

Green HR: Analysis of sustainable practices incorporated by IT firms in India

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Abstract

Carbon emissions and pollution have been increasing at an alarming rate. To limit the effects, corporate world has started taking initiatives to promote environment friendly practices. The report has been prepared on the topic “**Green HR: Analysis of sustainable practices incorporated by IT firms in India**”. The main objective of the study is to study the various sustainable practices and policies incorporated by IT firms and to assess employee awareness regarding sustainable practices in their organization. The study was done on a sample of 100 employees and 5 HR managers having age between 21 to 50 years in major IT firms in India. The process adopted for the study involved physical interaction as well as E-questionnaires. Most of the respondents were aware of the Environmental Management Systems in their respective Company and the HR managers agreed to the fact that Green HR policies had contributed in increasing the profit share of the company. According to the research, the major barriers to implementation of sustainable policies were cost of implementing programs and the cost of maintaining programs. It was found out that majority of the employees are aware of the practices followed and they do think that it is an important step towards sustainability. Green HR is an integral part of an organization as it is very important for a sustainable future. It is a positive step towards energy conservation and is the need of the hour

Keywords – Carbon emissions, sustainable practices

Introduction

Green HR is about focusing on recruiting, managing, giving direction to and finally retaining people while eliminating or reducing workplace inefficiencies. Companies now realize that they have to develop a powerful social conscience and green sense of responsibility where corporate responsibility is not just a tool for brand building but a factor essential for business development. Many companies, which are taking a greener approach inside their organization, are experiencing a positive and congenial effect on the patterns of employee relations in the organization. This also has a positive influence on the mindset of employees as they feel that apart from their functional contribution on the job, they have an important responsibility in preserving the environment.

Objectives

- 1) To study various sustainable practices and policies incorporated by IT firms.
- 2) To assess employee awareness regarding sustainable practices.
- 3) To identify gaps and suggest measures to improve sustainable practices followed.

Review of Literature

Mankotia, Shambhu and Tiwari in the year 2011 conducted a research study on “Green Governance in IT Companies”. The objectives of their research was to find out how much importance IT companies are attaching to adopt Green Practices and Products and also to find out the attitude of employees in IT firms towards environmental sustainability. They found out that green practices in the organization are helping them in bringing more clients and businesses. They also found out that many companies have gone for certifications i.e. LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environment Design). They concluded that Green IT awareness is growing rapidly among large and small organizations. Companies have taken this initiative in terms of virtualization, cloud computing and other methods like tele-conferencing etc. Besides this, there is an increased level of awareness amongst the employees of software firms regarding the adoption of green IT practices.

Nováček Pavel in the year 2013 conducted a research study on “Human Values Compatible with Sustainable Development”. His research process included studying the findings of long term researches conducted by Research professor Ronald Inglehart and noted environmentalist Josef Vavrousek. The objective of his research was to find the correlation between human values and sustainable development and how different countries can balance the two aspects to develop economically without compromising on environmental ethics. Through his research he found that two factors can trigger a shift in values orientation towards sustainable practices. The first factor is “Fear”, only a real fear of the consequence of our lifestyle based on our own experience with the influence of a negative factor may lead to a change in behavior. The other factor is having a vision of a positive solution, which gives hope that can produce the will and determination for a voluntary change in behavior. He concluded that we, humans must strive for a substantial change in our value orientations and lifestyles for a better future for the generations to come and to give them the chance to live their lives dignity, quality and creativity.

Methodology

To carry out research on “Green HR: Analysis of sustainable practices incorporated by IT firms in India” we have selected 100 employees and 5 HR managers working in major IT firms across India. Based on the result of the pilot study 2 hypothesis were formulated. They are as follows:

- 1) H_0 – Companies do not incorporate sustainable practices.
 H_1 - IT Companies are incorporating sustainable practices.

- 2) H_0 - There is no level of awareness among the employees of IT firms regarding the adoption of Green practices.
 H_1 - There is an increasing level of awareness among the employees of IT firms regarding the adoption of Green practices.

Data was collected by preparing a questionnaire and getting it filled online with the help of Google doc with the objective of generating response from the chosen sample.

Results

Table A1: Awareness of Environmental Management System

SNo	Parameter	n=100	Percentage
1	Company has Environmental Management System		
a.	Yes	73	73
b.	No	13	13
c.	Not Aware	14	14



Figure 1: Rating of Employee Awareness of Green Practices

From Table A1 and Figure 1 We can conclude that, 73% of the respondents were aware of the Environmental Management Systems in their respective Company. There were 13% of respondents who said that there were no Environmental Management Systems in their respective Company while a total of 14% was not aware of any such system in their company.

Out of the respondents who were aware of the Environmental management Systems in their organizations, 36% had good knowledge about the Green practices followed in their organization, 25% had very good knowledge about it and 14% had excellent knowledge while there were 14% of them with poor awareness level.

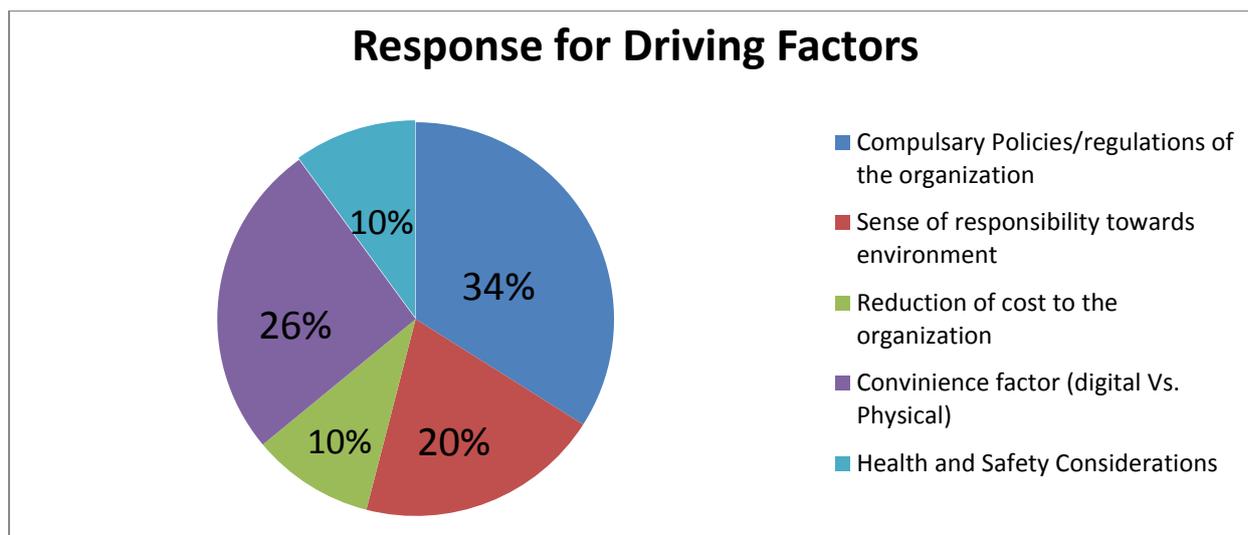


Figure No.2: Response for driving factors to environment sustainability

Discussion:

While carrying out this survey we found out that, 34% of the respondents followed/implemented Green Practices because of stringent government rules and policies of the organization. 20% of them felt a sense of responsibility towards environment and 10% of them felt it was helping in reducing cost of the organization and so it was their driver in following green practices. For 26% of them it was a convenience factor. There were only 10% respondents who said that it was also due to health and safety considerations.

Table A2: Barriers to implementation of Green HR policies in an organization

SNo	Parameter	n=100	Percentage
1	Barriers in implementation of Green HR policies in an organization		
a.	Cost of implementing programs	30	30
b.	Cost of maintaining programs	26	26
c.	Lack of support by management	9	9
d.	Lack of support by employees	15	15
e.	Concerns about workplace inefficiency	10	10
f.	Lack of governmental support	10	10

Discussion:

Most of the respondents thought that the biggest barrier in implementing green practices in any organization was Cost of implementing the programs. Around 26% said that it was due to Cost of maintaining such programs. 10% said that there was lack of support by the employees and 9% said that there was lack of support from the management.

Conclusion

We conducted a research study to analyze the sustainable practices incorporated by IT firms in India. The study was conducted on a few IT companies in Pune, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Kolkata and Delhi. Green HR awareness is growing rapidly amongst large and small organizations. Companies have taken initiative like virtualizations, LEED certifications and these initiatives are helping them bringing more clients and business to the organization. Companies offer sustainable options as it helps to reduce the operating cost and increase profits. Our first objective was to find out the various sustainable practices incorporated by IT firms. We found out that companies are adopting various methods towards sustainable development like takes double sided print outs, less use of papers, encouraging carpooling, switching off lights and other power consuming resources like ACs after 6 pm, using energy efficient electronic equipments, encouraging online application for jobs and conducting interviews through video conferencing etc.

Our second objective was to assess employee awareness regarding sustainable practices in their organizations. We found out that majority of the employees are aware of the practices followed and they do think that it is an important step towards sustainability. We also found out that many follow these practices not just because of the policy impulsion but also because of their sense of responsibility towards the environment.

So thereby we accept both our hypothesis that, companies incorporate sustainable practices and there is an increasing level of awareness amongst the employees of IT firms regarding the adoption of Green Practices.

Recommendations

As per the findings in the research a few practices can be recommended as to how companies can really make Green HR an integral part of their organization as it is very important for a sustainable future. The company should focus on internal operations and get senior management involved. They should engage employees to capture new ideas and communicate and share best practices with them. Encourage employees to incorporate green habits in their personal lives. Company must drive campaigns to raise awareness about the green practices within the organization as well outside the organization. Always try to align green HR practices with corporate sustainability goals.

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