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GREEN HRM PRACTICES: A NEW OUT LOOK TO SUSTAINABILITY

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ABSTRACT

The concept of green management for sustainable development refers to the need for balance between industrial growth, for wealth creation and safe guarding the natural environment for future generations. This research paper indicates significant work in Green HRM research from 1996 to 2015. The objective of this research paper is to develop an outlook on green HRM practices in organizations based on the existing literature. A systematic review of literature was conducted on the following HR practices such as recruitment, selection, induction, training, performance management, compensation management and discipline. The aim of this paper is to extend the scope of green HRM practices in materializing sustainable environmental performance of organizations.

KEYWORDS

green hrm, hrm practices, sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

The term "Green Human Resource Management" may seem to be a novel concept to majority of Indian people including academics and professionals in HRM. A further aspect of sustainable HRM is the way HRM supports the "greening" of the organization. Terms like "green employees", "green career", and "green jobs" are more common today. This concept originated in 1996 from the contribution by Wehrmeyer (1996) who edited a book titled "Greening people: Human resource and Environmental management (as in Jackson, Renwick, Jabbour and Muller-Camen, 2011).

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is the integration of environmental management into human resource management (HRM) practices. Growing environmental concern and the development of international standards are creating the need for business to adopt formal environmental strategies and programmes (Daily and Hung, 2001).

The concept of green management for sustainable development refers to the need for balance between industrial growth for wealth creation and safe guarding the natural environment for the future generations. Implementation of corporate green management initiatives requires a high level of technical and management skills among employees. According to Renwick et al(2008), the implementation of rigorous recruitment and selection of employees, performance based appraisal system and the introduction of training program are powerful tools to increase the employees' environmental awareness. These scholars broadly specified that distinguished policies in the field of recruitment, performance management and appraisal, training and development, employment relations, pay and rewards are considered to be powerful tools for aligning employees with an organization's environmental strategy. According to Jabbour et al; (2011), green HRM is 'the level of greening of human resource management practices' in terms of functional and competitive dimensions of HRM. Green HRM refers to "all the activities involved in development, implementation and on going maintenance of a system that aims at making employees of an organization green. It is the side of HRM that is concerned with transforming normal employees into green employees so as to achieve environmental goals of the organization and finally to make a significant contribution to environmental sustainability. It refers to the policies, practices and systems that make employees of the organization green for the benefit of the individual, society, natural environment and the business" (Opatha, 2013; Opatha and Anton Arulrajah, 2014). As far as the above definitions are concerned, the very latest definition provides a clear meaning and understanding about what green HRM is in the context of organizational setting.

OBJECTIVES

The paper has the following two objectives:

1. To re-detail a model of HR practices involved in Green HRM.
2. To develop an outlook on green hrm practices in organizations based on the existing literature.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper adopts a literature review of significant works on Green HRM research from 1996 to 2015. The reference articles are taken from databases sage, Sheffield, Springerlink, Wiley Online Library, and Emerald with 'Green HRM Practices' as the topic. Literature review is adopted as it enables to structure research and to build a reliable knowledge base in this field. The type of research done for this paper is desk research rather than a survey or any other mode of research.

The concentration is given to the following HR processes namely.

1. Recruitment
2. Selection
3. Induction
4. Training
5. Performance Management
6. Compensation Management
7. Discipline

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The examples from many organizations suggests that HRM leadership can play a vital role in helping articulate the organization's green HRM mission, expressing the role of the business in society beyond that of simply making profit. The Human resource department of a company is said to have a capability to play a significant role in the creation of company's sustainability culture. Many researchers, especially in the area of HRM, argued that the effectiveness and success in any management innovation and strategic tools depends on the quality and ability of their human resources. Green HRM refers to using every employee to endorse sustainable practices and increase employee awareness and commitments on the issues of sustainability. Green HRM has got different meaning for different people, Ashok Ramachandran, Director HR Vodafone Essar Ltd defines green HR as using every employee touch point to espouse sustainable practices and raise employee level of awareness. Anjana Nath Regional Head HR, Fortis Healthcare Ltd. defines Green HR as environment-friendly HR initiatives leading to better efficiencies, lesser cost and heightened employee engagement levels.

It involves undertaking environment friendly initiatives resulting in greater efficiency, lower costs, and better employee engagement and retention which in turn help organization to reduce carbon footprints by the means of

- Electronic filling
- Car sharing
- Job sharing

- Teleconferencing
- Online training
- Flexible working hours
- Tele- commuting

The HR department of the organization plays a vital role in formulating and maintaining the corporate green culture. The traditional HR practices that belong to the HR department are recruitment, selection, induction, training and development of employees, performance appraisal, and compensation management. It is a challenge as to what extent it is possible to keep the green element in these HR practices. It will be discussed as follows:

1. RECRUITMENT Vs. GREEN RECRUITMENT

Recruitment is the process of searching for prospective employees and stimulating them to apply for jobs in the organization. The Recruitment process begins when the personnel department receives requisitions for recruitment from any department of the company. Locating and developing the sources of candidates, stimulating as many candidates as possible for applying are the major steps of recruitment

Green recruitment means paper free recruitment process with a minimal environmental impact (Tulsee Giri Goswami, Saroj Kumar Ranjan, 2015). Applications invited through online mediums like e-mail, online application form or the Global talent pool. Telephone or video based interviews help to reduce travel related environment impact.

(Tulsee Giri Goswami, Saroj Kumar Ranjan, 2015). A survey by the British Carbon trust confirms that most of the employees (more than 75%) considering working for an organization that have an active environmental policy to reduce carbon emissions (Clarke; 2006). Indicating or making transparent about the organization's environmental performance in recruitment message will attract candidates with green competency and attitude (Clarke 2006; Wehrmeyer 1996; Oates 1996)

The findings suggested by Bauer and Aiman-Smith (1996) confirm that when firms present a proactive stand towards protection of the environment then it would help improve the attractiveness of the firm, and it is an effective way to attract new talent (Philips, 2007, Stringer 2009). The Rover group carmaker, in Britain, makes environmental responsibilities and qualifications part of every job profile (Wehrmeyer, 1996)

Including environmental criteria in the recruitment messages and reflecting environmental policy and strategies of the organization in its recruitment policy (Opatha, 2013) helps to stimulate green candidates to apply for the job. Moreover expressing some environmental values in the job advertisement will be a reliable strategy a green firm can follow (Opatha. 2013; Arulrajah, 2015)

According to the suggestions by Shoeb Ahmad, 2015, the recruitment process must be aligned with environment friendly issues. The potential job seekers perceive or rate the green employer on the basis of parameters of sustainability as claimed, namely the presence of green job description, eco- friendly locations, paper less interviews, and such other practices in their recruitment port folio.

2. SELECTION Vs. GREEN SELECTION

The purpose of the selection process is to determine whether a candidate is suitable for employment in the organization or not. According to Thomas Stone, "selection is the process of differentiating between applicants in order to identify and hire those with a greater likelihood of success in a job. Selection is now centralized and handled by the human resource department The process of selection is lengthy ie, it include preliminary interview, selection tests, selection interviews, checking reference, final selection, and job offer.

In this selection context, the selection committee can consider candidates' environmental concern and interest. During the interview the committee can ask environmental related questions to the interviewee (Wehrmeyer, 1996, North, 1997, Revill, 2000, Arulrajah, 2015). These are some of the good green selection practices any organization can adopt to select environmental friendly people in addition to the normal selection criteria. The selection of wrong candidate will mean loss of time, money, more over destruction of environmental policies of the organization.

3. INDUCTION Vs. GREEN INDUCTION

The selection procedure ends with the placement of a worker to the job. When a new employee joins an organization, he should be welcomed as a new member of the organization. Induction is the welcoming process to make the new employee feel at home and generate in him a feeling of belonging to the organization (Flippo)

New employees need to ensure that they understand and approach their corporate environmental culture in a serious way (Wehrmeyer, 1996). Companies can adopt two approaches in respect of green induction. They are general green induction and job specific green induction. After the selection company provides basic and necessary information about the corporate environmental management policy, system, and practices. Job specific green induction includes fa new employees about environmental orientation programs specific to their jobs (Arulrajah, 2015). Now a day these two green induction practices are important to organizations.

4. TRAINING Vs. GREEN TRAINING

Every organization needs the services of trained persons for performing activities in a systematic way. It is an organized procedure for increasing the knowledge and skill of people for specific purposes. Training also provides an awareness of the rules and procedures to regulate their behavior.

Providing environmental education to the work force will help to create environmental awareness among workers (North 1997). Training the staff to produce green analysis of work place, job rotation to train green managers of the future are some techniques of green T&D (Renwick et al, 2008). Green training and development includes education of employees about the value of environment management, training them in working methods to conserve energy, reduce waste, diffuse environmental awareness within the organization, and providing opportunity to engage employees in environmental problem-solving (Zoogah, 2011). To entertain the "go-Green" concept there should be extensive use of online and web-based training programs and interactive media to deliver training rather than printed material to reduce the use of paper (Tulsee Giri Goswami, Saroj Kumar Ranjan, 2015).

5. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT Vs. GREEN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Performance management is the process of measuring quantitatively and qualitatively an employees past or present performance against the back ground of his expected role performance. Edward Flippo says that, "performance management is the systematic, periodic, and impartial rating of an employee's excellence in matters pertaining to his present job and his potential for a better job.

In the aspect of green HRM, performance measures, standards and indicators for appraising environmental performance is a difficult task. The measurement criteria of employee green performance of jobs must be carefully aligned with the firm's environmental performance. Normally organizations are using Environmental Management Information System (EMIS) and environmental audits for evaluating the green performance. Organizations must include responsibilities and the success of communicating environmental concerns and policy with in the performance evaluation system of the company (Wehrmeyer, 1996)

Communication of green schemes keeping performance indicators and standards of all level of employees and establishing firm wide dialogue on green matters will help to materialize targeted environmental performance (Renwick et al, 2008; Renwick et al, 2013)

Shoeb Ahmad, suggests that green performance appraisal should also focus on environmental incidents, environmental responsibilities, communication of environmental policy, and green information system and audits. The job description should be aligned with green tasks and goals to be achieved.

The HR manager plays a strong role in achieving green outcomes such as familiarization towards green management and encouraging green HR learning and inviting green ideas from employees by developing green performance standards and green behaviour indicators. (Tulsee Giri Goswami, Saroj Kumar Ranjan, 2015).

6. COMPENSATION MANAGEMENT Vs. GREEN COMPENSATION MANAGEMENT

Compensation management system should be linked with green performance management (Liebowitz, 2010). The use of financial incentives and rewards paid to workers whose production exceeds some predetermined standard was first popularized by F.W Taylor in the late 1800s. Financial incentives refer to performance linked compensation paid to improve motivation and productivity of employees.

Providing incentives like environmental awareness incentive, acquiring designated skills in green performance (Renwick et al 2008 and 2013), giving incentives to accomplish green objectives are what makes green compensation management an effective one. (Tulsee Giri Goswami, Saroj Kumar Ranjan, 2015).

The adequacy of green rewards was best observed in a study conducted by Berrone and Gomez-Mejia(2009) on 469 US companies operating in high-polluting industries. They found that the companies having eco-friendly performance paid their CEOs more than the non eco friendly companies. (Shoeb Ahmad, 2015) Denton (1999) examined the impact of employee involvement in pollution control. The employees rewarded those who came up with innovative waste reduction ideas. (Jackson et al, 2011) and those who provided incentives to encourage environmental friendly activities such as recycling and waste management.

7. DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT Vs. GREEN DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT

Discipline refers to the presence of orderliness in any particular field of activity. Discipline is the tool for implementing various rules and regulations for the smooth running of the organization.

Wehrmeyer (1996) stated that green discipline management is a pre-requisite in corporate environmental management. It is important to ensure the green behaviour of employees in the work place. For achieving the environmental management objectives and strategies of organization green discipline practices are needed.

Setting penalties for noncompliance on targets in environmental management and dismissal for environmental breaches are some green disciplinary practices followed in some firms (Renwick et al 2008)

Opatha also suggested that implementing discipline management as a tool to self regulate employees in environmental protection activities of the organization. Some companies have developed a clear set of rules and regulations which imposes on employees to be concerned with environmental protection in line with environmental policy of the organization. In such companies if an employee violates environmental rules and regulations disciplinary actions such as warning, fining, suspension etc are taken against him. (arulrajah,2015)

DISCUSSION

This research paper has focused on the greening of the most important seven HR activities practised by all organizations. The selection of described activities is done on the basis of scope and practical implementation of green practices rather than a theoretical description. A key role for HR environmental executives is to guide all employees in terms of gaining full co-operation towards implementing environmental policies. Green HRM practices helps organization to win a cost effective green corporate image. Before implementing the green practices, all employees of the firm must be educated about the methods, practices and benefits of green HRM. This will help to prevent the resistance from employees about the impending change in the work place. Without the formation of a right attitude about greening among employees it is difficult to practice a sustainable work culture in the organization.

CONCLUSION

Based on the review, it is possible to conclude that green HRM practices are the powerful tools that an organization can utilize to maintain its work place sustainability. Green HRM practices are providing a new outlook to the sustainable growth of the organization. Along with profit maximization it helps the organization to maintain the surroundings that would be useful for the future. Hence it is suggested that organizations should implement new measures and give more preference to make each function of HRM green.

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