

PRACTICALITY OF GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES: A STUDY ON BANKING SECTOR IN BANGLADESH

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Abstract

Green Human Resource Management has been the buzzword since the last few decades but least was known about its real implications on the organizational context. The objective of this paper is to simply put the Green HRM thoughts into actions instead of providing extensive insights on it which already exists. Hence, the study has been carried out to find out the level of engagement to the Green HRM practices by a sample of 30 commercial banks operating in Bangladesh. Since there is a strong tie between HRM (being the strategic partner within the organization) and organizational environmental performance, this study tries to clarify the extent to which traditional HRM practices is reflected through the touch of green practices in each functions: job analysis, recruitment, selection, induction, performance appraisal, and reward management; and their contributions to the environmental sustainability. The findings of the study encompass the level of green HRM practices adopted by the banking sector of a developing country where the most of the companies sampled are familiar with the Green HRM but the practices are less than what is required. This study also found that, the adoption of Green practices has a positive relationship with increased organizational performance and helps promote organization's image. It is expected that the study would help the industries to gain a grasp on how to turn traditional HRM practices into Green ones in order to reap the fruits of Green HRM in this 21st century.

Keywords: Green Human Resource Management, Commercial Bank, Strategic Partner, Traditional HRM Practices, Environmental Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

Since the last couple of decades Green Human Resource Management has received an immense attention among the scholars, academicians, business organizations as we are constantly facing a lot of environmental calamities due to our own actions that produce immense impact on our earth. The Green HRM is the requirement of the 21st Century as day in and day out, it is reported in the newspaper that because of the excess consumption of natural resources as a raw material by the industries and other commercial organization, there is tremendous pressure on the natural resources of planet Earth (C. M. Mathapati, 2013). It is the high time we should think about the environmental sustainability and produce less harm to the ecological system.

HR is regarded as an integral part of the organization that has the responsibility to manage the human, the most important resource among the other resources. Organizations' strategic skills and HR professionals' competencies are the prerequisite for promoting Green HRM practices. Despite lack of sufficient studies on strategic HR competencies and Green HRM practices, HR has been acknowledged as an essential factor in this regard (Jing Yi Yong and Yusliza Mohd-Yusoff, 2016).

Though many scholars have highlighted the importance of Green HRM in promoting environment-friendly behaviors among employees, it is still a less-researched area (Del Brío et al., 2007; Jabbour and Santos, 2008; Jabbour et al., 2010; Jackson et al., 2011; Ones and Dilchert, 2012; Rimanoczy and Pearson, 2010). Moreover, the available literature on Green HRM primarily provides insights in the Western context (Renwick et al., 2013). Considering the significance of Asian economic development and environmental crisis, it is equally important to explore the same in the Asian context (Pavitra Mishra, 2017).

LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been observed an increasing awareness within business communities on the significance of going green and adopting various environment management techniques. Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has become a key business strategy for the significant organizations where Human Resource Department plays an active part in going green at the office. (Shoeb Ahmad, 2015).

Gill Mandip (2012) asserted that Green Human Resources refer to using every employee touch point/interface to promote sustainable practices and increase employee awareness and commitments on the issues of sustainability. Basically, Green HRM includes the greening of HR functions of an organization. Moreover, the emphasis has been on undertaking environment-friendly HR initiatives that would result 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-sharing, job-sharing, teleconferencing and virtual interviews, recycling, telecommuting, online training, energy-efficient office spaces etc.

The Green Human Resources Management (Green HRM) has emerged from companies engaging in practices related to protection of environment and maintaining ecological balance (Prasad, 2013). This green movement is focused on protecting the environment and saving the earth from man-made disasters. The attainment of sustainability through the practices of Green HRM encompasses all the activities aimed at helping an organization to carry out its agenda for environment management to reduce its carbon footprint in areas concerning job analysis, acquisition of human resources, their induction, performance management, training and development and compensation and reward management. Among various benefits of Green HRM practices, one of the major advantage is that it can enhance corporate image and brand. Green HR plays an important role in making the employees aware of and concerned for preservation of natural resources and contribute in pollution control, waste management and manufacture of eco-friendly products.

From job design function to employee relations, HRM has gigantic potential in greening organization and its operations (Arulrajah et al, 2015). Following is the table that describes how the traditional HRM practices can be transformed into Green HRM practices.

HRM Functions	Green policies, procedures, or practices
Job analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusion of environmental dimension in job description and job specification. - Highlighting the organization's policy through job circular. - Requiring employees green competencies as a special component in job specification.
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicating the employers' concern about green practices through recruitment message. - Giving priority to the candidates with green mindset.
Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selecting the candidates who are well aware of greening the job vacancies. - Preferring the candidates who in their private life were conscious and practiced green policies. - Asking the potential employees about green HRM policies and practices in the interview questions.
Induction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orient the employees to the organizational green policies and practices through induction process.

Training	- Make the new employees familiar with organization's green efforts.
	- Help them develop organizational citizenship behavior.
	- Arrange training program both for managerial and non-managerial employees of the organization about the green practices both within and outside the organization.
	- Determine employees green training needs analysis.
Performance evaluation	- Impart knowledge on green practices and policies by arranging seminars, programs in the organization.
	- Communicate that green practices as a criterion for performance evaluation of employees.
Rewards management	- While evaluating the performance of individual employees, make sure that the green performance of that employee both individually and collectively considered.
	- Provide employees with both financial and non-financial rewards for their green performance.
	- Among the financial rewards (incentives, bonus, and increment) are lucrative.
Discipline management	- Among various non-financial rewards (certificate, recognition, and compliment) are noteworthy.
	- Publish the organizational policies pertaining to the green practices.
	- Develop disciplinary system regarding the breach of environmental performance and green conduct within the organization.

In order to create, practice and maintain environmental related innovative behaviors of employees coupled with right attitude of greening, green HRM practices are critical (Arulrajah et al, 2015). As this side of HRM is concerned with transforming normal employees into green employees, it is inevitable for the organizations to go green to achieve environmental goals of the organization and finally to make a significant contribution to environmental sustainability (Opatha et al, 2014). So organizations in this 21st century needs to abide by the Green environmental policies in order to leave a sustainable and safe business arena to the generations to come.

METHODOLOGY

Once the problem is identified, the task of data collection is launched. The researcher has the options of choosing the primary and secondary or both data for their research purpose. The primary data are those which are collected afresh and first time and thus happen to be original in character. The secondary data are those which have already been collected by someone else

and which have already passed through statistical process. In this particular study, the researcher chose the questionnaire and interview methods in order to collect data from 30 commercial banks operating in Bangladesh. There are 55 commercial banks (both state owned and private) are operating in Bangladesh (Source: Bangladesh Bank) and in order to determine the sample size the author chose the convenience sampling method.

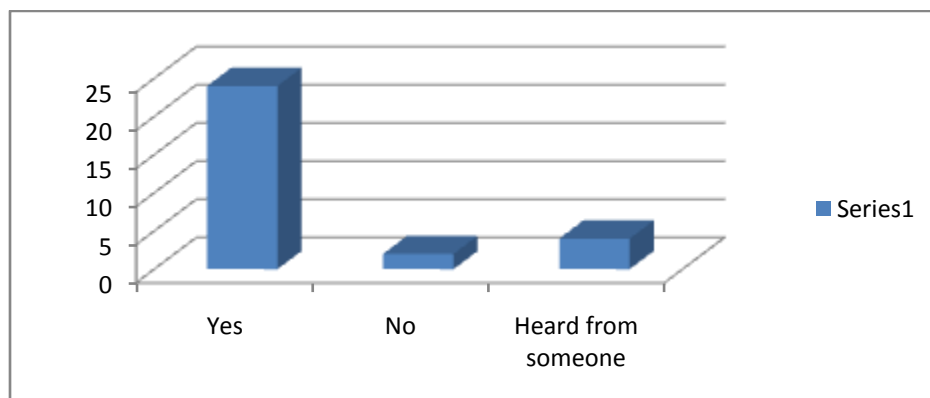
In order to analyze data the researcher used the descriptive statistical tool (Graphs and Charts are used) so that it becomes easier to the common audience to understand the level of acceptance of Green HRM policies and its practices in a country that recently got promoted from LDC to developing one and moving towards a booming economy which is likely to have impact on environment in near future.

A set of 8 core questions were asked to the HR manager of the targeted organizations and their responses were recorded accordingly. Apart from the structured questionnaire, the employees of the organizations were given the opportunity to share their ideas on Green HRM practices which was also reflected on this study.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Q1. Do you know about green HRM?

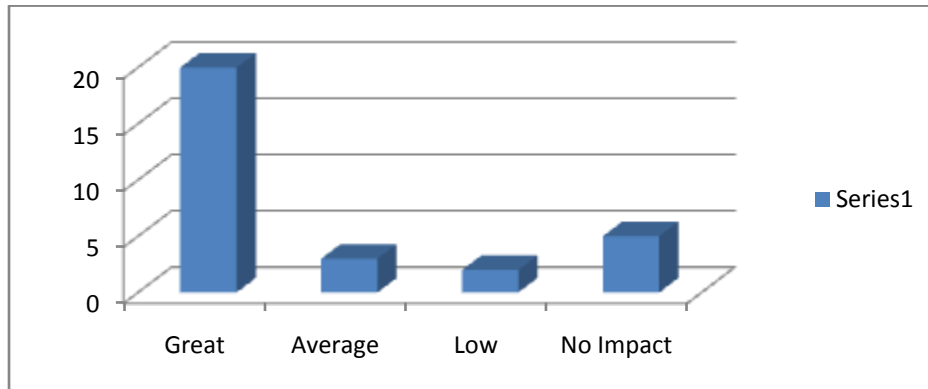
- I. Yes
- II. No
- III. (Not sure) May be heard from someone



Discussion: Among the 30 organization, 24 respondents knew about Green HRM. Only 2 were not aware. This shows that most of the organizations are aware about Green HRM and it is getting in practice day by day. As the number is getting bigger, it shows that the country is moving towards the green revolution which is inevitable for the business originations to exist and for the greater benefits of the earth.

Q2. To what extent green HR policies can improve environment and make name for organization?

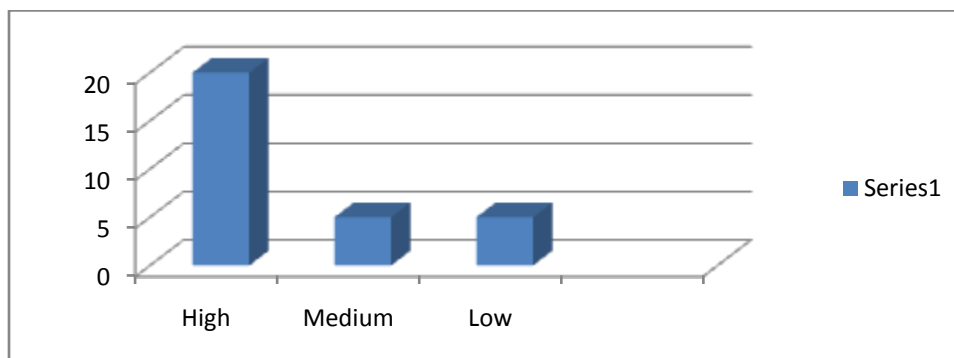
- I. Great
- II. Average
- III. Low
- IV. No impact



Discussion: Most of the organizations believe that, Green HR practices indirectly help the organization by improving its image as a Green organization. Some banks even found few candidates who questioned about organization's green performance, so it could be a tool to attract environmentally conscious employees as well.

Q3. Role of HR in environment management.

- I. High
- II. Medium
- III. Low

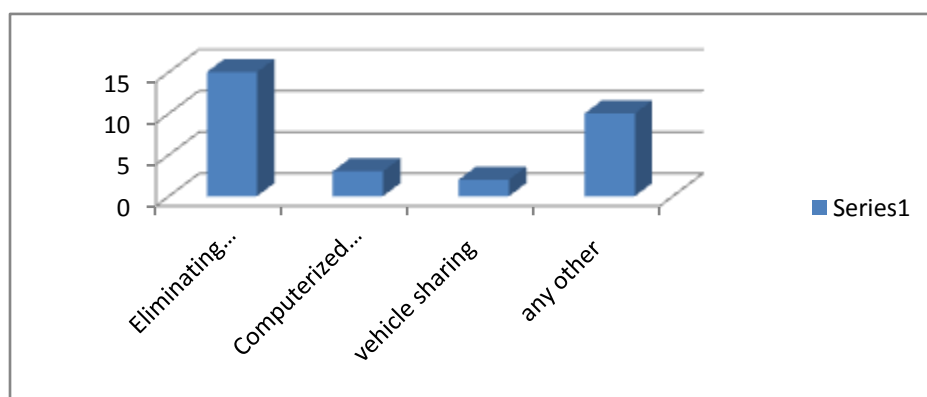


Discussion: HR policies are having a big role if organization wants to make the GREEN theme. Most of the respondents think that HR being the strategic partner in the organization hold the

responsibility to environmental actions from the part of the organizations. But 5 respondents feel that HR alone cannot bring about the green practices unless the top level management supports in this regard. So some organizations suggested that both top management and the HR department of the organization should work together in order to introduce Green HRM practices.

Q4. Best practice for going green can be

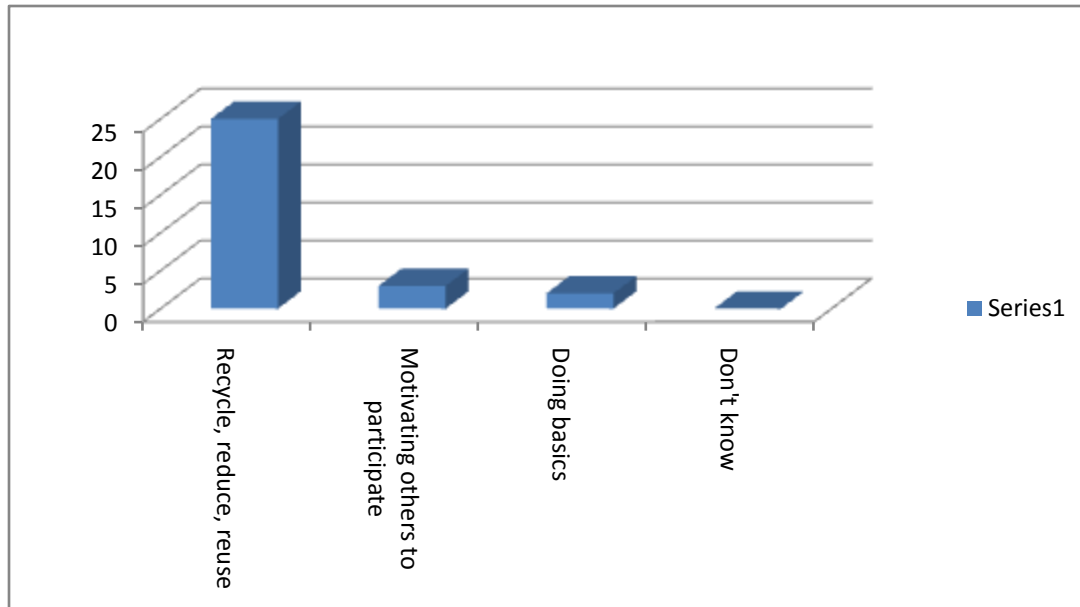
- I. *Eliminating excess use of paper*
- II. *Computerized training.*
- III. *Vehicle sharing*
- IV. *Any other (Specify)*



Discussion: Although the question might seem close-ended but through the last option the responding organizations suggested many best practices for the Green HRM. Among them paper-less work process of HR got attention. Most of the respondents are concerned with the use of paper at offices and at the same time think that this problem could be reduced to a greater extent by implementing Green movement in offices. Other respondents made recommendations on greening the whole HR policy from job analysis to recruitment to selection and so forth by bringing about green movement. Other best practices are described in the Recommendation section of this paper.

Q5. How you are contributing to the place you work or spend maximum time?

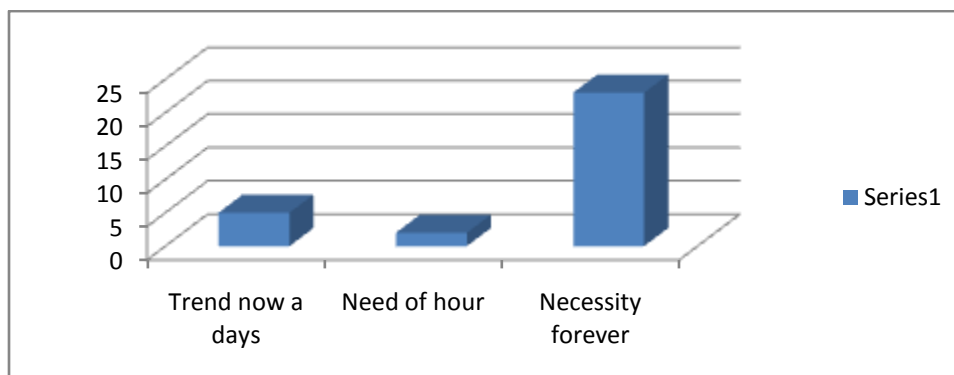
- I. *Recycle, reduce, reuse*
- II. *Motivating others to participate*
- III. *Doing basics like switching lights and monitors off when not required.*
- IV. *Don't know*



Discussion: There are just three options and all are conducive to green performance of employees but apart from them the employees themselves suggested many ways to practice Green HRM in the organization. Most of the organizations the researcher surveyed on this issue contribute to the reduction of paper use and Green movement through recycle, reduce, and reuse, some organizations just do the basics like switching off of the fans, lights, improving healthy working conditions within and outside the organization. Some of them are also motivating others to contribute to this movement directly or indirectly.

Q6. Why Green HRM?

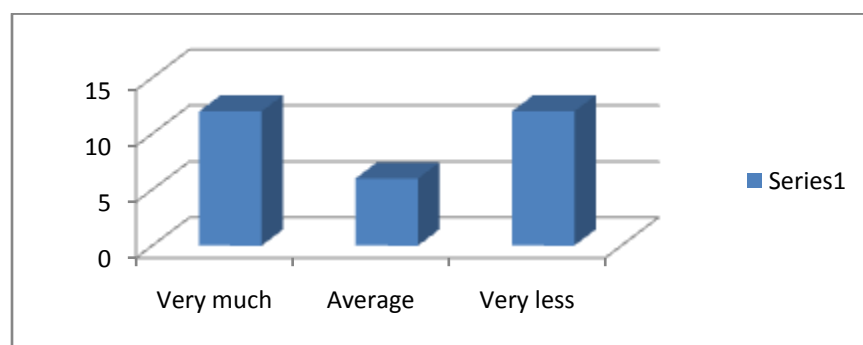
- I. Trend now a days
- II. Need of hour
- III. Necessity forever



Discussion: Green HRM is not something for very transitional purpose, rather it is the most important issue for not only the time being but also for future. Most of the responding organizations already understand the needs of Green HRM and are practicing green initiatives which according to them are producing positive impressions among the internal employees of the organization and the external stakeholders as well. That's why most of the respondents replied that the importance of Green HRM is forever.

Q7. *How many Bangladeshi organizations are promoting Green HRM?*

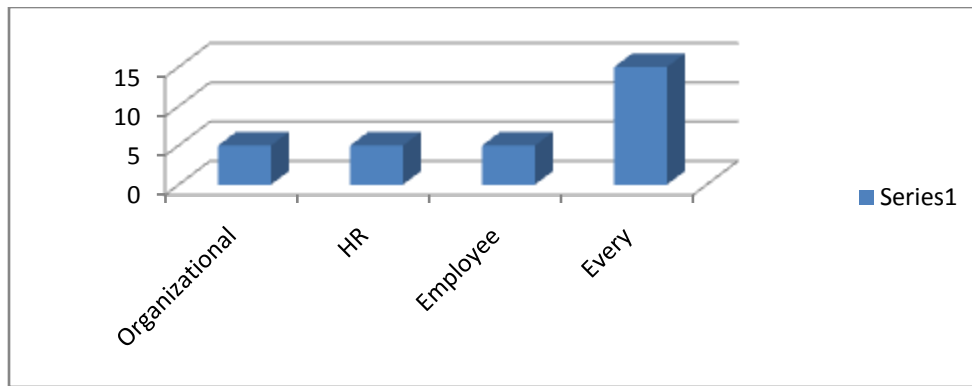
- I. *Very Much*
- II. *Average*
- III. *Very Less*



Discussion: This is a true scenario that, the number of the organizations following Green HRM policies is currently not that significant but it is evident from the study where more than 20 out of 30 organizations are trying to adopt green practices which surely indicates that in near future the number of green practicing organization increase. But as the time passes, most of the organizations are coming towards this noble movement for their own betterment and for the betterment of the earth as well. Most of the respondents suggested that, it is important to let the organizations know about the benefits of Green HRM movement, and then they will be motivated to take initiative towards it.

Q8. *At what level more improvement is needed to spread HR policies in the organization efficiently?*

- I. *At organization level*
- II. *At HR level*
- III. *At employee level*
- IV. *Every level*



Discussion: Although there are some levels of organizations who need to take the major initiative to Green movement but it can never be accomplished without the support and guidance from other departments as well. Some organizations even recommended that they need the maximum support from the top level managers of the organization. Only if the top management gives consent on greening the organization can they move for green revolution within.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Specifically the functional areas where HR can have a green approach and which can have a bearing on acquisition, development and retention of human capital could be the following.

- a. With the help of the advanced technology, organizations can tremendously reduce the use of paper as nowadays the job circulars are posted online, company websites are used by candidates to search for jobs and resumes are invited online and even the job interview is also done online which help organizations contribute more to the environmental sustainability.
- b. Most of the originations that were surveyed for this study suggested that along with HR department the higher level executives have to take greater responsibility for green initiatives. To start with, HR Department can make Green/EM (Environmental Management) job descriptions for employees. While selecting employees, it should be ensured that environmental consciousness is treated as a required competency for the post.
- c. Employee orientation programs should be designed in such a way as the new employees feel that the integration of the organizational culture with green practices is

strong. Induction programs should highlight an organization's concern for green issues of employees like their health, safety and green working conditions.

- d. Employees' key performance areas (KPA) should include 'Green' targets and based on the progress on the green targets employees performance needs to be evaluated. There can be an option of developing green performance standards which can be the yardstick of green performance evaluation of employees at all levels. Green targets, goals and responsibilities should be established for managers and the degree of accomplishment should be reflected in appraisals.
- e. Training and development plans should include programs, workshops and sessions to enable employees to develop and acquire knowledge in environment management, green skills and attitude. Training contents should be developed to increase employee competencies and knowledge in Environment related issues and should be reflected through practices.
- f. Compensation and reward management should be integrated with the performance of employees' green performance. Compensation packages should be customized to reward green skills acquisition and achievements by employees. Different monetary and non-monetary rewards can be offered where monetary-based rewards for contributions in environment management can be allocated in the forms of salary increase, cash incentives and bonuses while non-monetary rewards may include recognition, special leave and gifts to employees and their family members. Recognition-based awards can highlight green contributions of employees through wide publicity and even public praise and appreciation of green efforts by the top level management of the organization.

CONCLUSION

HR department is the center of managing the human resource, the most crucial resource of the organization. Recent green movement among the organizations has increased the role of the HR managers and given extra role of performing its traditional practices in touch with the Green approach that means not having any harmful effect on the environment. HR has significant opportunity to contribute to the organization's green movement and plays important role in enthusing, facilitating, and motivating employees for taking up green practices for greener business (Shoeb Ahmad, 2013). The returns that the modern green practicing organizations are reaping is lucrative as well, Job seekers prefer organizations that have a close fit between their

and the organizations' values, and a recruiting organization's environmental reputation and images are now increasingly prominent in recruitment efforts (Renwick et al, 2013). Greening the HR functions gives employees an impression of performing their tasks with care, meaning less harm to the environment which increases commitment, loyalty and confidence among the employees. Thus firms with good reputations for environment management may have a source of competitive advantage in their ability to hire potentially high-performing staff (Renwick et al, 2013). Hence, it can be said that, adoption of Green HRM policies and practices is the need of hour and organizations need to commit to green movement for their own betterment and for the maintenance of sustainability for the future generations.

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