

Green work-life balance and Green HRM in 21st Century: An Emerging Perspective.

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Abstract

Green Human Resource Management highlights the development of environment friendly values and attitudes in the two main areas of work and life for an employee. This also at creating an eco-friendly workplace identity that ensures worker to assimilate green ideals in their professional and personal lives. The present paper suggests that Green work-life balance can achieve its full potential by considering workers as producers and consumers in their dual role. Employees learn different types of behaviors not only in the workplace, but in private life as well. Since there are reciprocal interactions between work-life and private life, it is suggested that a "green work-life balance concept" should facilitate environment friendly behavior both at workplace and home front. By increasing, for example, work motivation, job satisfaction, job retention, friendly green HRM policies, the concept offers opportunities not only for the environment, but also for the company and its employees. The purpose of this paper is to provide the general idea for a better work-life balance through conceptual knowledge and possible measures to create a sustainable green environment.

Keywords: Green Human resource management, green work-life balance, employees, environment.

Introduction

The Green HRM literature is predominantly Western, and given the importance of Asian economic development for environmental management, this is a significant gap in reducing future studies. Management scholars around the world are now analyzing different

management practices that can facilitate the achievement of GHRM's goals and also have a significant impact on the organizations' environmental competitiveness. Two decades of this century have witnessed universal consensus on the need for a realistic drive to manage the environment around the world. Such effort has been made since the harmful effects of various contaminants have been apparent, among which the industrial waste is the main culprit that has degraded and very rapidly exhausted our natural resources. In the first United Nations (International) Conference on Human Environment held in June 1972 in Sweden, the "Magna Carta" on Human Environment announced that protecting and enhancing the human environment has become an imperative task for humanity for present and future generations.

The term green HRM is mostly used to refer to HRM policies and practices' commitment to the wider business environment agenda. It refers to using every employee to support sustainable practices and increase employee awareness and commitments on the issue of sustainability. Anjana Nath defines Green HR as environment friendly HR initiatives that lead to improved efficiencies, lower costs and increased levels of employee engagement. Typical green activities are performed by video recruiting or using online and Skype interviews to meet travel requirements. This includes implementing environment friendly HR initiatives leading to greater efficiencies, lower costs and increased employee engagement and retention, which in turn help companies to minimize the carbon footprint of workers by digital filing, car sharing, work sharing, teleconferencing and virtual interviews, recycling, telecommuting, online training, energy efficient office spaces. There is a need for companies to implement formal green initiatives due to growing global environmental concerns (Daily and Huang, 2001). Most companies around the world have traditionally not been concerned about the environment; they have followed green management initiatives driven by laws and regulations. But from last year's global companies focusing on various green initiatives and their environmental impact (Sroufe et al., 1998; Daily et al., 2009; Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004). From control to prevention, they change their strategies (Brockhoff et al., 1999).

Green initiatives refer to the use and implementation of environment-friendly goods, processes and technologies, for instance, these processes may include the emergence of new energy resources to meet society's needs, developing new creative ideas and strategies to help reduce the cause of environmental degradation (Opatha and Arulrajah, 2014, p.2). Proactive green practices are therefore important (González-Benito, 2006; Jabbour et al., 2010). The implementation of green practices in organizations will lead to improved productivity

(Jackson et al., 2012), improved organizational culture (Jabbour et al., 2013), cost reduction, efficient use and increased client reputation (Wagner, 2007; Molina-Azorin et al., 2009). Green HR work-life balance strategies help employees achieve personal satisfaction and make them focus on their workplace. For instance, work from home revolution that aims at reducing the carbon footprint helps employees and organizations in more ways than one. It not only reduces operational costs of the organization via reduced absenteeism and lowered transportation costs, but has become a value added retention tool. Employees get rid of nerve-wracking commutes and are able to balance work and life. For example, work from home initiative by employers aimed at reducing the carbon footprint helps more than one way for employees and organizations. Not only it reduces the organization's operating costs through reduced absenteeism and reduced transport costs, but also become a value-added retention tool. Employees are able to get rid of unnecessary commutes and can balance a healthy work-life.

HRM and Green Management

Mampra (2013) defines Green HRM as the use of HRM policies to foster sustainable resource use in business enterprises and promote the cause of environmentalism that further enhances the morale and satisfaction of employees. Others describe Green HRM as the use of HRM policies, philosophies and practices to promote the sustainable use of business resources and thwart any harm caused by organizations' environmental concerns (Zoogah, 2011). Green HR can have a significant impact on the broader green agenda. For service-oriented business in particular, green initiatives for employees can have an enormous impact, as the workforce is often the largest single contributor for waste that leads to environment pollution. Today, there is an argument and ambiguity associated with how Green Management Principles can be effectively implemented in organizations to enhance the organization's sustainability. Employees who are actively involved in the principles of environmental management can play a vital role in achieving better strategies for the environment. Employees may feel empowered to follow similar concepts of environmental management as a result of supporting human resource policies that offer better opportunities for improvement in waste reduction and lean manufacturing promotion (Cherian and Jacob, 2012). The HR of an organisation plays a significant role in rendering environmental responsibility part of the mission statement of a company (Prathima and Mishra, 2013). Managers will match greening investments with the company's standard strategy (Bhatnagar and Srinivasan, 2013).

Green Work Life Balance

Green Work-Life Balance refers to Green HR initiatives that are aimed to create healthy workplace health and wellness for the organization. This requires two key elements 'sustainability' and 'operational efficiency'. These integrated approaches are intended to create a safe environment for employees so that they can be more efficient and productive in the way they work and better improve the company's overall health. In the present context, the efforts of green work-life balance are highly commendable throughout preserving the intellectual capital of the company and can be instrumental in creating a win - win situation for both the employee and the employer as a whole. India is heading for a green economy where the notion of going green in organizations is no longer a fad or a mere tool of public relations. In most organizations, it has become a way of life as it contributes to the feel good factor at work. Jyorden T Mishra, Managing Director Spearhead InterSearch aptly takes the view that "ecoconsciousness" or "black" color is rapidly evolving in every aspect of our lives, and workplaces are increasingly displaying a coordinated response to this challenge by bringing in "technical knowledge" at the organizational and individual level.

According to Muster (2011), this concept considers the employees as both producers and consumers. Green Work-Life-Balance is a possible tactical HRM resource that needs to be incorporated into organizations ' organizational strategies and culture to create sustainable value. Green work life balance initiatives lead to a balanced approach to green practices by encouraging constructive work-to-life and job-to-work experiences. Sometimes at their workplace, workers tend to adopt eco-friendly policies but in their personal lives continue to ignore them. This creates an imbalance and the green goals of the organization are not achieved completely. Hence organizations need to encourage the adoption of green values in both the domains to ensure that the goals of Green HRM are achieved completely. When Green HRM focuses solely on the employees ' professional role and ignores the non-work positions, therefore Green HRM's full potential cannot be realized. Employees are human beings and they play various roles in their daily lives, and in every role the employee performs, the company must encourage green behaviour. (Kossek & Lambert 2005)

Emerging trends of green work-life balance

In the 21st century each one of us will rush towards too many things in every minute to sprint through life. Each of us sensed it, the utter depletion that swathes us as we rush through the

day, finalizing home front home chores, meeting office and multitasking deadlines. So many employees are ruptured between juggling heavy workloads, managing relationships and family responsibilities, and squeezing in external interests, no surprise that more than one in four Americans describe themselves as "highly stressed," and that's not balanced or healthy. In a hurry to "get it all done" at the office and at home, it is easy to forget that our productivity is plummeting as our stress levels are spiking. Stress can zap our attention, make us irritable or discouraged, and can destroy our personal and professional ties. Over a time, stress also weakens our immune systems, and makes us susceptible to a variety of ailments from colds to backaches to heart disease. The recent research exposed that chronic stress can actually double the risk of having a heart attack. Therefore there is a need to maintain an equitable balance between work life and personal life. So, we note that the borders between conventional working day and workplace have been thinning. The more blurred the boundary, the higher the tension between work and life. This leads to a number of health problems, including work-related mental stress, anxiety disorders, depression, and aging, to name a few. Before time, a stressful job could make us old and sick (Suprabha Bakshi & Vidisha Vyas 2015)

GHRM is a manifesto which helps to create green workforce that can understand and appreciate green culture in an organization. Such green initiative can maintain its green objectives all throughout the HRM process of recruiting, hiring and training, compensating, developing, and advancing the firm's human capital. Numerous work life balance strategies look worthy on paper, but if not executed, will not serve any purpose. The ensuing measures would prove fruitful in accommodating the personal goals of employees and keep them engaged and aid in the process of work life integration. The following balancing methods deserve implementation:

Going Green: For healthy work-life balance

A healthy work-life balance involves a number of interdependent factors. Establishing a work-life balance is the art of implementing as many of these factors as possible in both areas without causing damage elsewhere. It is therefore important to know what exactly belongs to a healthy working life and a healthy private life, and how these elements are connected. Green HR Practices results in different outcomes like improved employee morale, stronger public image, increased employee loyalty, increased brand recognition, gained competitive advantage, increased workforce productivity and increased employee retention (Saba Jafir,

2012). Green HRM practices influence the behaviour of the supervisors towards employee engagement and finds a possible solutions for environmental problems (Chandarjeet, 2017). Green HRM is a system that motivates the employees and helps to understand the green culture in the organization. The employee's performance level, employee attitude, behaviour and competencies can be shaped and reshaped by applying green HRM practices (Aparna Jain, 2016). High level of management and technical skills are required among the employees for the purpose of implementing the green HR practices to have a powerful impact on the sustainable competitiveness among the organisations. Employees in the present scenario understand the environmental consciousness and follow the green values and practices in the organization. Wider level of employee participation in green practice will pay way for the successful outcome for the organisations (Hanna, 2000)

Green recruitment and selection

Green recruitment is a system that focuses on environmental importance and makes it a major part of the organization. In addition, the recruits are also excited about working for an environmentally friendly "green" organization, and to some extent, passionate about it. Recruiting applicants with a green mind makes it easy for businesses to attract practitioners who are aware of sustainable processes and who are already familiar with basics such as recycling, sustainability and creating a more rational environment Green recruitment and choice (GRS) has been seen as an important component of GHRM practices. The word "Green Recruiting" is coined by John Sullivan, HR Consultant and Professor of Management at the San Francisco State University's College of Business in June 2007. He quoted "If you want an edge in recruiting, green recruiting is the way forward. Time is ripe for the companies to go in for a kill as many organisations have not taken to it currently". Green recruiting refers to sharing of company's unswerving commitment towards the cause of environment with the candidates whom they are trying to hire. It is not a passing fad. World over, companies are joining the green recruiting bandwagon. It can be termed as a paper-free recruitment process with a minimal environmental impact. Applications are invited through online mediums like e-mail, online application forms or the Global Talent Pool. If possible, telephone or video-based interviews are conducted to minimize any travel-related environmental impact. Encouraging small practices at work, like turning off lights and equipments when not in use, shutting down desktops, conducting teleconferences instead of trips, striving to use paperless office etc. can make a whole world of difference and an

exciting place to work in. Green recruiting is a chance to differentiate you in a recruiting marketplace where standing out from the crowd is already very difficult. Green recruitment process works with companies throughout the process to define the talents, skills, knowledge and abilities of top performers and manage the process from start to finish and also it applies in our day to day life to ensure the importance of it in the future (Saini & Shukla, 2016).

Green Performance management

Performance Management (PM) is the process by which employees are encouraged to improve their professional skills in order to better achieve the organizational goals and goals. The business strategy's acknowledgment culminates in the PM. PM is also influenced in a possible positive way by the green wave with the EM affecting global business strategy. Green performance management consists of issues relating to the company's environmental concerns and policies. It also focuses on the use of accountability for the environment. Many companies today tackle the PM problem by introducing corporate-wide environmental performance standards, and Green information systems / audits to collect valuable environmental performance data.

Green Learning and Development

Learning and development is a practice that focuses on development of employees' skills, knowledge, and attitudes, prevent deterioration of EM-related knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Green training and development educate employees about the value of EM, train them in working methods that conserve energy, reduce waste, diffuse environmental awareness within the organization, and provide opportunity to engage employees in environmental problem-solving. Green L&D activities make employees aware of different aspects and value of environment management. It helps them to embrace different methods of conservation including waste management within an organization. Further, it sharpens the skill of an employee to deal with different environmental issues.

The goals of green training and development are:

- To create awareness about the current environmental problems happening worldwide – through newsletters or briefings with environmental organizations from time to time;

- To educate more employees about working methods that allow to reduce waste, save energy and resources – e.g. recycling, turning lights off or shutting down laptops;
- To teach more operational employees and business decision makers about processes along the companies' value-chain that allow to reduce waste, save energy and resources – like applying circular economy to waste or rethinking the sources of energy;
- To encourage workers to find out opportunities in their jobs to help their companies become more sustainable.

Employee green behavior

It is a pro-social in nature (Chou, 2014); and from a pragmatic perspective, routine workplace green behavior should include both in-role and extra-role green behavior (Ramus & Killmer, 2007), as both forms of behavior contribute to organizational outcomes through value creation. How behavior is ultimately classified, such as whether such behavior is in-role or extra-role, is dependent on the organization and the expectations that the organization has of its employees (Paillé & Boiral, 2013).

A green reward system

Rewards and bonuses are the major HRM mechanisms that compensate workers for their success. Such HR activities are the most important approach that links the interest of a person to that of the company. They also claim that benefits and bonuses will influence the attention of workers at work to the fullest and encourage them to make maximum effort to achieve organizational objectives on their part. Reward systems also have to comply with the new approach with the development of green companies. Giving employees free access to printing and copying, for instance, may not lead to a green mentality. For green companies to be successful, rewards and incentives need to represent the organization's comprehensive, sustainable approach. We need to interact with the culture of the company and conceptually embrace the behavioral change implemented by the business

Green employee relations

Employee relations are the aspect of HRM that is concerned with establishing a friendly relationship between employer and employee. The relationship facilitates employee motivation and morale as well as productivity increases. Employee relations are essentially

practices involving employee engagement and empowerment. It also assists in avoiding and solving problems that may impact the workplace. Positive employee relationships are, in essence, an intrinsic and enduring asset and a source of competitive advantage for any company. Employee participation in Green initiatives increases the chances of better green management as it aligns employees' goals, capabilities, motivations, and perceptions with green management practices and systems.

Green employee retention

It may be a roundabout way of attracting talent, but studies have shown that implementing sustainable practices may play a vital role in attracting high-quality employees as well as retaining them. We bring a growing awareness of sustainability issues and lifestyle choices as younger generations enter the workforce. As a result, more firms are implementing sustainable practices to attract candidates of high quality. It can be a source of pride for staff to display concern for the environment and the local community. It also means that the company takes care of its workers and helps them align common corporate values with their own personal values.

Green workplace

As an alternative to traditional workplaces, companies around the globe are considerably opting for green building as their workplace and offices. The phenomenon is quite trend-setting as Green buildings meet such requirements to reduce the use of natural resources used in their construction. In addition, the green workplace is simply defined as an environmentally sensitive, resource-efficient and socially responsible workplace (SHRM 2008).

It is also defined as sustainable workplace strategies by which managers can make their offices and practices more sustainable, efficient and well suited to the complex, ever-changing business world, and organizations can improve profitability and long-term marketability while reducing costs, increasing productivity, improving recruitment and retention, and increasing shareholder value, in addition to benefiting the environment. The green strategies are based on concrete and cost-effective changes such as working from home, ways to cut commuting costs, video conferencing to cut down on travel, increasing access to natural light to save energy,

Go Paperless. Go Green.

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. Go paperless and go green is the new mantra for today's businesses that want to attain efficiency and speed in their processes. The challenge is to reduce paper dependence, and automate the processes through secure and legal mechanism. It is always difficult for any business to shift away from its traditional model, and mould itself into a new shape. However, in this competitive era, businesses cannot afford to lack behind their peers, they need tools to stay in the race. Therefore, the emergence of digital signatures has proved to be a savior for such businesses. Efficient and affordable, digital signatures are helping these businesses go paperless and green in a secure and legal manner.

Sustainable businesses to conserve energy

Energy conservation ensures that future generations have access to enough resources to live comfortably and continue progressing. It's everyone's responsibility, from individuals to sustainable businesses. Conservation of energy in the office has the potential for a great environmental impact. In an effort to provide more efficient and eco-friendly services, offices around the world have implemented several energy conservation initiatives to reduce the environmental impact. Conserving energy does not just lead to a greener environment, it also reduces operating costs, prevents the depletion of resources and increases the lifespan of equipment. All of these help businesses save money in the long run and enable companies to be more competitive

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.

- **Reduce:** Organizations can change their current practices by changing the design, manufacture, purchase, or use of materials or products to reduce the amount of waste

generated. For example, employers could encourage workers to print only what they need and make sure printer settings are configured to print double-sided to save paper.

- **Reuse:** Material and packaging reuse increases the useful life of these items, avoiding final removal or recycling. Reuse is restoring, rehabilitating, cleaning or simply recycling used or discarded items, appliances, furniture and building materials. For example, you don't have to manage the disposal of a bunch of coffee cups by encouraging occupants to use reusable coffee mugs instead of single-use disposable cups..
- **Donate:** Organizations can donate products or materials to other people who need them and can recycle them. Restaurants, hotels and cafeterias, for example, promptly distribute perishable and prepared foods in their communities to hungry people. Many local food banks will collect free food donations, saving the cost of storage and disposal.

Go green at work

The term “going green” means different things to different people. But, in general, going green means making conscious and sustainable choices that help you reduce, rescue, and recycle. There are a lot of ways to go green, but no one “right” way to do it. In order to improve health and safety of employees, some organisations have really created strategies like green factory or green zone to maintain a conducive environment to prevent various health problems. Balancing environmentally friendly behaviour in working life and private life domains reduces negative interaction effects, since non-environmentally friendly behaviour will be downgraded. According to Datta (2015), green work life balance (GWLb) aims at creating an environment friendly personality of the employees which ensures that the employees imbibe green values in their professional as well as personal lives.

Conclusion and Future directions

The main issues in front of employers are to understand the scope and depth of green HRM in altering their organizations into green entities. The organisations are facing difficulties in motivating the employees to adopt to the green practices, to develop green culture and change the behaviour of the employees in short span. Adopting green practices would increase the level of balancing healthy professional and personal life for the betterment of the work productivity, which in turn would be beneficial for both the organisation and the employees.

The concept of green work-life balance is proposed as a new perspective for Green HRM. It is assumed that effective implementation of green policies can only be achieved if employees are encouraged and motivated to do so both in their personal and professional lives. The above proposed ideas are conceptual only. Future research needs to provide empirical evidence if green work-life balance strategy will achieve the positive outcomes.

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