

# “GREEN HRM” –A Road Map to Sustainability

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## Abstract

*“A Sustainable business is resource efficient, respects the environment and is a good neighbour” - Phil Harding*

In today’s scenario Business sustainability is the core value of many fortune companies in the long run in order to maximize their opportunities and to minimize their negative impact in the economy. “Going Green” and environmentally conscious business is the ultimate target of many private as well as public sector enterprises. “Green way” of business is to integrate the green initiatives with people, process, and technology. Almost all the functional departments in organizations are conscious about green practices, wherein HR department plays a vital role as being the nervous system of an organization. In the light of the above, this paper attempts to study Green HR practices pertaining to selected Indian companies and also its impact on organisation & Quality of work Life of Employees (QWL)

## Introduction

Human Resource Management is an important function of management that deals with the most valuable assets of an organisation which is human resources. The whole context of HRM in present scenario can be addressed as “**People and society**” wherein sustainable use of resources within organizations which leads to environment sustainability and corporate social responsibility plays a vital role. HR managers now have a major role to play in designing efficient strategies which are in par with the company’s values and culture, investor’s expectations, meeting government rules and regulations and also initiate environment friendly practices and awareness among employees.

Green HR strategy primarily reduces the carbon foot print of each employee and enhances talent retention. It also increases efficiency within processes, reducing and eliminating environmental waste and revamping which results in electronic filing, job sharing, teleconferencing, recycling, telecommuting, online training, and developing more energy efficient office spaces and also Sustaining green objectives throughout in all the HR

functions of recruitment, training, compensation etc., G-HRM initiatives also aims in creating sound occupational health and organisational health through Green Work-Life Balance practices. Green HR practices for Work life balance imbibes the feeling of belonging for the organisation and also increases productivity.

Most of the progressive businesses in India are realising the importance of **“Green management practices”** instead of considering the management as simply an art of getting the work done. Many companies have integrated “G-HRM” as their strategies in order to facilitate long-term sustainability for the business.

## Objective

The objective of this paper is to study:

- The Green HRM initiatives, strategic implementation in selected companies
- Impact on organisation and QWL of employees.
- Real Challenges for organisation towards- G-HRM

## Limitations of the study:

The main limitation of this paper is that this study has only focused on a small sample of Indian companies and information were collected from print literature, websites of these companies and no primary data were collected.

## Research Methodology:

The research paper is an attempt of exploratory research, based on the secondary data sourced from websites, journals, magazines, articles, and media report. To study, Green practices in selected Indian companies & its impact from their websites.

## Review of Literature:

**“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 & safeguarding the natural environment, . Business firms play a key role in the issues of environmental management since they are part of our society and cannot be isolated from the environment. Nowadays companies are implementing EMS- Environmental Management System as a strategic tool to control of firm’s environmental impacts. G-HRM enables the sustainable use of resources within business enterprises and promotes the cause of environmentalism which further boosts up employee morale and satisfaction. Some of the prominently used Green HR practices are:

1. Green Printing
2. Green Manufacturing and Disposal of Staff ID card
3. Job sharing (sharing a full-time job between two employees)
4. Teleconferencing and virtual interviews
5. Recycling
6. Telecommuting
7. Online Training
8. Reduce employee carbon footprints by the likes of electronic filling, Green HR involves reducing carbon footprint via less printing of paper, video conferencing and interviews etc.
9. Energy efficient office spaces
10. Green Payroll
11. Car Pooling
12. Public Transport
13. Company Transport
14. Flexi-W

**Green Work- Life balance** refers to Green HR initiatives that are aimed at creating sound occupational health and organisational health. It encompasses two key elements "Sustainability" and operational efficiency". Green Work life Balance practices are highly commendable in the present scenario to sustain the intellectual capital in the organisation and it can be instrumental in creating enhanced quality of Work life (QWL) for both the employee and employer at large.

## **Green HR Practices by selected Companies**

### ➤ **Reliance Infocom**

Reliance Group founded by Shri Dhirubhai H Ambani (1932-2002), ranks among India's top private sector business houses in terms of net worth.

“**One Reliance**” is the concept wherein health, safety, and environment are the key business processes. The company has taken green initiatives on green telecom such as:

- Usage of renewable energy with solar panels
- Usage of newly developed batteries to reduce fuel consumption at telecom sites thereby reducing CO2 emission
- Company has deployed high efficient batteries and energy conservation measures such as sourcing power through Green resource
- Company has implemented the Energy Management System (ISO 50001\_EnMS) at all centres across India and Occupational Health and Safety system (OHSAS 18001).

- Company has deployed efficient waste management system of re-engineering of process resulting in minimal waste and also works towards zero waste.
- Company enhanced green initiatives by training through e-learning facilities and introduced several progressive **and employee friendly HR practices in E-HR, Employee Self Service, Performance Management System, 360° Feedback and Leadership Development.**

➤ **ITC Agri Business Division**

ITC Agri Business is one of the leading domestic players and exporters of numerous agricultural commodities. It works with farmers to improve the productivity and quality of various crops and sources the finest of Grains, Oil Seeds, Pulses and a range of value-added agri products such as Processed Fruits, Coffee and Shrimps across multiple geographies in India

ITC is always known for its Eco-friendly initiatives. To continue its endeavor towards Clean environment, ITC trained and raised awareness of over 2000 business managers on various Sustainability issues. ITC has constructed Green Centre at Gurgaon which was certified as the highest rated green building in the world. The Ethos of ITC Gardenia is **“Forward to Green back to nature”**. Through **WOW (i.e.)”Wealth out of Waste”** as an initiative towards waste management, the company collected approximately 26,731 tons of waste. ITC designed a proper plan for OZONE Depleting Substances (ODS). Its salient features are:

- All units to monitor and reduce consumption of ODS.
- Replace all the existing equipment using ODS well before the phase out stipulation
- Recover all the ODS from the equipment being replaced for recycling or safe disposal.
- The company ensured that all the newly purchased equipment are free from Chlorofluorocarbons and methyl Chloroform

ITC has also taken sustained efforts to reduce the intake of fresh water by conducting water audit, benchmarking and implementing best practices. ITC has incorporated many clean technologies/fuels and invested in many state of the art pollution control equipment such as plasma filters to reduce air emission levels.

➤ **Godrej consumer products ltd**

Godrej one of the leaders in consumer durable products is well known for its focus towards designing & manufacturing green and green products i.e. ergonomic, environmental friendly products which enables the users to have a healthy life. Apart from being the green initiator Godrej has recently launched the concept of **“Greener India”** as their vision for the next ten years. one of the steps taken in this regard was the successful initiative of rain –water harvesting in Mumbai plant and setting up of renewable energy and producer gas in all the future units.

Godrej follows ICON scheme for greater employee involvement and participation where in employees are given rewards & recognition points during the year for their participation and finally converted in to a sum of money which is again donated towards charity.

The design teams at Godrej work on conceptualizing and creating products and office systems where sustainability and raw material safety along minimizing product's carbon foot print plays a vital role. Godrej products are 100% recyclable and the company has also initiated "Wecyle" which is a recycling service for all institutional products **Godrej has won GREENGUARD and BIFMA award for its green initiatives.** Company also conducts Wellness camps and Ergo Audits to create awareness among employees and suggest corrections in terms of work place layout.

The company ensures Work-Life balance to every employee by providing housing close to work place, unlimited avenues to learn, Open door policy of top mgt Employee friendly policies, Job security.

➤ **TCS (Tata consultancy services)**

TCS adopts diverse initiatives to reduce operational impact on the environment. Green IT benefits are innumerable ranging from efficiency and cost savings for not only IT industry but also various disciplines such as manufacturing, transportation and much more.

**There are several green practices employed across TCS facilities:**

- (i) Energy savings by using energy efficient LED lighting, sensor based light turn on/off, building design for cooling efficiency, automatic cooling system modulation based on need and load, alternate energy for lighting and cooking,
- ii) Reducing water consumption by recycling, rain water harvesting and ground water recharging
- (iii) Waste reduction through paper reduction, composting and digesters for bio waste
- (iv) Fuel emissions reduction through cycling, car-pooling and buses.

TCS made significant steps leading to 12.5% reduction in electricity consumption, 76 MWH of solar energy generation, 1.5M cubic metre of water reuse, 28% and 67% reduction in paper and printer cartridge consumption, leading to a 2% reduction in the carbon footprint. The company achieved this through corporate level policies, bringing awareness to the employees, setting targets and achieving them systematically. TCS obtained **Green building** certification for 3 of its branches.

**Green Procurement:** Green procurement or Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) is the practice of procuring products and services that are less harmful to the environment and all species including humans that depend on environment for survival. Green products are those that are made with less harmful materials or which when produced or used/consumed would have a minimal impact on the environment.

The companies complete HR Services reduces cost and maximizes operational efficiency and paper less HRM functions such as

- Recruitment and resourcing
- Workforce administration
- Compensation and benefits
- Performance and learning
- Payroll
- Work-life balance

A part of **TCS work-life balance programs**, '**Maitree**' actively promotes a series of scheduled fun and cultural events and activities, and also keenly promotes community development projects.

Through this range of open and transparent best practice business services, TCS brings rapid transformation across all HR processes with the goal of minimizing manual workload, providing better service and drastically reducing costs leading to Green HR such as electronic filing, job sharing, teleconferencing and virtual interviews, recycling, telecommuting, online training, and developing more energy efficient office spaces.

#### ➤ **Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL):**

Indian Oil Corporation is India's largest commercial enterprise, and has been ranked as 119<sup>th</sup> among the world's largest corporate (and first among Indian enterprises) in the prestigious *Fortune* 'Global 500' listing for the year 2015. The company has been meeting India's energy demands for over half a century

Minimizing carbon, water and waste foot print are the important agenda of Indian Oil Corporation.

The company's green initiatives are

- Carbon Reduction through:
  - Energy Conservation and Efficiency
  - Alternate Energy Generation
  - Bio fuels, wind, solar, Biogas etc
  - Tree plantation
- Waste Management
- Water conservation through recycling, rain water harvesting, and water –shed development etc
- Carbon & foot printing in all its locations
- Organic & Waste paper recycling
- Green buildings features in Delhi, Panipat, Mumbai, Indore
- Energy Auditing

- Energy conservation & Energy efficiency
- Solar energy power generation at Rawra, Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

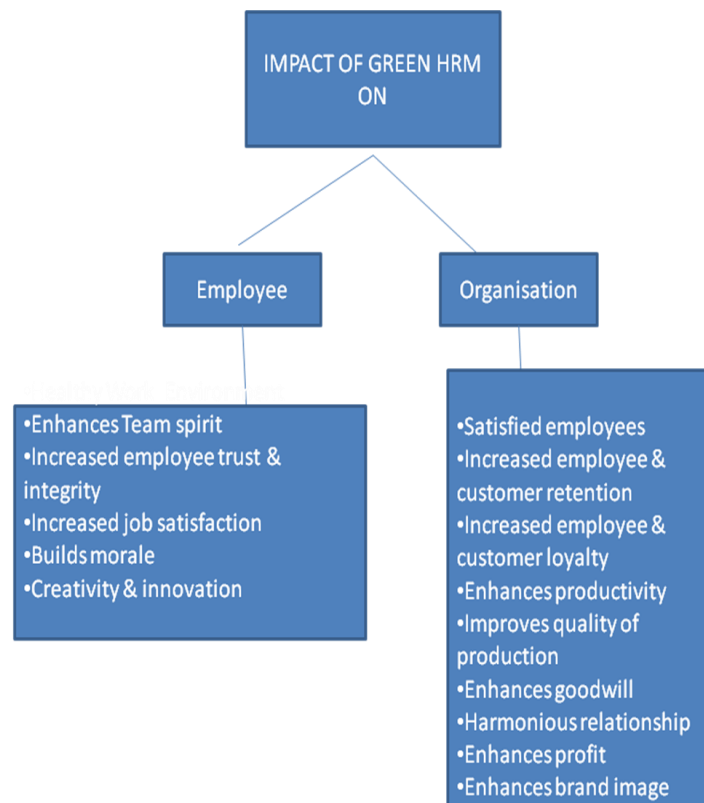
IOCL green HR initiatives include, Enhancing employees Participation in management through activities such as **Suggestion Scheme, Total Productive Maintenance, Quality Circles, Mentoring etc.**

Indian Oil has won the “**Global Human Resources Development Awards 2014**” in the category “**Improved Quality of Working Life**”. **E-Tendering, E-Procurement and E-payment procedures are followed as a model for sustainable sourcing. E-ledger, E-suggestion scheme, Employee Performance management system-communication, Employee Self Service, SMS Indenting, E-CFS** methods are also implemented by the corporation as a way to minimize and make the work more clarified.

Indian Oil has always encouraged women employees to lead and represent organization in national and international platforms and so various women’s cells were also formed across Indian Oil

## Impact of Green HRM in Organisation

Green HRM has its impact/effect on both employee and organisation depending upon the extent of its implementation and emphasis within the organisational climate. The above listed companies which implements green Human resource practices clearly proves that it has the following impacts on their employee and the organisation:



## Green HRM- the real Challenges

As customers become more aware of environmental issues, there is an increase in the demand for ecological products. This increased awareness of and sensitivity towards environmental issues places certain demands on business functions to become greener.

Though Environment-friendly HR practices are implemented in many private as well as in central public sectors, the real challenge is to :

- refer and follow **green HRM practices in the long run**, rather than implementing for short-term productivity and performances to build an environmentally –friendly organisation.
- **Definite policies** as change agents to change the existing management system in order to implement green values
- **Linking employee involvement and participation in environmental management programmes**
- **Training HR professionals** to update & focus on green HR practices.
- **Companies are required to encourage product, process, design & technology innovation to healthy, damage free society with adequate resources available**
- Although green practices leads to huge investment, managing and measuring the level of **Green – HRM expenditure** is also challenging

## Conclusion

Today, the topic of environmental sustainability is generating increased concern among business executives, governments, consumers, and management scholars. As these stakeholders struggle with the challenges and opportunities presented by an array of environmental issues, In order to strengthen green organizational behaviour, it is important to acknowledge that environmentally relevant attitudes and behaviour are not learned exclusively at the workplace, but also in private life. People have distinctive modes of living. They practice specific consumption patterns in their everyday life, which have different effects on the environment Therefore employees private role as consumers is considered crucial for learning and practicing environmental attitudes and behaviour .**The real strength or success of implementing Green HRM by organizations, lies in not only making people responsible citizens of their organizations but also of their community, society and nation at large, Enthusiastic participation of employees towards green practices in the long run .**

*“Being green is more than just buying ‘eco’. It is an unshakable commitment to a sustainable lifestyle. – Jennifer Nini”*