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# Sustainable HR – Paving the Greener Pathway

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**ABSTRACT:** HR has become a key player in the companies' meaningful interaction with the environment due to the rising global awareness of the sustainable approach. Sustainable Human Resources (SHR) or Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) is a part of an HR strategy that involves environmental, social, and economic sustainability in order to create long-term value for the organization as well as society. The objective of this paper is to develop the understanding of SHR and the importance of HR in guiding environmental protection, social equity, and economic potential in the workplace. It discusses some of the important HR practices that include green recruitment, training for sustainability, performance management, and employee engagement, all of which will help an organization to achieve its sustainability goals. Through the HR practices that are in line with corporate sustainability programs, companies can thus lower their ecological footprint, diversity and inclusive workplaces, and social responsibility. The paper further highlights the business benefits of sustainable HR practices which include great employee morale poster, great organizational performance, and low employee turnover rate. The study, however, also looks at the challenges one company might encounter when adopting sustainable practice such as a lack of resources, knowledge, and fight back against the new system. The paper then provides suggestions for companies wishing to integrate SHR into their strategic framework. These include investing in sustainability training for HR professionals, employee engagement in sustainability initiatives, and green HR practices' effectiveness measurement. Sustainability is the one main concern of businesses as part of the world community, and SHR is thus important as it helps us make the greener pathway to a better and more resilient future.

**KEYWORDS:** Sustainable Human Resources, Green HRM, Employee Engagement, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Environmental Sustainability.

## I. INTRODUCTION

At one point, sustainability was understood mainly in relation to the environment. This is now a concept ranging from social responsibility to the proper development of our economy and the environment. Here, sustainability is even put at the core of corporate strategy, where it becomes imperative to seek ways through which a company designs in such a way that it can positively impact society and the environment alongside its growth. Human Resource Module thus plays an important and essential role in embedding sustainable practices in an organization with respect to its culture, operations, and strategic planning.

According to a Green HRM perspective, Sustainable HR is nothing but an intersection where human resources meet sustainability. It is a dimension of human resources management practice that lends support to environmental goals, advances social responsibility, and builds up the overall destination of the organization in terms of sustainability. Hence, it facilitates improved employee engagement, lower environmental footprints, and a culture of sustainability further than organizational boundaries through the implementation of green HR strategies in organizations.

## II. RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

- To Understand the Concept of Sustainable Human Resources (SHR).
- To Explore Key HR Practices for Achieving Sustainability.
- To Assess the Benefits of SHR Practices on Organizational Performance.
- To Identify the Challenges of Implementing SHR in Organizations.



### III. CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE HUMAN RESOURCES

Sustainable Human Resources (SHR) is an emerging discipline that seeks to align HR practices with sustainability goals. The concept is built on three core pillars:

**1. Environmental Sustainability:** HR plays this major role as that of a green initiatives pathogen in itself, for example, promoting energy-efficient operations, waste reduction initiatives, eco-friendly policies up to all operations of the process through HR. They can act as sustainable HR practices encouraging people not to indulge in too much-level emissions of their own, bringing recycling practices to light, or providing rewards for sustainable commuting.

**2. Social Sustainability:** The sustainable HR dimension emphasizes the creation of a diversified, inclusive, and equitable workplace. HR practice should ensure employee well-being where the workplace is fair, respectful, and presents personal and professional opportunities for growth. Health and safety of employees and CSR activities also make a contribution to social sustainability.

**3. Economic Sustainability:** The new economic sustainability paradigm attempted by HR has been most valuable by initiating long-run business strategies that are capable of delivering value irrespective of how resources are depleted over time. HR can contribute by formulating talent management interventions aligned to the sustainability strategy of the company, cutting down turnover, and promoting employee loyalty-all measures toward ensuring that the enterprise is around for the long haul. That is the trick to "making a sustainable profit" while keeping human resources proud and ethical.

#### Key HR practices for achieving sustainability include:

- **Green recruitment and selection:** Employment of individuals who are in aligns with the values of sustainability and committed to sustainable practices.
- **Training and development:** Employees should be equipped with the knowledge and skills to be actively involved in sustainable practices for the organization.
- **Performance management:** Distinguishing and rewarding employees practicing sustainable behavior.
- **Employee engagement:** It is not sufficient to have motivated and empowered employees to contribute to the sustainability initiatives.

### IV. DEFINITION OF SHR

Sustainable Human Resources (SHR) concern about the definition which refers to human resources that are considered as long-term environmental, social, and economic sustainability strategies of the organization. This means that human resources have integrated HR practices that are related to sustainable objectives, such as recruitment, training, performance management, and employee engagement, but at the same time support the whole organization's sustainability goals.

#### Important Aspects of SHR

Some of these include:

- **Green Recruitment and Talent Acquisition:** Acquiring employees who are sensitive to green issues or trained in sustainability practices.
- **Green Training and Development:** Provide them with information on sustainability issues and skills to enable them to practice green behaviors.
- **Employee Well-being and Engagement:** Instill a workplace culture that cultivates environmental sustainability and encourages employee involvement in green initiatives.
- **Sustainable Leadership:** School leadership styles that advocate sustainable practices and decision making.

#### Role of SHR in Organizational Sustainability:-

- 1) These practices enhance environmental sustainability in human resource activities. It encompasses the following key **green HRM practices**.
  - **Sustainable Recruitment:** It implies recruitment of individuals who align with the sustainability-related goals and values of an organization.
  - **Green Performance Management:** It is creating sustainability goals and KPIs for employees and teams, rewarding eco-friendly behaviors and results.
  - **Eco-friendly Workplaces:** Creating flexible work arrangements such as telecommuting to lower the carbon footprint and making the office feel sustainable (e.g. reducing waste, energy-efficient features).



## 2) Employee Engagement in Sustainability

Employee engagement is one of the major roles of SHR. Sustainable incorporated initiatives to make all employees spend a sustainable life in the organization. The following are ways towards that engagement:

- **Building a Culture of Sustainability:** empower employees to take ownership over their environmental objectives and behaviours and be active in sustainability programs.
- **Rewarding Sustainable Acts:** provide rewards for employees who join hands with environmental practices; waste reduction or energy saving.
- **Employee Education:** Resources and training resources for employees to learn and embrace sustainability in making choices for their professional or personal lives.

## V. CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING SHR

However, these are the major challenges in integrating SHR

- **Lack of knowledge and awareness-** HR professionals are incompetent when it comes to understanding sustainability, and this makes it hard to function an effective green initiative.
- **Resistance to change-** Adoption by employees and managers of policies and practices that centre on sustainability will almost always be met with resistance where they see the practice as disruptive or unnecessary.
- **Limited resources-** An organization will require huge investments of time, money, and effort to put green HR practices into action. This could become a potential barrier for small or resource-constrained organizations.
- **Measurement of sustainability impact-** it is quite complex to find returns on investment on sustainability initiatives, and organizations may face difficulties in monitoring and measuring their outcome in the long run on the SHR practices.

## VI. BENEFITS OF SHR PRACTICES

Despite these challenges, the benefits of SHR practices are considerable:

Creating a best corporate image: Such organizations adopting sustainable HR practices tend to cultivate a better reputation with customers, investors, and other stakeholders, thus boosting loyalty and market position.

- **Employee Retention:** They lead to an organizational environment that positively contributes to employee satisfaction, loyalty, and retention.
- **Attracting the best talents:** Commitment to sustainability is an attractive element to prospective employees, particularly in well-known examples of the millennials or the Gen Z that put a premium on environmental and social values.
- **Chronic Saving on Costs:** Eco Initiatives, like energy conservation and waste reduction, save on much more costs over the years.
- **Increased Employee Productivity:** An engaged employee who subscribes to the organization sustainability goals is much more motivated to be productive.

### Best Practices for Implementing SHR:-

It is necessary for all HR organizations to take into consideration these important best practices prior to the incorporation of SHR into the organization:

- **Formulate a transparent sustainability strategy:** Align the HR strategies with the overall sustainability goals of the organization.
- **Integrate recruitment and on-boarding into sustainability:** Issue a recruitment message that expresses the commitment of the organization to sustainability during on-boarding.
- **Provide Continuous Training and Development:** Learning opportunities should be offered for employees to develop increased understanding of sustainability issues.
- **Promote Flexible Work Arrangements:** Encourage remote work and flexible scheduling that would reduce everyday commuting.
- **Measure and Communicate Progress:** Regularly measurement of sustainability initiatives and updates on the status could keep employees engaged and informed.



## VII. CASE STUDIES OF SUCCESSFUL SHR IMPLEMENTATION

### Case Study 1: Google

Google has had a major reputation in sustainability since time immemorial. This reflects in their HR policies, which greatly include environment-friendly practices, addressing the purchase of economically viable transports to employees, wellness programs to ensure proper health, and aligning recruitment with company environmental standards.

### Case Study 2: Unilever

Perhaps another similar-case-example would be Unilever. Unilever has shown at the instant to embed sustainability seamlessly into HR functions. The company delivers ample training towards sustainability and encourages employee volunteerism in environments. Furthermore, it invests time and makes significant thrust to future-proof itself on sustainable leadership development.

## VIII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is based on secondary data. The research will help acquire useful information or knowledge about the subject area. Under this study not only topic under consideration is theorized, but also formulated and discusses some very fundamental ingredients to enable the management of organizations to plan.

The study will use **purposive sampling** to select organizations that have made significant strides in integrating sustainability into their HR practices. This will ensure that the research focuses on companies with practical experience in implementing SHR strategies

### Research Design

The study adopts a **descriptive research design**, which focuses on understanding the current state of SHR practices and their impact on organizational sustainability. This design allows for an in-depth exploration of existing HR strategies related to sustainability, their benefits, challenges, and the role of HR in achieving sustainability goals. The research design aims to gather detailed qualitative and quantitative data through surveys, interviews, and case studies.

## IX. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

### Literature Review:

A comprehensive review of existing research papers, reports, and articles will be conducted to understand the theoretical underpinnings of SHR and identify the most effective practices for sustainability.

### Case Studies:

The research will analyze case studies of organizations such as Google and Unilever, which have successfully integrated SHR practices into their operations. These case studies will provide real-world examples of SHR implementation and its impact on organizational sustainability.

### Data Analysis:

The collected data, including literature review findings and case study analyses, will be subjected to thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves identifying recurring themes, patterns, and relationships within the data to uncover key insights and draw meaningful conclusions.

## X. CONCLUSION

Most importantly, however, it is to have a Sustainable Human Resource in organizations to ensure anything sustained in an environmental and social manner, as well as economically, toward achieving success over the long term. By aligning HR practices to the sustainability goals, organizations can develop an overall positive impact on the earth while contributing to employees' wellness and improving organizational performance as well. Green HRM is not all about making this world better though, it is also keeping good culture spaces in the workplace, making blissful environments that attract and retain talents in the best ways possible. The role of HR in bringing such changes in terms of sustainability for industries is going to be critical in paving a greener pathway for the whole organization and society in general.



In an end state, integrating Sustainable HRM practices into the core activities and corporate values of an organization is the way forward toward maximizing the potential of Sustainable HR. It will also mean constantly revisiting and modifying HR strategies to be flexible to changes that sustainability is likely to introduce with time.

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