



## **GREEN HRM: A STRATEGIC REQUIREMENT FOR A SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION**

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### **Abstract**

*As the corporate world is going global, the business is experiencing a shift from a conventional financial structure to a modern capacity-based economy which is ready to explore green economic facets of business. Today, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has become a key business strategy for the significant organizations where Human Resource Departments play an active part in going green at the office. Recently, there has been observed an increasing awareness within business communities on the significance of going green and adopting various environment management techniques. As the corporate world is going global, the business is experiencing a shift from a conventional financial structure to a modern capacity-based economy which is ready to explore green economic facets of business*

**Key Words: Green HRM, GHRM, Business Organization, strategy, Human Resource Management.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

As the corporate world is going global, the business is experiencing a shift from a conventional financial structure to a modern capacity-based economy which is ready to explore green economic facets of business. Today, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has become a key business strategy for the significant organizations where Human Resource Departments play an active part in going green at the office. Recently, there has been observed an increasing awareness within business communities on the significance of going green and adopting various environment management techniques. As the corporate world is going global, the business is experiencing a shift from a conventional financial structure to a modern capacity-based economy which is ready to explore green economic facets of business. Ecological consciousness is the magic word of today that is promptly invading every dimension of our lives and workplace. Of late, our lifestyle both at personal and professional level started affecting the environment so adversely that we cannot risk to letting the effects go unchecked. Better, we change our living habits or face the consequences.

The paper largely focuses upon to indicate the meaning and significance of green GRM and the various Green Human Resource Practices that can be incorporated for building a Green Workplace. The study mainly based on the secondary data collected from various sources

### **GREEN HRM-MEANING**

Green HRM refers to the use of HR initiatives for promoting sustainable practices. It involves understanding environment-friendly HR initiatives resulting in greater efficiencies, lower costs and better employee engagement and retention which in turn help organizations to reduce employee carbon footprints by the likes of electronic filing, car-pooling, job sharing, teleconferencing and virtual interviews, recycling, telecommuting, online-training, etc. It is the use of HRM policies to promote the sustainable use of resources within business organizations and, more generally, promotes the cause of environmental sustainability.

GHRM refers to practices promoting green initiatives by increasing employee awareness and commitment on the issues of environmental sustainability. The area of GHRM has high significance in organisations as it contributes to other functional areas of green management, green operations, green marketing, supply chain management, green finance and accounting. GHRM is considered to bear a holistic view in order to align employees with the company's environmental strategy. Daily and Huang, (2001) and Wee and Quazi (2005) have argued that companies that adopted environmental management system are particularly dependent on elaborated green HR policies. GHRM is an environmentally profit centric approach which undertakes environment-friendly HR initiatives resulting in greater efficiencies, lower costs and better employee engagement and retention. Researchers in the area of HRM argue that effectiveness and success in any management innovation and identification of the right strategic tool depends on the availability and ability of the employees involved in the process (Boselie et al., 2001; Paauwe and Boselie, 2003).

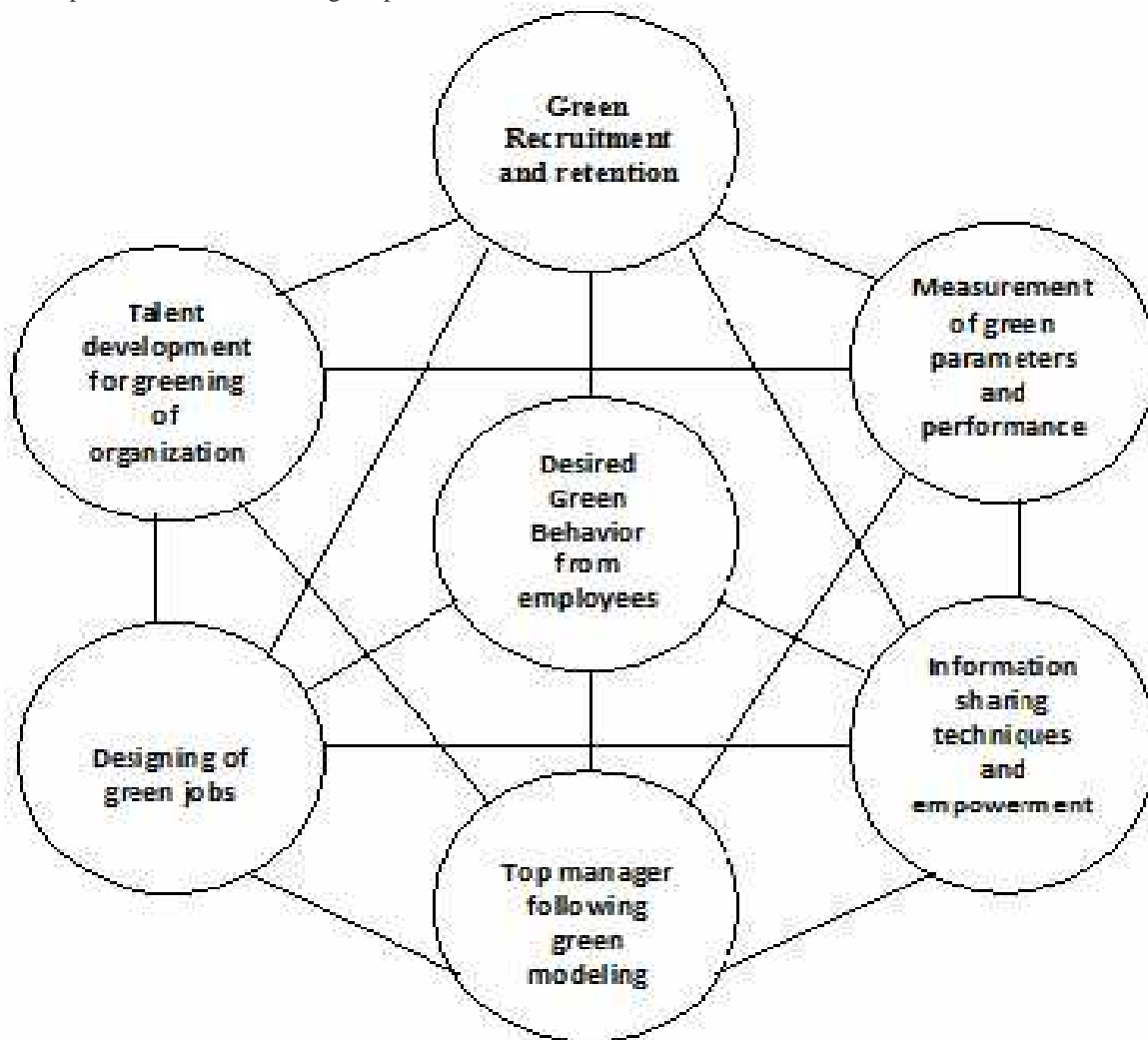
GHRM involves people related technology advancements and majorly includes initiatives like car-pooling, job-sharing, teleconferencing and virtual interviews, recycling, tele-commuting, online training and optimally utilising the energy-efficient office spaces etc. GHRM is a process which focuses on greening of organisations (an old concept) with identification of new ways and techniques involving 'people' to have greater greener impact. Activities with green focus are difficult to initiate as it involves changes and any new change has to be initiated, implemented and accepted by 'people' and

GHRM ensures the same. Thus, GHRM can be termed as a process innovation at organisations marching towards a greener tomorrow.

The term 'Green HRM' is most often used to refer to the contribution of people management policies and practices towards the broader corporate environmental agenda. Typical green activities include video recruiting, or the use of online and video interviews, to minimize travel requirements. Green rewards can include the use of workplace and lifestyle benefits, ranging from carbon credit offsets to free bicycles, to engage people in the green agenda, while continuing to recognize their contribution. While many employees often feel it is not their responsibility to protect the environment while they are at work, the new workforces of millennial are emphasizing environmental consciousness as they chose their employers. There is also a broader opportunity to engage the workforce given that more and more people seek meaning and self-actualization in their jobs.

#### Green HR Involves two Essential Elements

1. Environmentally-friendly HR practices
2. The preservation of knowledge capital.



Green Culture in Green GRM organization

#### INITIATIVES TAKEN BY THE COMPANIES HAVE TO GO GREEN

1. **Green building** The organizations round the globe are considerably opting for green building as their workplace and offices as an alternative to traditional offices. The phenomenon is quite trend setting as Green buildings fulfill certain criterion for reducing the exploitation of natural resources that are utilized in their construction.



Furthermore, green buildings include some enhanced features related to green practices such as energy efficiency, renewable energy, and storm water management.

2. **Conducting an energy audit** - Most local utilities offer businesses free on-site consultations on how they can reduce usage and save money. Frequent suggestions include: Improve insulation, install timers to automatically turn off lights, use energy efficient light bulbs, keep temperatures at comfortable ranges that are not excessively cool in the summer and warm in the winter.
3. **Conducting annual Survey**- It is important to Survey employees to assess how well the organization is doing with regard to implementing green business practices. The survey should request suggestions for becoming a greener organization. This can be a separate survey focused on going green issues only, or it can be added as part of an employee opinion/satisfaction survey. Conducting the surveys annually will enable the organization to assess going green progress and provide information, suggestions and insight for future actions.
4. **Paperless office** - Most of the work in the office is managed on paper but, with introduction of IT, the consumption of paper has been reduced. Today E-business and learning have changed the methods and procedures at offices converting them into paperless offices. Paperless office is a work place where the use of paper is either restricted or eliminated by converting important official documents and other papers into automated workflows. The practice greatly reduce the consumption of paper, the costs of paper-related actions including copying, printing, and storing, and also save the time used for searching paper documents.
5. **Recycling and waste disposal**  
Recycling is the methodology of processing used up materials (waste) into new and useful products. Recycling reduces the use of raw materials that would have been otherwise used to produce new products. Consequently, this practice saves energy and reduces the amount of waste that is thrown into the dustbins, thereby making the environment cleaner and the air fresher. As a part of their green initiatives, several organizations are implementing recycling program to increase the amount of recycled products and decrease the amount of waste. At present, the whole corporate world is reciting the old mantra of three Rs—Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle to save the environment
6. **Reducing business travel or rethink transportation** - Teleconference instead of traveling. For must-go trips, keep track of the miles driven and flown and buy carbon offset from a non-profit like Carbonfund.org to make up for the greenhouse gas emissions.
7. **7.Buying and using green Products** - Tell suppliers that you are interested in sustainable products and set specific goals for buying recycled, refurbished, or used. Make the environment, and not just price, a factor when purchasing. Many offices have toxic substances, such as used batteries and copier toner, on hand. Talk to suppliers about alternatives to toxics, and make sure that company properly dispose of the ones you cannot avoid usage of same.
8. **Provide leadership and resources for going greening** - Assign a respected executive-level person to head up going Green/Organizational Sustainability initiatives. Including “going green” in company’s mission statement and business plans.
9. **Get employees involved** - Create a team to lead the company’s eco-efforts and employees can be asked to suggest ways the organization can go green. Example: Companies can start an employee “green team” that can draw some volunteers from the firm’s and some from employee workforce. The group can meets monthly to bring changes such as the addition of transportation incentives and the use of recycled papers .
10. **Communicating about Going Green issues** - Inform suppliers and customers about your efforts. And get in touch with local regulatory agencies, many of which offer financial incentives to businesses that implement green initiatives. Keep employees and shareholders/ investors informed about going green progress.
11. **Publicity** – Publicize what the companies are doing. Publicity congratulate to employees who take advantage of the company’s green benefits and then publishing a quarterly, online newsletter devoted exclusively to their stories and to reminding workers about green benefits and how to participate. Employees and the public media can be informed about green benefits like job candidates, shareholders, the media and community and they usually can see through an organization’s attempts to hype its green benefits and practices. In advertising campaigns environmental

issues can be focused. Press releases can be send to local media, which will publicize the unique employee benefits.

12. **Explore opportunities for implementing alternative energy sources** - Evaluate opportunities for using solar energy, bio-fuels, wind power and other alternative energy sources.
13. **Implement green manufacturing processes** - Use energy-efficient equipment, and streamline processes to use fewer steps and less materials and packaging.
14. **Implement green policies** - Establish policies and standards such as hardware energy consumption, waste disposal, using recycled and environmentally superior content, water and energy efficient products and alternative fuel vehicles, among other measures.

Conduct green theme Events- The company can choose a green theme for events like the employee health fair; benefits-enrollment fair, holiday parties, recognition ceremonies, even staff meetings.

### HR PROCESSES INVOLVED IN GREEN HRM

#### 1. **Recruitment-Online Applicant Tracking and Recruiting**

HR managers can locate and recruit better qualified candidates for open positions. Positions are posted online, and resumes and applications are also received electronically. In that format, they can be searched and filtered for the appropriate skill set. Resumes and applications can then be routed to management for further review. Some systems can even help schedule candidate interviews and, if approved, transmit the offer letter. If the candidate is employed by the company, the resume and application are then stored in the new electronic personnel file. The elements related with are;

- Green job descriptions for employees (and green goals included into managerial job descriptions)
- Graduate perceptions of Green practices (applicants use green criteria)
- 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 (familiarization)

Other HR benefits, like increased staff motivation and/or engagement, reductions in labour turnover, and increasing workforce health

#### 2. **Performance Management (PM) and Performance Appraisal (PA)**

Using Performance Management (PM) in Environmental Management (EM) presents the challenges of how to measure environmental performance standards across different units of the firm, and gaining useful data on the environmental performance of managers (TUSDAC, 2005: 42). . Firms like Amoco in the United States (U.S.) have tackled them by installing corporate-wide environmental performance standards (which cover on-site use, waste management, environmental audits, and the reduction of waste) to measure environmental performance standards, and developing green information systems and audits (to gain useful data on managerial environmental performance), which includes a green audit programme that contains field audits –which are seen as important, as they can give employees a mechanism by which they can raise any recurring problems, and gain information and feedback on past and future environmental performance of their firm One way in which PM systems can be successfully initiated in an organization is to develop performance indicators for each risk area in environmental awareness and education.

#### 3. **Training and Development**

Training seems to be one area where the role of HRM in environmental management has been recognized for some time (as job rotation) provides a useful way to train Green executives or future Board members in EM, and is seen as a crucial part of successful environmental programmes many firms .should begun training initiatives where training objectives are linked to their vision regarding regulatory compliance (TUSDAC, 2005: 42)..Training in organizations in EM should involve regulatory requirements, employee awareness, and Training on Environmental Quality Management (TQEM) use of environmental training practices include the need to counter employee cynicism associated with such programmes; to evaluate their effectiveness; to communicate with and gain feedback from external regulatory stakeholders; and how to deliver such training in terms of cost and learning .environmental approach requires increases in employee awareness and knowledge of process and materials, and

employee skills – meaning employees need ‘integrating training’ – and for employees to show an emotional involvement to attain objectives. They note that whilst some studies show a relationship between level of employee training and level of environmental development.

#### 4. **Employee Administration**

The employee self-service feature of the system performs many routine HR functions while keeping sensitive employee data safe and secure. The HR manager can determine how workforce data is distributed based on the security profile of each user. With these security protocols in place, the system allows employees to initiate requests for time off and training, review their payroll history, see what benefits they signed up for, access company policies, and much more.

#### 5. **Employment Relations**

A number of rationales for using Employee Involvement (EI) teams in EM include the ideas that they can cut waste (as employees are seen to have the most knowledge of the work processes and products involved); can manage such complex work well; and that using them helps build employee pride and commitment in their work. Using EI in the EM domain is not only seen as changing how work processes are performed, but also in terms of improving worker health and safety too.

#### 6. **Grievance and Discipline**

In general terms, grievance and discipline in EM has seen few firms following the lead of the British firm National Westminster Bank in encourage internal whistle blowing regarding environmental breaches. The need to raise grievances is seen in high risk operations (for their safety record), and it is logical that in such cases disciplinary procedures are attached to environmental rules and duties where noncompliance occurs (Wehrmeyer, 1996). Indeed, expert legal opinion is that some firms may eventually move to ensure that environmental obligations are secured by including clauses in staff contracts to do so, i.e. that environmentally unfriendly behavior may constitute a breach of contract and therefore possible grounds for dismissal (Brockett, 2006).

### COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES OF GREEN HRM

1. **More inspired problem solving:** Employees who bring a sustainability lens to business decisions allow for a broader perspective that sparks innovative solutions to both common and newly emerging climate change-related business problems.
2. **Increased desirability as an employer:** Intellectually knowing what sustainability is and practicing it in daily decision-making are two different animals. As you become known as a desirable green employer, you'll have your pick of the green talent pool - individuals who already understand sustainability and have practice in maximizing people, planet, and profit through business strategy. Bringing them onboard gives you a powerful market edge. Just look at Patagonia, a company that receives *thousands* of applicants for each posted job opening. The synergy that builds from green-minded employees working together in a business can be unbelievable.
3. **Less stressed budget:** Many employees who are committed to sustainable careers are amenable to flexible compensation and benefits, often preferring alternative transportation, flex work schedules, and other low-cost benefits over hard dollar cost-of-living increases. These options can give you more bend in your budget.
4. **Improved employee retention:** Many green companies these days boast low turnover rates compared to their non-sustainable counterparts. That's not just talk. In a green workplace survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), 61 percent of respondents who worked for an environmentally conscientious company said they were "likely" or "very likely" to stay at the business because of those practices.

### CONCLUSION

Green HR emphasizes the importance of the decisions, processes and choices organizations make about managing people and shows how workforce management directly affects strategic organizational outcomes. It provides guidance for managers on how to make better human capital decisions in order to achieve strategic success more effectively. Green HRM policies encourage the sustainable use of resources within business enterprises to promote the cause of environmentalism and in the process, create improved employee morale and satisfaction. The future of Green HRM appears promising for all the stakeholders of HRM. Socially responsible and sustainable service sector organisations that employ green HRM practices reap benefits by attracting and retaining good employees. Improved employee retention translates into low





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