

HR PERSPECTIVE ON INNOVATIVE APPROACH FOR SUCCESS OF GREEN BUSINESSES IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Today every business establishment wants to project itself as an eco-friendly organisation. Owing to the increased level of awareness and the governmental pressures, most of the business organisations are opting for greener and sustainable processes so as to achieve their primary objective of making more profit. Success of entrepreneurship depends upon innovativeness and risk taking capability of an entrepreneur. India's most important natural resource is HR. The emerging technologies greatly rely on newer methodologies and techniques to optimize the green business processes. Similarly, there is a need to review the existing HRM concepts and introduce new approaches towards selection, training, retention, enriching and exploiting the inherent skills and capabilities of the employees. The potential of Green HRM, Green Soldiers and Renewable HR are to be harnessed to achieve the success of green businesses. Innovativeness and traditional wisdom would enable green businesses in India to derive upon the futuristic concepts of the past and newer HRM concepts, for its success.

KEYWORDS: Green HRM; Green Soldiers; Green Business; Renewable HR; Traditional Wisdom; Innovativeness; Futuristic Past

Today, every business, irrespective of its nature, type of management is concerned about environment protection. Global Warming, Depleting Natural Resources such as fossil fuel, Change in Climatology, Deforestation, Depletion of Ozone Layer and increased waste generation are just a few components of this major concern. Every company vies to project itself as the champion who keeps the concerns about ecosystem at the centre of its business operations. Millions of rupees are spent to do research on this subject and governments are busy making regulations to curb the businesses and processes that would cause more damages. But, each measure or technology introduced to alleviate this problem actually compounds it.

Unless the humans change their attitude no technology or sophistication can help us in overcoming this problem. It means that the HR of any organisation would play a vital role in ensuring the eco-balance without affecting the profitability of the business. This is applicable to any type of business, be it manufacturing or service oriented, agriculture related or technology based.

INDUSTRIALISATION AND THE ECO SYSTEM

The rapid and to an extent unregulated industrialization during the twentieth century has led towards environmental degradation and various disasters. The worst manmade disasters include Chernobyl (Ukraine) Disaster (26 Apr 1986), Deepwater Horizon (USA) Oil Spill (20 Apr 2010). Even in India we had one of the worst industrial disaster i.e. Bhopal Gas Leak accident (3 Dec 1984). One of the main causes for such a situation is increased level of consumerism and non-adherence to the stipulated safety norms.

While these environmental changes have been studied since the second half of the twentieth century, it has drawn the attention of the world community since the beginning of this century. Today, every nation is concerned about environmental issues. While it has the positive effect on the way they use their natural

resources, it has also led to exploitation of the third world countries which are rich in natural resources and have a lucrative market for the non-biodegradable products.

The general public is aware of the significance of environment protection and are turning towards greener ways of life. Even the international communities, organisations and governments have enforced stringent measures and guidelines to safeguard the eco-system in general. Nevertheless, the primary purpose of any business being profit making the corporate houses and entrepreneurs often tend to violate the norms and exploit the resources at the cost of the society.

Sanjeela Mathur and Neelam Tandon (2016) in their study on Green Entrepreneurship in India, mention that only in 1990s the term Green Entrepreneurship came into vogue. They also quote Berle.G (1991) as the one who introduced the terms viz recycling, renewable energy and preservation etc in his book, 'Business opportunities that can save earth and make you money'. Giovanni Marin (2015) in his research paper defines the green entrepreneur as the one who can be either making her business green or simply entering a green business.

With the increased level of public awareness and the media activism, various NGOs and independent bodies have been formed to monitor and guide all the stakeholders viz government bodies, general public and corporate houses. Various research studies are being carried out to estimate the current level of environmental degradation and the future course of action in view of the current pace of development. Newer strategies are being developed to restrict the unmindful exploitation of the natural resources and to mitigate any harm to the global society.

On the part of the general public, they are very aware of their rights and responsibilities these days. Classic example of such kind of awareness and collective action initiated by a community is the uproar

against the 'Methane Project in Thanjavur Delta Region'. While it has been a successful story, there are hundreds of them which could not achieve the desired results.

Whatever be the state of economy, every nation today wants to ensure that the natural resources are preserved for the future generations. Towards achieving this, lot of emphasis is laid on promoting green businesses.

EMERGENCE OF GREEN MANAGEMENT

In spite of the skepticism about the profitability of green businesses, many international companies have adopted various measures to ensure that the guidelines of various agencies monitoring the green practices are strictly adhered to. Neeraj Kumar S (2015) in his study on Industry Initiatives for Green Marketing in India, states that the first wave of Green Marketing came in 1980s and the second wave came in early 2000, after the concepts of CSR, Triple Bottom Line (TBL) became popular. Hage Tam & Dr. Taruna (2015), in their paper published in the International Journal for Applied Research, define green management, in common parlance as indulgence in ecofriendly practice in process and decision of management.

While the green management is getting momentum, there is a growing resistance from many quarters of the society against the CSR activities of companies involved in businesses such tobacco, liquor etc. There are many NGOs and government agencies which are actively involved in the policy making as well as monitoring of the Green Management processes of the organisations across the globe. One such organisation is South East Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA). It critically analyses the CSR activities of particularly the tobacco companies and publishes the findings in the form of report, such as 'A Perfect Deception' (2008) wherein it exposes the false claims made by the tobacco companies in terms of their CSR activities. Mary Assunta Worawan, Jirathanapiw (2016) in the review report, 'Terminate Tobacco Industry Corporate Giving' published on tobacco industry recommends that the CSR activities of Tobacco Industry should be prohibited by law.

GREEN BUSINESSES IN INDIA

Today, environmental issue has taken the centre stage and hence it has become one of most important aspect of the CSR activities of companies. The government of India through its Manufacturing Policy-2011 had announced incentives for the green business activities and in its Companies Act-2013 a new schedule on CSR was also introduced to ensure environmental sustainability of the business entities in India. Even the employees prefer to work for the company which observes green processes. There are numerous other advantages accrued to the green businesses which include reduced employee turnover, enhanced performance of these motivated employees, enhanced reputation and reducing carbon footprints.

The profitability of a business venture are not measured merely by the monetary gains, anymore. The trend has changed wherein the intangible costs in terms of environmental effects are taken into consideration while calculating the profitability of the business. It automatically means that the intangible benefits such as reduced carbon emission and paperless office are already doing rounds in various industries. In other words, the companies which have included environmental issues as part of their businesses are called as Green Businesses. These companies are also the promoters of Green Innovations which are the bedrocks of Green businesses.

Neeraj Kumar S (2015) in his study about the initiatives of lists out the Indian companies which have taken initiative in the field of green marketing in various sectors. These companies include, Wipro, Infosys, Tata Metaliks Ltd, Suzlon Energy, HP and Maruti Udyog Limited. Kishore Kumar (2014), in his article published in Global Journal of Finance and Management analyses the opportunities and challenges faced by any company which is ready to tread the path of Green business wherein he mentions that the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) Green Homes is the first rating programme developed in India, exclusively for the residential sector. The standards of the international certification programme such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is also being adhered to in India.

Few of the companies in India, are actively involved in various CSR activities including publishing of Sustainability Report. For example, ITC Limited has undertaken various CSR activities as published in its Sustainability Report-2016.

Mathur & Tandon (2016), in their study on green entrepreneurship in India, mention that the benefits of green businesses include cost reduction, higher profits, green job creation, environment sustainability and enhanced brand perception. While green businesses are here to stay, their processes are yet to be refined and measured as well. At the moment, there are no accurate scale to measure the effectiveness of the green processes. Nevertheless, in spite of the reduced profit margin the green business ventures are widening their customer base besides gaining the trust of other stakeholders.

GREEN HRM

Business is a human activity which means that the role of HR needs to be factored in while one plans to establish or develop a Green Business. Uddin MM and Rabiul Islam (2015) in their paper on Green HRM state that the major goal of green HRM is to achieve the organisational financial goals through environmental sustainability. Opatha HHDNP & Anton Arulrajah A (2014) in their paper on Green HRM brings out that the Green HR requirements include Green Competencies, Green Attitude, Green Behaviors and Green Results. As per them, these are needed to achieve the corporate environmental objectives. Thus the Green HRM is critical for success of a green business.

GREEN SOLDIERS

Business is a coordinated effort of various stakeholders wherein the policies are implemented through stipulated processes for achieving the objectives of the organisation. As it is evident from the discussions seen so far, the profitability of a green business cannot be realized at the cost of green processes. Since, it is a tough call to be taken by a profit oriented manager, the Green HR professionals need to act as soldiers who would obey the order irrespective of the consequences. In other words, the Green HRM can be practiced only by green soldiers who would leave no stone unturned to achieve the stipulated green principles.

RENEWABLE HR

It is an innovative concept of harnessing and effectively employing the inherent set of skills possessed by the soldiers. The veterans joining the work force after their release from the armed forces possess a vast pool of knowledge and skills which can be effectively utilised for promoting green businesses at lower cost.

Being in a profit making business organisation, even for a HR manager it will be difficult to overlook the loss of profit owing to the adherence to green principles. Hence, it would be more appropriate to employ the veterans of the armed forces for such jobs. This measure would have an added advantage of optimally utilizing the multiple skills possessed by the veterans. Thus, this new concept of Renewable HR may be included into the ambit of Green Businesses.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Modern science and technology will hardly meet the demands of the current management. This is more applicable to India due to its vast area and the divergent socio-economic condition involved. Being a country with rich traditions and refined customs, we can reap the benefits of our traditional wisdom and ancient customs. The western and other developed nations have industrialised to such an extent that they are unable to revert back to greener methods. In case of India, we still have scope to resort to safer, cleaner and greener methods. It means that we must concentrate more on the critical fields of manufacturing i.e. agriculture, food processing and medicine. Green building is another area where can excel.

We can even utilise technology but without the negativity of the modern science. In order to achieve all these things we must have a sound HR policy and implementation strategy, which would ensure that the employees remain motivated and satisfied. Following are the compilation of the recommendations in respect of HR processes to be observed by a Green Soldier to lead his organisation towards excellence:-

Agriculture

- Revive the traditional farming techniques
 - Adopt ancient technology for drying/storing of grains
 - Practice crop rotation and calendar
- Food and Medicine

- Natural method of cooling and filtering water
- Use of earthen ware
- Home remedies and natural preservatives
- Manufacture Herbal medicines in lieu of chemical based
- Start business of homemade milk products, snacks & sweets
- Use natural and forest products such as honey

Technology

- Employee only cleaner technologies viz solar or wind Energy.
- Utilise and market energy saving devices
- Promote green buildings and recycling

HR Processes

- Educate and motivate employees
- Reward for eco-friendly practices
- Promote paperless work culture
- E-filing, e-learning and online training
- Telecommuting (e working)
- Virtual Interview/video conference
- Flexi working hours
- E Performance Review
- Recycling

CONCLUSION

Any organisation will be as good or as bad as its stakeholders and HRM practices. Hence, success of the green initiative and green business will be heavily dependent upon the Green HRM processes. Hence, a green entrepreneur must support green HR, promote renewable HR and invest in green soldiers while there is also a scope to engage the academician in the effective implementation and monitoring of the processes.

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