Impact of Novel Coronavirus on the Green Human Resource Management Practices

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Abstract

The Covid-19 crisis has forced all the employees to work-from-home this has lead to implementing of the Green HRM Practices. The outbreak of coronavirus pandemic has impacted almost in every sector of our lives. The “new normal” phenomenon has drastically changed the way organizations and employees are collaborating to work. It is the role of HR to manage the current scenario and help adjust the situation for the betterment of both the organization and employees. The HRM Practices during the pandemic have moved a step towards sustainability. It is promoting the Green HRM Practices. Now adays more of the works are carried online, video conferencing, green printing, green recruitment, training and less transportation is enhancing the activities of Green HRM. Therefore, looking at the current scenario paper has emphasised on how coronavirus is impacting on the green HRM Practices. The novel coronavirus is an ongoing fear in the minds of employees.Taking care of the health of employees is the utmost priority of every organization. Therefore, the study is undertaken to understand how the novel coronavirus is impacting on Green HRM Practices. The lockdown,quarantine ,work-at-home all these activities have impacted on the environment positively.

Keywords: Covid-19, Green HRM Practices

1. INTRODUCTION

The novel coronavirus is a highly infectious disease it is caused by a deadly virus called SARS-CoV-2. It’s first case was found in Wuhan (China). Since, then the disease has spread at a very fast pace. Mostly elder people are more prone to get infected. To prevent the spread of virus, there was no better solution than to quarantine. Quarantine and social distancing were major steps taken to stop the pandemic. These measures were practiced almost everywhere. Work-at-home were announced in almost every sphere of life. Almost all sectors are exercising these practices of work-at-home. Big and renowned companies are also such examples. Covid-19 has changed our way of living. We can see schools, colleges, offices all are practicing such activities. The Covid-19 virus is so infectious it can spread through sneeze, cough, touch or any physical contact. To prevent the spread and to for the well-being of employees. Organizations are more inculcating Greener HRM Practices.

Green HRM Practices are HRM Practices which are exercising HRM Practices along with the green concept. The term “green” means nature, environment, surroundings. When HRM Practices are integrated with the concept of sustainability “Green HRM” term emerges. The term Green HRM has no proper definition. It has come in vogue from 1980’s. Recently, Green HRM is gaining advantage at a large scale.Anjana Nath defines Green HR as...
environment-friendly HR initiatives leading to better efficiencies, less cost, and heightened employee engagement levels. Green HRM involves eco-friendly activities such as carpooling, job sharing, flexi-work, online training, video conferencing, green building, green printing, virtual interviews etc. The Covid-19 pandemic has enhanced these practices of Green HRM at a wide scale. This is impacting positively on the environment around us. The novel coronavirus is affecting almost every sectors widely. Every country is facing the challenges in terms of economics, jobs, mental health, medical facilities, food and basic necessities. Job market is also impacted. Every department from Human resource, Finance, marketing, Finance, IT, Operations etc. has been impacted at large scale. The way to business success is its energetic, motivated, engaged and happy employees who can turn any average or sick business into a gold mine provided they are treated, nourished and cared for in terms of salary, compensation and benefits, career development, training and development, performance management and succession planning. Those days are gone when employees were treated as mere commodities and not as assets. Now the time has changed drastically and it has become the norm for every organization to treat their human work force as assets. The talented millennials are opting for those organizations where they are treated respectfully. They are also considering those companies where career growth, challenge, motivation and learning environment is there. COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to an unpredictable situation where every human being and job sector worldwide are clueless about how to tackle this situation. Everyone is trying to find out a solution for the same. The most badly hit is the world economy. World economy of every country right from the most powerful to the poorest are drastically hit. This uncalled situation has literally shaken the entire world so badly that every Organization in order to sustain themselves are practicing many methods. The bigger organizations are somewhat surviving through employee layoff and salary deduction. The smaller organizations are going for winding up. This kind of situation has created an element of distrust and panic in the minds of the employees. Employees are not at all motivated and this is taking a toll on the efficiency level of the employees and in turn is affecting the productivity of the organization. Organizations worldwide contribute a larger share towards world economy. Organizations are all in a bad shape as the most important aspect of the organization that is the human workforce is not nurtured properly. During this pandemic it is much more important to take care of the human workforce as they are going through various distressing phase like mental trauma, financial crunch, less motivation, disorientation, no job security, getting used to Work from Home norm, meeting deadlines, family pressure and no career growth. This kind of situation can be handled excellently by Human resource manager. Human resource management is the most sought after and greatest savior in this unpredictable situation to take care and nurture the human workforce as every business whether big or small can only survive through human workforce.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Armstrong (2006) defined HRM as a strategic and coherent approach to the management of the most valued assets of an organization, the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives. The sudden transition of the education system to the online medium caused a stir. As much as students have faced troubles during learning, the digital rules and punctualities, so have the online teaching
faculty found many challenges. Schools and colleges have principals and the level of management is slightly on a smaller scale than universities. Educational institutes may or may not have an integrated HR department but they perform practices such as planning, organizing, and managing the personnel. The higher management or the HR manager is responsible for setting the mission and the goals, motivating the employees, deciding on the best guidelines, and so on. The best HR practices include recruitment and selection, training and development, transparency, employee benefits, employee incentives, compensation and evaluations, compliance, and termination. As the foremost orders by the government strictly imposed social distancing, the challenge began to keep the organizations running smoothly, which meant a world without direct interactions.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has taught us that change is inevitable (Islam et al., 2020).

The first preventative step suggested by WHO was social distancing. Every country closed school, colleges, and universities. Moreover, the government cancelled entrance tests, examinations, classes, and internships. It took students as well as the faculty by storm as adapting to the digitized education system was not easy. Change requires time; however, the pandemic caused the education sector in India to grow. Online education has proved to be a salvation for the students and teachers. They assigned work to students via the internet and delivered lectures through live video conferencing using applications like Zoom, Google meets Facebook, YouTube, and Skype. There are WhatsApp groups that help keep students, teachers, and even guardians connected and aware of the class schedules. Online learning is the best solution and is surely better than not getting to learn anything (Jena, 2020).

To better understand the impact of HR practices on faculty commitment, an empirical study has been conducted by Rahiman et al. (2018) to analyze demographic factors that have an impact on HR practices, the influence of explanatory variables on organizational commitment, the relationship between HR practices and organizational commitment, and, in addition, to suggest improvements in HR practices and commitment level. Quality of teaching staff and faculty commitment need to be restructured, which will, in turn, increase the quality of education and student satisfaction. It is only fair to say if the organization provides staff with the best training and environment, it directly affects the results of students. For stability and growth, every organization must have an integrated HR system. HR is the backbone of any organization and it helps carry out all organizational operations. HRM practices, namely, training and development, performance appraisals, teamwork, HR planning, compensations, safety, and health, help to enhance the performance of an employee by creating a psychological link with the organization that prevents him/her from leaving. Organizational commitment in higher education is necessary as teachers are not only facilitators for students but they thrive for their personal development as well.

According to the reinforcement theory, behaviour is a function of its consequence. The consequences that immediately follow behaviour and increase the probability to repeat a behaviour are reinforcers. The biggest HR challenges of the year 2020 were focusing on employees and communicating often. It is human psychology when efforts go unappreciated the person is automatically demoralized, which results in the prevention of
further out-of-the-mile hard work. Getting used to the online education transition has been reckless to the faculty and they deserve sufficient motivation even if it is a single appreciation email. According to Skinner (1958), people will most likely engage in desired behaviours if they receive a reward for doing so. Managers can easily influence employee behaviours by using positive reinforcers for actions that help the organization achieve its goal, which in this case is maximum faculty performance. This will equilibrate the effects of HR practices from home on online teaching faculty.

A recent study of the impact of COVID-19 lockdown measures revealed amplified average daily ozone concentrations at various urban stations (Sicard et al. 2020). There were ozone increases of 24% in Nice, 14% in Rome, 27% in Turin, 2.4% in Valencia and 36% in Wuhan compared to the same period in 2017–2019. This increase in O$_3$ concentration is mainly due to the decrease in NOx because at ground level ozone is created by reactions between NOx and volatile organic compounds (VOC). A study also found that O$_3$ production during lockdown was higher during weekends (Sicard et al. 2020). Similar increases of O$_3$ concentrations were also observed: 20% in Sao Paulo (Nakada and Urban 2020), 50% in Barcelona (Tobías et al. 2020), 11% in London (Authority 2020), 17% in 22 Indian cities (Sharma et al. 2020), 116% in Wuhan (Lian et al. 2020), 43% in Beijing–Tianjin–Hebei region (Le et al. 2020) and 15% in Almaty (Kerimray et al. 2020). Overall, most air pollutants declined strongly during the COVID episode, with the exception of ozone, which increased notably. As a consequence, and contrary to the common belief, these findings show that decreasing air pollution and offsetting global warming is feasible in a short time period. This of course has caused negative consequences for the economy, but findings are inspiring to find solutions for a more sustainable society.

Research shows that prolonged exposure to air pollution causes chronic inflammation and an increased risk of chronic respiratory disease, both of which are associated with an increased risk of death in COVID-19. Evidence in northern Italy proves this point (Conticini et al. 2020). Cocker et al. (2020) also showed that an increase in a unit concentration of PM$_{2.5}$ was associated with a 9% increase in COVID-19 mortality. Liang et al. (2020) also found in the US states that urban air pollution may increase the COVID-19 mortality rates. With the increase of the per inter-quartile range (4.6 ppb) in NO$_2$, COVID-19 case rate and death rate increased by 11.3% and 16.2%, respectively. There was also a 15% increase in COVID-19 mortality for the increase in the per inter-quartile range in PM$_{2.5}$ (2.6 ug/m$^3$). In another study in Ghana, there was no link between home air pollution and acute lower respiratory tract infections caused by the COVID-19 (Carrión et al. 2019).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had beneficiary consequences on surface water quality in some regions as lockdown has improved the water quality of some rivers, canals and seas (Table (Table3)). One of the positive impacts of COVID-19 (Fig. 8) according to satellite images is that Venice’s canals became clearer after one month of lockdown (ESA 2020b). Niroumand-Jadidi et al. (2020) reported an almost 50% reduction in total suspended matter (TSM) after lockdown using shallow-water inversion via Planet Scope.
imagery. Before the COVID-19 periods, the concentration of TSM was 3 g/m$^3$ on average; however, it was reduced to 1.4 g/m$^3$ during COVID-19 lockdown. Because of a reduction in boat traffic, sediments have settled resulting in a reduction in turbidity. Banning tourists during lockdown has also reduced water pollutants released by tourists. This clearer water has enabled other creatures such as fish, dolphins and swans to come back to these canals and waterways. Beaches, including Acapulco (Mexico), Barcelona (Spain), and Salinas (Ecuador) have had crystal clear waters since the reduction in tourists (Zambrano-Monserrate et al. 2020).

The other advantage of nationwide lockdown is the improvement of the water quality in some Indian rivers which are normally exposed to polluted industrial and human effluents (Lokhandwala and Gautam 2020). For example, the River Cauvery had been polluted by wastewater discharge from homes and resorts on the banks of the river, but the lack of tourists has reduced wastewater discharge keeping the water quality in the “A” category since lockdown (DeccanHerald 2020). Garg et al. (2020) analyzed the turbidity level along the Ganga river and its stretches including Haridwar, Kanpur, Prayagraj, and Varanasi using remote sensing data; the reduction in reflectance in the visible and near infrared (NIR) region of Sentinel-2A/B data indicated the turbidity reduction. According to the Centre Pollution Control Board’s (CPCB) real-time water quality monitoring data on April 19, the pre-COVID polluted Ganga river has met drinking water standards, with biological oxygen demand level lower than 3 mg/L, dissolved oxygen (DO) greater than 4 mg·L$^{-1}$, and pH = 6–8, in a manner never seen before. After a month lockdown, DO level was improved by 79%. Although more than 80% of pollution in the Ganga River is related to domestic sewage, which has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, the lack of other sources of pollution, such as industrial effluents and tourism activities, have increased the water quality. Aside from the reduction in industrial effluent, water lifting by industries has also decreased, resulting in a dilution of pollutants in the river (Singhal and Matto 2020).

Transport and mobility of passengers are some of the most vulnerable aspects of the COVID-19 period. In particular, declines of commercial flight operation, demands of urban transport, public transport usage, and generally passenger transport, were the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 period on transportation. Also, freightage transit has been affected. On the other hand, these events have led to positive effects on the environment because of less energy demand in the transportation sector (Falchetta and Noussan 2020). Air traffic and public transport demand declined 90% and 80%, respectively, in Europe, and Road traffic fell down by 73% in the UK (Budd and Ison 2020). Even remote working has had positive effects on the environment by reducing transport emissions. Working from home less traffic pollution and commuting without harming the economy (Crowley et al. 2020).

Because airlines are a significant factor in the international spread of COVID-19, governments have levied stringent restrictions on air travel, and, as a result, international air travel more or less ceased (Lau et al. 2020). As shown in Fig. 11, the global change in air traffic in early lockdown was around under 25%, and in the following the global air transportations were gradually decreased to 0% in February 2020. China, however, had an
abrupt decrease (more than $-75\%$) in late January to mid-February. From early to late March, the US, Europe, and the Middle East decreased air travel by—around 50%, these decreases reducing CO and NO$_2$ in air. At this time, there was also an almost 50% reduction in collisions and injury/fatal accidents. Generally, as severe disruption occurs in industrial operations owing to epidemic or pandemic outbreaks, the transport volume is reduced, and thereby, positive impacts on the environment are appeared (Loske 2020). Though, positive impacts of COVID-19 on the environment such as the low generation of greenhouse gas emission are expected to have a reverse trend by returning to normal conditions. Therefore, the progress of green new action is indispensable (Tardivo et al. 2020).

3.OBJECTIVE

1) The objective of the study is to investigate how novel coronavirus is impacting on the Green human resource management. How novel coronavirus has elevated to turn HRM practices into green HRM Practices.

2) There are positive and negative impact of novel coronavirus on green HRM practices.

4.METHODOLOGY

Methodology adopted for the study is systematic review on the current scenario of Covid-19. The impact of Covid-19 on Green HRM has been investigated. Although limited studies have been conducted on the topic.

5.IMPACT OF NOVEL CORONAVIRUS ON GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

The novel coronavirus has also impacted on the Human resource management practices. They are facing with lots of hurdles on the way to operate an organization and keep the working of companies going. The top challenges faced by the organizations are as follows:

CHALLENGES

5.1 WORK STRESS

the employees are faced with lots of mental stress during working hours. The pressure to complete assignments and tasks in due time. Although Covid-19 has turned offline works into online. It is difficult task to manage and keep track of all employees working online. It is the responsibility of HR managers to take care of their employees.

5.2 MANAGING WORK
the change in lifestyles of work from offline to online is not an easy task to manage. It is a challenge for both the organization and employees. Work-from-home is not easy to adapt for employees. The new normal is difficult to cope up with for employees to operate.

5.3 COMMUNICATION
Communication is the key to success for an organization. The coronavirus crisis has given tough time for organizations to communicate with its employees. The organizations are trying their best to communicate with their employees online through video conferencing, virtual meetings, online assignment submission, data entry. All the activities are taking place online through zoom.

OPPORTUNITIES
As we can see all these are activities are turning Human resource management practices into green human resource management practices. Which is having a positive impact on the environment around us. It is moving towards sustainability, keeping a positive track on environment. It is beneficial for both the employee’s health in the present scenario of coronavirus outbreak and on the environment. It has made people realise the importance to take care of the environment around us. The challenges HRM are facing in the pandemic has some positive side of the coin. To think optimistically, the HRM has manged the current situation positively with good efforts.

Green HRM has come with best resilience strategies to cope with the changes in the current scenario with eco-friendly practices.

- Decline in major air pollutants due closure of factories and organizations
- Sharp decrease in global energy consumption in the year 2020.
- Due to shutdown of airlines, transport and vehicles. It has reduced the air pollution largely.

6.CONCLUSION
The paper has highlighted the changes in the lifestyles of employees working in the organizations. The novel coronavirus has turned the world upside down. It has impacted in almost all sectors of world. All departments of organizations are facing challenges due to the pandemic. The way employees work in a organization is changed from offline to online. Managing employees on online platform can be daunting task for the organizations. Employees are engaging in work from online along with the home routine they are keeping up with the daily office routine. Handling both lifestyles together is not an easy task. Employees are giving their best and keeping the work going. In the current scenario there are positive and negative affects of novel coronavirus. The positive side of the novel coronavirus is the employee’s safety of health is given top priority. Secondly, it is having a positive effect on the environment. The novel coronavirus has reduced the major air pollutants,
emission of CO2, NO2 has deduced. The novel coronavirus has impacted on environment favourably.

7.REFERENCES

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