

GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT – FEW SELECTED CORPORATE SUCCESS STORIES

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Abstract: Green HRM is the latest buzzword in organizations today. With a lot of emphasis and focus of the top management on sustainability, Green practices are being adopted and corporations today are developing human resource policies for promoting environment management initiatives. Earlier the success of a firm was strongly dependent on promotion of economic value. However today, organizations have to consider the reduction of ecological footprints and give importance to social and environmental factors along with economical and financial factors in order to enable the organization to be successful in the corporate sector thereby enabling attainment of profit by the shareholders. This paper is an attempt to study some of these practices in a few selected Indian organizations today. The paper also highlights the impact Green HR has created and the advantage these companies have over their counterparts due to these practices. This study 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, environmental pollution, non-renewable resources, Green work-life balance (WLB)

The Future of Business Organizations

Realities of skills shortages, managing people through change and creating an effective workforce have emerged as some of the most prominent challenges to global organizations. It has been growingly observed that the radical change in business models have impacted companies fundamentally. 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:

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	US signs the Kyoto II agreement and becomes	India becomes a key player in the CSR	Hybrid or fully electric cars	A group of scientists confirm

Trading Exchange.	a leading advocate for actions to reduce the rate of global warming.	agenda with a focus on preserving the Indian culture and heritage.	outnumber petrol-powered cars.	that the rate of global warming is slowing.
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Source: PWC Report: *Managing Tomorrow's People*

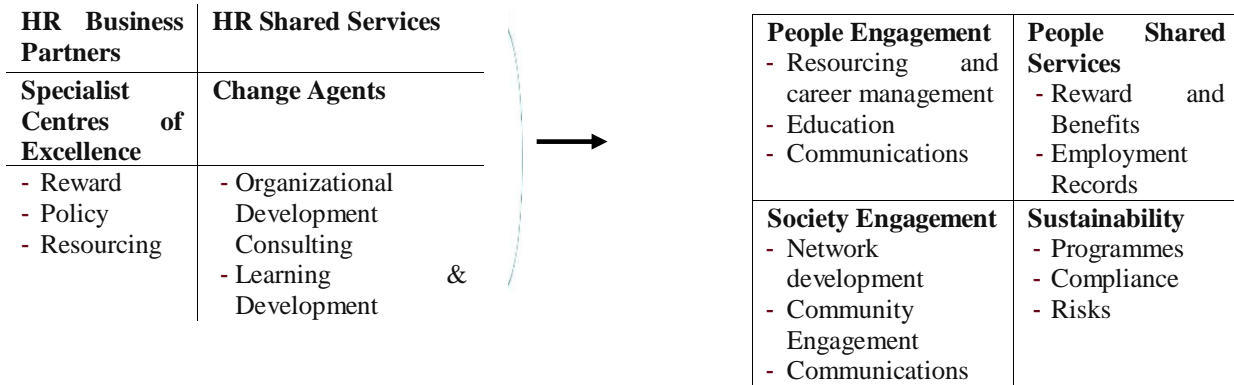
In today's global business environment, businesses are facing increased competitive, regulatory and community pressures. Furthermore, there is also pressure for environmental sustainability, which requires strategies to be put in place to reduce the environmental impacts caused by the products and services 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. The term 'green businesses' is defined by Smith (2003) and Friend (2009) as businesses and practices that are viewed as environmentally sound, including the use of organic and natural products to build factories, tighter protection against emissions and environmentally friendly sourcing of materials. Zsolnai (2002) defines a green business as a business that has adopted the concept of environmentalism across the various functions of the business. Gilbert (2007) identifies a green business activity as any activity that is performed in a manner that has either limited negative ecological impact or directly benefits the natural environment in some way. Morebusiness.com (2009) describes a green business as using less natural resources to complete the tasks needed and using sustainable methods and materials such as recycling (paper, plastic, electronics, glass and aluminium) and using sustainable products (recycled, plant-based or organically grown).

With environmental concerns at the helm of all business decisions, the role of HR is likely to transform greatly, and Green HR is foreseen to dominate the future of all corporations, big or small. In fact, with the growing need for the integration of environmental management into Human Resource Management (HRM) – Green HRM – research practice, some researchers have tried to classify the literature on the basis of entry-to-exit processes in HRM (from recruitment to exit), revealing the role that HR processes play in translating Green HR policy into practice. Green HR is a strategy used primarily for reducing the carbon footprint of each employee and talent retention. This term is combined by traditional CSR concept with longer-term renewable approach to business practices. It involves undertaking environment-friendly HR initiatives resulting in greater efficiencies, lower costs and better employee engagement and which in turn, help organizations to reduce employee carbon footprints by the likes of electronic filing, car-sharing, job-sharing, teleconferencing and virtual interviews, recycling, telecommuting, online training.

Given below is the current model of HRM in business organizations, and a parallel representation of what HRM is envisaged to be by 2020.

Figure 1: Current HRM vs Future HRM

Human Resources: The Current Model People and Society: The 2020 Model



In a study by Renwick et al (2008), the authors draw together the extant literature in the area of Green HRM, and map the terrain in this field to propose a new process model and research agenda in Green HRM. The same is summarized in the table (Table 2) below. All the critical functions of HRM viz. Recruitment, Performance Management, Training and Development, Employee Relations, Pay and Reward and Exit have been taken here to propose how each of them can go green, indicating the huge scope HRM has in contributing to the Green Strategy of the organizations, and playing a significant role to the society and the environment at large.

Table 2: Summary of Entry to Exit HR processes as seen involved in Green HRM

<p><i>Recruitment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 - Green employer branding (green employer of choice) - Green aspects introduced to the induction process (familiarisation) - Becoming a green employer may produce other HR benefits, like increased staff motivation and/or engagement, reductions in labour turnover, and increasing workforce health
<p><i>Performance Management</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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

Training and Development

- 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
- Integrating training to increase staff knowledge
- Training in EM aspects of safety, energy efficiency, waste management, and recycling
- Safety representatives to give data on green courses
- Establish development of Green personal skills
- Re-training of staff losing jobs in relevant polluter industries

Employment Relations

- 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
- Green elements into the health and safety process
- Encouraging employees to use green forms of transport
- Set-up low carbon chiefs including CEO and Board) to increase action in EM
- Introduce green whistle-blowing help-lines
- Discipline and/or dismissal for EM breaches

Pay and Reward

- Green pay/reward system
- Tailor packages to reward green skills acquisition
- Use of monetary-based EM rewards (bonuses, cash, premiums)
- Use of non-monetary based EM rewards (sabbaticals, leave, gifts)
- Use of recognition-based EM rewards (awards, dinners, publicity, external roles, daily praise)
- Develop negative reinforcements in EM (criticism, warnings, suspensions for lapses)
- Develop positive rewards in EM (feedback)
- Establish PRP for all to gain green stewardship / citizenship (esp. seniors)
- Link suggestion scheme to rewards system
- Link participation in Green initiatives to promotion/career gains (managers advance through supporting staff in EM)
- Use green tax breaks
- Line have rewards to motivate employees in EM

Exit

- Staff de-briefings in EM in cases of dismissal

- Managers to ask if Green issues are reasons for resignations (moving to a more Green employer)
- Role of exit interviews to gauge perceptions of firm Green-ness
- Whistle-blower accounts on state of firm Green-ness
- Legal protection for green whistle-blowers

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. This has helped generate interest and awareness about green movement and green HRM IN India. HRM has to play a central role in creating awareness about environment management in organisations besides taking the lead in implementing Green HR practices as part of the bigger role to save planet earth. The companies that have been selected for this study are business giants having robust HR practices, known to be favourable employers in India and across the world.

IBM: Over the past decade IBM has undergone a significant and well-publicized transformation, turning a strong multinational business into a globally integrated enterprise. Such companies integrate production and value delivery worldwide by placing business functions where they are best located, based on the right costs and skills. To remain aligned with this strategy and support other business needs, IBM's human resources (HR) organization analyzed its own functions and processes, separating core HR roles, such as

designing policy and internal business consulting, from noncore back-office administrative tasks. “We were spending an inordinate amount of time on processing and administrative aspects, operating technology, and a lot of foundational things that were not adding a lot of business. Now in more than 170 countries and with 62 percent of our business service based, IBM sees the need to capitalize on talent worldwide. 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.

Walmart: Walmart is gaining a considerable amount of attention from its big-picture strategic goal to be supplied 100 percent by renewable energy, creating zero waste and selling products that sustain people and the environment. Much has been written about its intent to green its supply chain to achieve a 20 million metric ton reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and the development of environmental product ratings. Walmart is engaging its 2+ million associates, located across four continents, to turn its announced strategies into tangible results through a volunteer associate sustainability program. Walmart’s associates around the world are focusing on wellness, their community and the environment. Walmart also follows the practice of continuous recognition of associates and their stories of achievement. Walmart is enabling collaborative management/associate thinking that has succeeded in growing green revenues, profits and environmental improvements.

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. The company is one of top level corporate citizens of the world. The best of management systems have been in use for a number of years. It is a very fair and transparent company. Its customer satisfaction level is very high. Its employees are among the best paid and most satisfied employees due to its good Human Resource Management practices. 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. In the conduct of the Company's business, the practice of good corporate citizenship is a prerequisite and embraces the following: dealing with all stakeholders in the organisation, ITC upholds the values which are at the core of their HR Philosophy - trust, teamwork, mutuality and collaboration, meritocracy, objectivity, self-respect and human dignity. These values form the basis of their HR management systems and processes. The HR function in their department is contributing significantly to the green management practices of the company. The Company attaches great importance to a healthy and safe, green work environment. ITC is committed to provide good physical working conditions and encourages high standards of hygiene and housekeeping. Particular attention is paid to training of employees to increase safety awareness and adoption of safe working methods, particularly designed to prevent serious or fatal accidents. 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.

ONGC: ONGC is the only Indian energy major in Fortune's Most Admired List 2012 under 'Mining, Crude Oil Production' category. It is ranked 171th in Forbes Global 2000 list of the World's biggest companies for 2012 based on Sales (US\$ 26.3 billion), Profits (US\$ 5 billion), Assets (US\$ 51 billion) and Market Capitalization (US\$ 46.6 billion). ONGC has been ranked 39th among the world's 105 largest listed companies in 'transparency in corporate reporting' by Transparency International making it the most transparent company in India. Project of Landscaping, designing of garden and greening of area in the campus of Jollygrant Airport, Dehradun is started. ONGC has many such initiatives towards green HRM. Another one is Vadodara Movement with Indian Express.

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. Green HRM has the potential of creating a tremendous impact on the multiple stakeholders involved – it will help the employers and the manufacturers in their image and brand building by strictly implementing the ISO 14000 standards and environmental audit, whereby changing the organizational culture, thinking about waste management, pollution and helping the society and its own people (those who are getting effected by pollution). It will also make employees and society members aware of the utilization of natural resources more economically and encourage eco-friendly products. Green HRM is the buzzword for the times to come.

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