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"Green Pilots – Walking Those Green Miles – A Review"

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ABSTRACT

Alarms are raised all over the world against environmental degradation, to have checkmate on any further deterioration. Federal systems, conventions and action plans alone cannot work until there is human intervention. Human intervention is possible on a structured and organised platform. In an organisation, this platform can be occupied by the HRM departments who have the business intelligence on environmental issues too. This paper includes literature review to interpret 'Green', 'Green Human Resource', 'Green Human Resource Management' and 'Environmental Sustainability'. In the subsequent part, the paper highlights green pilot practices undertaken by eco-conscious organisations that are walking those green miles.

1. Introduction

With the recent bush fires fuming parts of Australia to environmental degradation panic all over the world, alarms are raised to have checkmate on any further deterioration. There is no other creature on the earth other than human beings who is creating this imbalance. All efforts of regional to international discussions on environmental concerns are only to address acts of human greed. Federal systems, conventions and action plans alone cannot work until there is human intervention. Human intervention is possible on a structured and organised platform. In this direction, Green Human Resource Management serves as a tool to promote environmental sustainability.

1.2 What is Sustainability?

All creatures have rest and work time defined in nature. Without rest they get weakened and collapse. Similarly environment works for mankind and other

creatures and it needs rest too – i.e. absence of pollution and over-exploitation of natural resources. Ranging from religious texts of the world to The Constitutions of all federal systems to the text books of all educational boards to the ethical oaths by the drivers of business world teaches us to grace the nature (the planet – the ecosystem it consists of; the people - who have to survive meaningfully within it and; the economic demands - for survival and a decent standard of living), enjoy its fruits and as well save for future generations to thrive well too.

1.3 Origin of the Term - Sustainability

While the concept of sustainability is a relatively new idea (from ecologists point of view) ⁽¹⁾, the movement as a whole has roots in social justice, conservationism, internationalism and other past movements with rich histories. After decades of industrialization, extreme poverty could not be dealt with. It was realised that economic growth at the cost of environmental health and social equity fails on long-lasting prosperity. By the beginning of twentieth century, many of these ideas have come together in the call for ‘sustainable development.’ Thus came up the Brunt land Commission in 1987. Sustainable development would imply improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystem. Sustainable development does not end with the sustainability of just the environment and resource system but requires the sustainability of economic and social system too.

2. Literature Review

Green HRM – Term Coined by Wehrmeyer, W (1996)

Table 1. Green HRM Interpretations

Name of the Author	Green HRM interpretations
Lee (2009) and Daily and Huang, (2001)	Green management is defined as the process whereby companies manage the environment by developing environmental management strategies in which companies need to balance between industrial growth and safeguarding the natural environment so that future generation may thrive.
Renwick et. al. (2008) and Muller-Carmen et.al (2010)	have explained that GHRM involves an integration of company’s environmental management objectives to the HR processes of recruitment, selection, training and development, performance management and evaluation, rewards and recognition etc
Mandip (2012)	Green HRM is a part of a broader framework of corporate social responsibility.
Mathapati, (2013)	GHRM is directly responsible in creating green workforce that understands, appreciates, and practices green initiative and maintains its green objectives all throughout the HRM process of recruiting, hiring, training, compensating, developing, and advancing the firms

	human capital and business.
Opatha and Anton Arulrajah, (2014)	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.
Nijhawan, (2014)	It can be used to reduce costs, better efficiencies, to reduce carbon footprints, to make green awareness among the employees and initiate green work-life balance programmes
R.K Mishra et al (2014)	GHRM refers to practices promoting green initiatives by increasing employee awareness and commitment on the issues of environmental sustainability. GHRM can be termed as a process innovation at organisations marching towards a greener tomorrow.

Astrid and Parisa (2019), a bibliometric review over the past 40 years makes an attempt to analyse on the development of sustainable HRM contributing to the knowledge base. Initial studies from Germany, Switzerland and Australia provided first definitions of this construct as ‘long term socially and economically efficient recruitment, development, retainment and dis-employment of employees’ mostly revolving around *sustainable work systems*. Second wave of studies further comprehensively linked sustainability and HRM components – downsizing decisions, talent management, human sustainability, and a stake-holder approach to S-HRM. Third wave of publications included interdisciplinary studies within which competing conceptions evolved such as Green HRM supporting environmental sustainability while conceding to the dominance of maximizing on the Triple Bottom Line (people-planet-profits).

Sabzar Ahmad et, al. (2018) - This study brings forth the concept of Green HRM by analysing the terms, literature and concepts given by various authors. Further, they stated that the Green HR requirements include Green Competencies, Green Attitude, Green Behaviours and Green Results needed to achieve the corporate environmental objectives. Empirical studies on Green HRM conducted by other authors in India from 2012-2017 has been presented, whereby environmental friendly initiatives are listed in the study to make the organisations stay green.

Jyothi Kukreja and Manasi Arora Madan (2018) - The study focuses on positive relationship between intellectual capital in green innovation or environmental management and competitive advantages of firms. Banking sector (SBI, Deutsche, Axis, Standard Chartered, ICICI, HDFC, UCO, PNB, HSBC, VIJAYA, CANARA) was analysed with having positive results of implementing green initiatives with various eco-friendly and energy efficient indicators. As branches pertaining to these banks are spread across the country the knowledge and practices are shared at other places too as a strategic implementation. The author opines that just being round the corner to 2020 and very soon firms might be filing tax returns upon units of carbon emissions.

Prof. Hirlikar N. N (2015) - This paper assesses the importance of Green HRM in polluting industries and best practices to stay Green in Human Resource Function. Impact of industrialization on environment quoting examples of Paper, Pharmaceuticals, Automobiles, Food Products, and Chemical industries are

presented. Adopting Green HRM helps in workforce development needs in emerging green economy, required HR policies and practices, role played by employees and trade unions in environment management etc. Few case studies pertaining to Indian Oil CSR mission on strong environment principles since 1964, amendment to the laws under Factories Act 1948 by Govt of India after the Bhopal Gas Tragedy in 1984, The Green Building Movement, Administration of The Indian Green Building Council form the traces of Green empowerment. Hence the HR role which acts as the custodian of the Green HRM functions becomes important in changing any unsustainable practices that might have been learnt by all levels of employees over decades.

3 Need for the Study

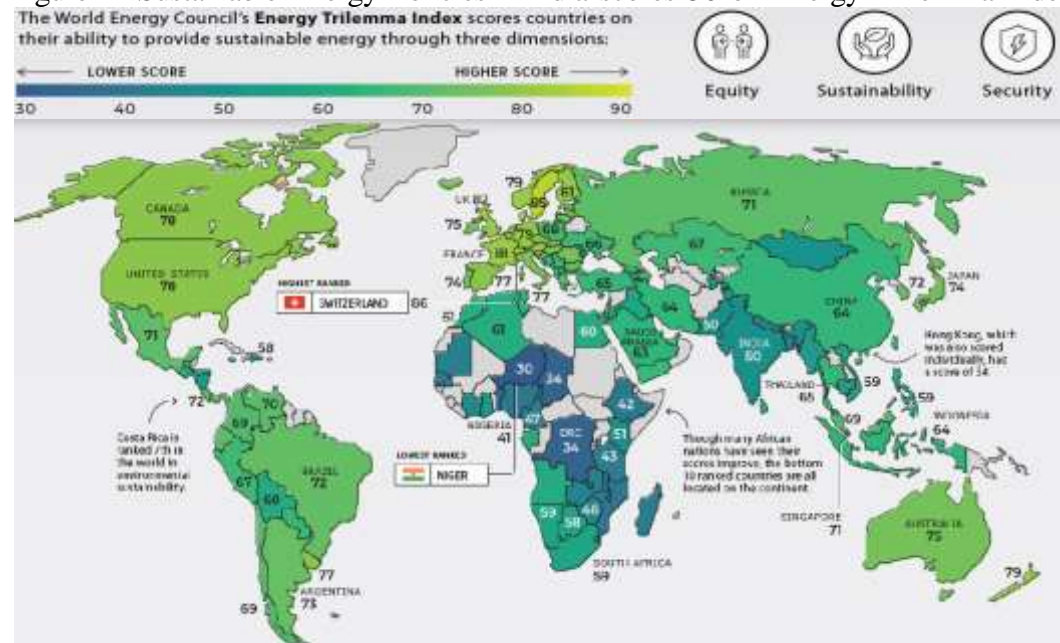
India ranks 109th out of 128 countries globally as per The World Energy Council's Energy Trilemma Index. The countries are ranked based on their ability to provide sustainable energy through three dimensions;

Equity - Basic access to reliable, affordable and abundant energy for domestic and commercial use.

Sustainability – The transition of a country's energy system towards mitigating potential environmental harm and climate change impacts.

Security – Energy security measures a nation's capacity to meet demand reliably, withstand system shocks.

Figure 1- Sustainable Energy Policies – India scores 50 on Energy Trilemma Index



Source: <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/countries-most-sustainable-energy-policies/>

As per the latest global Environmental Performance Index (EPI) rankings, India records the lowermost five performers out a 180 countries. It dipped to 177th position in 2018-19. This report includes 24 performance indicators, covering ecological health and its vitality. Air quality, carbon emission per unit of GDP, deforestation, water & sanitation and waste water treatment are a few to mention.

Figure – 2 India in Global Environmental Performance Index (EPI) rankings



Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/177/180-india-at-bottom-in-green-ranking/articleshow/62624784.cms>

Also as per Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Goal # 12 states; Ensure sustainable management, consumption and production regarding use of natural resources, halving global per capita food waste and encouraging companies and the public to adopt sustainable practices and procurement to reduce, recycle and reuse waste'. Sustainable development goals (SDGs) of each member-nation play a vital role in protecting mother earth and bring in social equity. These goals penetrate into the vision statements of all organisations especially those which undertake economic activities being dependent on resources from the environment. Among the most innovative tools, Green HRM focuses directly on how companies manage their operations by empowering the HRM system on Go-green mode.

4 Objectives

1. To review on the existing literature to interpret 'Green', 'Green HR' and 'Green HRM' under the discipline Human Resource Management
2. To examine the various variables which go into interpreting Green HRM from works done by previous authors
3. To study the Green Piloting Practices of Organisations in Indian context that aim at sustainability.

5 Research Methodology

The secondary data research was done by reviewing the works of other authors on Green HRM, online news websites, Research gate, CSR Journal and others.

6 Limitations

- Global perspective of Green HRM practices is not scoped in.
- Only few Green Pilot practices pertaining to Indian context are mentioned in this paper.

What is 'Green'?

As per the Literature, 'Green' is understood in the context of environment which symbolises life and harmony among the eco-systems of the blue planet. Through **Greening**, there exists sustainability in the environment.

What is Green HR?

Review of the literature on Green HRM and Organisational sustainability, show cases of leadership that extend boundaries of traditional HRM practices into eco-conscious HRM practices embracing environmental strategies through employee participation and empowerment stretching in both directions along any business pyramid.

What is Green HRM?

Review of the Literature reveals; touching every employee interface (under the functions of HRM) to increase awareness on having concern for the environment is called Green Human Resource Management. It includes all policies and practices anchoring at go-green. GHRM is the significant element in promoting sustainability. If there is an element which can set all other elements (structure, systems, technology, policies etc) in an organisation in motion, it is the Human Resource and through Green HRM, knowledge capital is accumulated. This knowledge capital effectively anchored, forms a tool in promoting organisation's environmental sustainability.

Pre-requisite strategic factors for Green HRM, as per scholarly notes

1. Organisational environmental goals
2. Recruitment Policies
3. Management Commitment and Support
4. Internal HR Communications
5. Employee Environmental Trainings
6. Employee involvement and participation
7. Stake holders' Co-operation

7 Green Pilot Practices*7.1 ITC WOW Mysore*

Wealth out of waste (WOW) is an initiative taken up by Indian Tobacco Corporation (ITC) in Mysore, Karnataka, India as part of Corporate Social Responsibility to address dry waste. The labourers (pourakarmikas) hired for the waste segregation are likely to get Rs.3000/- to Rs.4000/- in addition to their monthly wages.

7.2 St. Teresa's College – An Educational Institution on Green Mode

Kerala state's St.Teresa's College secured National Energy Conservation Award 2019 instituted by Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE). This college has been associated with Kerala Energy Management Centre under 'Urja Kiran' since 2015. It won State Award for Energy Conservation in 2018. Energy conservation decreases the amount of energy used for different purposes. As a result, it increases financial capital, environmental value, national as well as personal security, and human comfort. It plays a significant role in lessening climate change.

7.3 Accelerator Labs - India

India will be among the 60 global ones that will find alternatives to scale up innovative solutions that can help fight both climate change and social equity. It is a global collaborative effort to try and test solutions.

7.4 SBI – Annual Calendar 2020

State Bank of India has identified ‘Sustainability’ as one of the core values of the organisation. With a vision to become a carbon-neutral organisation by 2030, the bank is committed to protecting the environment by reducing their carbon footprint. Through these twelve initiatives across several branches, their aim is to encourage people to adapt to green banking, switch to environment-friendly products, act responsibly, and help save the environment. The 12 initiatives across branches in India are:

1. January 2020 - To leave green footprint behind
2. February 2020 - Green Reward points
3. March 2020 - Water conservation
4. April 2020 - No to single use plastic
5. May 2020 - Digital Banking with SBI Yono app for retail customers
6. June 2020 - Employing Solar Power
7. July 2020 - Tree plantation drives
8. August 2020 - Promoting paperless banking
9. September 2020 - Waste Management - Aim for less waste
10. October 2020 - Cleanliness drives and Smart Sanitation Amenities
11. November 2020 - Energy saving initiatives (usage of LEDs, Light Censors, Star Rated equipment, in-house Desktop Energy, Saving Tool for PCs and Consolidation of Branch Servers on Cloud)
12. December 2020 - Observes Soil Day on December 5th by organising farmers meet.

7.5 Green Thumb Initiative of TATA

Deforestation has affected the tribal population. In an intense undertaking to give back forests to tribal communities a nationwide plantation campaign is flagged off by Tata Projects along with its associates to restore India’s depleting green coverage. This initiative is based on a unique online participation model of, “You click, we plant.” which envisages to plant (on behalf of citizens) approximately 2,50,000 trees, at its various project sites in the year 2019-20. Year 2020 has been the 4th edition.

7.6 Kirloskar Vasundhara International Film Festival (KVIFF)

Kirloskar Vasundhara International Film Festival (KVIFF) is the only Indian festival of its genre which combines film screenings and connected activities (discussions on the subject with experts, policy makers and society at large) related to environmental aspects. It is an innovative attempt to evolve on a platform in creating awareness, and preservation of greater natural environmental heritage.

8 Scope for Further Research

The earthlings interested to research further, can explore Green HRM practices followed in a particular sector or sub-sector of an economy. Such studies might help in giving inputs to the accelerator labs of the respective country. Ancient texts/literature can also be reviewed to explore what kind of eco-friendly practices were followed by those people who lived back in history; close to the nature.

9 Conclusion

The wave of research studies in India is still at a nascent phase.

The motivation behind why some organisations are going-green is often diverse. For most organisations the key motive is to understand and make the world around it better for survival. Those organisations thinking on these lines have the Green HR personnel who can put **an organisation's HRM eco-system on green mode to achieve environmental sustainability**. This strategically meditated outlook is called **Green Human Resource Management**. Top Management support for an environmental vision can make the sustainability element more achievable.

Several authors have interpreted Green HRM in different perspectives but all aiming at creating green workforce and promotion of the policies, practices and systems that benefit the individual, society, natural environment, and the business.

Greed can erode Green - This attitude in organisations will set a stage for the entire workforce to go-green and contribute its part in adding to environmental sustainability. The HR Department personnel serve as a team of doctors to an organisation. Little drops of water make a mighty Ocean. Small sustainable practices, small or large, but continuous efforts have significant impacts in the long run. All organisations mentioned in the paper can be pilot models for embedding environmental sustainability practices to other organisations that are yet to raise their own Green flag. They have to get serious about implementing ISO 140001 which will deliver benefits beyond the podium. Definitely it adds to their brand image and competitive edge.

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