.

The objective of this paper is to make clear the concept of Green Human Resource Management and it significance. This paper focuses on highlighting the role of HRM in developing sustainable business and the importance and role of HRM practices and policies as the means of accomplishing environmentally sustainable business.
Green HRM Policies and Practices

Green Recruitment and Selection

The high sense of green awareness among employers is triggering them to recruit people who are environment friendly. Meanwhile, job aspirants of today are also very much concerned about environmental credentials of their future employers. Moreover, millennials have a mind-set of working for and purchasing from organisations that support social cause. Prevalence of the common interest among the job aspirants and the job providers maximises win-win situation for both. This sync also creates an equilibrium that ends in maximisation of environmental protection.

The recruitment process working on the basis of “Green” principle would generate a quality set of new employees who possess greater passion towards sustainability and green thinking in everything they do for the organisation. Since recruitment is the lead-in through which candidates enter the organisation, practising Green HRM policy will drench the organisation with pool of appropriate and deterministic workforce.

Green recruitment process involves personnel planning i.e. deciding the positions to be filled, searching for candidates through internal and external sources, examining the filled applications, screening of candidates, usage of appropriate selection tools, physical examination in Green ways and verifying candidates’ background to check the history of environmental activities.

During recruitment, organisations can publicise their Green vision and mission to attract candidates who are crazy over sustaining environment. The primary objective of the business that aspires sustainability should be reduction of carbon footprint in all the business activities including recruitment and selection. This can be done in many ways by minimising usage of papers and going online or using digital modes such as social networking websites to advertise the firm’s green policies as well as recruitment, using LinkedIn and online job portals as external sources to obtain candidates and using an applicant tracking system to sort the resumes and determine the best fit for the organisation. These HR practices would sustain the organisation by saving time, reducing paper consumption and organising all the HR activities unified with the Green vision and mission.

Green Training and Development

Training acts as a medium through which organisations educate its values, new policies and techniques to the workforce and also bridges the skill gap of the employees. Training begins with identifying the training needs. At present, the ultimate objective of conducting training programme is to hone employees so that it results in sustainable environment and business. The foremost value the organisation should infuse in its employees is environmental sustainability to make a better living space for next generation. In addition to conveying importance and need of going Green, the environment in which training is rendered must be eco-friendly.

Technology acts as a redeemer in saving the organisation from polluting the environment by discarding traditional training procedures. Use of technologies like computers, smartphone, websites, blogs, e-mail, etc. not just bridges the sustainability gap but improves the overall learning experience of the trainees, by putting them at ease and making learning more interesting.

The tech based training helps in reducing paper usage, pooling resources and experts irrespective of geographical limitations. Conferences, seminars, discussions and role plays regarding environmental protection can be conducted in an eco-friendly manner. To a greater extent, the materials used for training can be in digital form and in cases, where printed materials are mandatory, senior employees can be motivated to share their books and learning materials among them and thereby reducing the paper usage. Identifying the trainees’ level of satisfaction on the organisation’s green initiatives will be helpful to the organisation to gauge the actual effectiveness of their Green initiatives. Also during exit interview, employees’ opinion on the organisation’s green initiative can be acquired and used in designing more realistic Green HR policies and Practices.

Green Motivation

Motivating employees based on their Green initiatives stimulate them to be more energy conscious and results in more energy saving. Organisation of Induction Program for newly joined candidate will prepare them for the Green Policies of the company. Motivation is contagious and it attracts the employees to contribute favourably towards environmental protection. Organisation can provide excellence awards and bonus to engage the workforce to march onto green objectives.

The entire organisation can conspire to inspire its workforce to follow their green policies by encouraging their employees to attend conferences, seminar on environmental sustainability, declare their work area as plastic and polythene free zone, use recycled papers in the Company, give liberty to modify and create innovative eco-friendly practices, motivate and persuade HR managers to practise green, celebrate a day for green practices and be vigilant in taking disciplinary action against the employees who infringe rules of green practices.

Green Compensation

Environmental consciousness of the employees can be considered as one of the criteria to evaluate employee’s job performance. Recognition for employees should not be grounded on performance that accounts for revenue generation alone instead, less consumption of non-renewable energy and suggestion on new energy saving ideas, initiatives in propagating and creating awareness on environmental protection and reduction of carbon emission should also be considered. To facilitate meaningful compensation, the management can keep track of the green activities of each employee by recording it. The recognition can be in the form monetary or non-monetary awards.

Research and Development

Research paves way to discover new means of developing HR policies. Researching the various functional units in an organisation will lead to development of a holistic Green Policy. Such holistic policy will strengthen the contribution of entire organisation towards environment sustainability. Moreover, Green initiatives should be a wider plan and should not stop with employees going green in all the business activities, besides it should bring a comprehensive change in the overall organisation and the community. The organisational Green HR Policies have to create awareness
about the ecological system as well as to enhance Green behaviour among all its stakeholders.

CONCLUSION
Any progress in the sustainable business strategies and practices can be achieved only with the help of individuals. Once the individual’s mind-set is influenced by the Green initiatives taken by the organisation, their sense of belongingness is ensured not only with the organisation but also with the mother earth. This will help the management to retain the Green Employees and to enhance its goodwill among the public ensuing creation of more committed and responsible human beings for the business as well as the society to save the planet earth.

REFERENCES