# GREEN ENVIRONMENT THROUGH HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES

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**Abstract**

Green Human Resource Management is all about using Human Resource practices for the betterment and welfare of the environment. It is actually the contribution of people management practices towards the broader environmental agenda. In the current study an attempt is made to find out some specific HR practices which are used by the selected organizations for the wellbeing of the environment. The selected sector is telecom, because to more or less extent these practices take place in this sector, data have been collected through semi-structured interviews while thematic analysis has been used for data analysis. From current study it is concluded that there are no HR departments in their regional offices, therefore they are not fully aware of GHRM and hence can't link it with organizational as well as environmental sustainability. Further studies can be done to ensure the importance of GHRM for Corporate SSocial Responsibility as well as for advocacy purposes.

**Keywords:** Green HRM, Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Performance Management, Employees Participation, Rewards and Compensation, Thematic Analysis.

## 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Green Human Resource Management

Green HRM is all about using the HR practices for the betterment and welfare of the environment. It is actually the contribution of people management practices towards the broader environmental agenda. In today's environment sensitive era, people focus on eco-friendly practices of organizations. Different researchers have defined the Green HRM in various ways. Green HRM is actually the combination of Human Resource as well Environmental Management practices (Redman and Maguire, 2008) and (Sushaimi and Sudin, 2011). According to Jain (2009), the Green HRM helps the organization in reduction of costs and to discover other ways for different practices without losing their talent. The green human resource practices are associated so as to protect the planet earth from future disasters (Shaikh, 2010). Sumanta Dutta (2012) has explained the GHRM as the use of business practices for the purpose of sustainability and awareness by means of proper usage of employees interface. In short the green human resource management is *"the use of human resource practices for the benefit of environment, organization as well as employees"*. Focus of GHRM is on environment friendly practices. Previous researches highlights the use of HR for wellbeing of environment, however, this study particularly targets HR practices that play a key role in terming an organization eco-friendly. This study answers questions such as influences of HR practices on organizational environment. Other questions of this study are finding the relationship between HR practices and sustainability of organization and exploring those GHRM factors that telecom sector practice in Peshawar. Researcher carried out an in-depth study of these targeted practices and founded that these HR practices take place in targeted sector. Study of these HR practices is vital as it makes an organization eco-friendly and contributes to sustainability.

### 1.2. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To find out and discuss the influences of green HR practices on organizational environment.

2. To find out the relationship between green HR practices and sustainability of the organization.

3. To explore the GHRM components practiced in the telecom industry in Peshawar.

### 1.3. Nature of the Study

This research study is qualitative in nature. The overall philosophy is phenomenology while the case study along with survey is used as research methodology. For data collection semi structured interviews are used. The data collected is primary as well as secondary. The telecom sector is targeted and the non-probability sampling is used.

### 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Green Human Resource Management

The term Green HRM is somewhat new and is defined in various ways by different researchers. According to Redman and Maguire (2008), GHRM is the combination of HR and EM practices, GHRM model and future research agenda for GHRM. Jain (2009), describes the GHRM as it helps the organization in cost reduction and to find out alternative means for various practices without losing their top talent. GHRM is based on the efforts which are associated with environmental protection and to save the earth from any future disasters (Shaikh, 2010).

According to Sushaimi and Sudin (2011), Green Human Resource Management is basically the combination of environmental management activities and HR activities. The integration of environmental management and HRM practices is known as green human resource management (Gill Mandip, 2012). Sumanta Duta (2012), explained the GHRM as *"to use the employee interface in such a way so as to promote as well as maintain such business practices which are sustainable and to create awareness, which in turn helps the organizations to operate in a sustainable manner"*. GHRM is

the combination of two important things, the preservation of knowledge capital and environment friendly HR practices (Shakti Marhatta and Sandeep Adhikari, 2013).

In the light of the above mentioned definitions the GHRM may be defined as "*the use of human resource practices for the benefit of the environment, organization and employees*".

## 2.2. Green Human Resource Management and HR Practices

These are HR policies and practices which play an important role in the effective implementation of GHRM strategies. According to Shaikh (2010) GHRM plays a vital role in organizations to develop those issues which are related to the environment by adopting it, HR strategies and practices, proper training of people and implementation of rules and regulations related to environmental protection. GHRM policies and practices help organizations to find alternative means in order to reduce costs without losing their top talent part time work, holidays (Jain, 2009). GHRM requires the active involvement of all members of the organization in order to make the organization green. These practices of GHRM can be started from common practices among the employees in their working organization or area. According to Mandip (2012) the Green HR practices should be translated into HR practices and processes, such performance appraisal management, hiring and recruitment, training and development, employee relations, compensation management etc. some of these practices are discussed here in detail.

### 2.2.1. Recruitment and Selection

This section focuses on hiring, recruitment and selection policies and procedures which are beneficial for the environment, employees' as well as for the organization. Recruiting employees needs to ensure that employees understand and approach the corporate environment, the culture of the organization in a thoughtful way (Anthony, 2012). So issues of the green

environment must be integrated into the process of recruitment. It includes how to monitor the long-term competency requirements for the organization, giving information to new employees about sustainable development policies and practices, using recruitment methods which help the reasonable demonstration of applicants and recruits in terms of gender, race, age, ethnic group and sexual orientation. General descriptions can be used in order to specify a number of environmental aspects (Wehrmeyer, in Renwick, 2008). It involves controlling long term-requirements for competency of the organizations, informing new employees about the development practices and commitments, and also using such recruitment practices which ensure the equity in the process of hiring in terms of age, gender, racial and ethnic groups, sexual orientation, disabled groups etc. (Bird, A.1996). The interview should elaborate probable compatibility with the organization's green objectives (Mandip G, 2012).

### 2.2.2. Training and Development

Training and development of employees should include environmental as well as social issues at all levels. Programs including green orientations should be essential part of training and development process. The training and development should inform the employees about the green processes and practices including the sustainability oriented benefits of the organization, organization-wide initiatives like minimizing greenhouse gases, producing green products etc. Allied Signals Inc. includes Total Waste Minimization (TWM) component in their training and development (May and Flannery, 2008). Furthermore green teams can be established, the primary function of which is to produce general awareness and specific training in environmental management. Training Needs Assessment (TNA) can also be done in order to find out what type of environmental training is needed for the employees.

### 2.2.3. Performance Management System

By using performance management in GHRM shows the challenges that how to measure the standards as well as the indicators of environmental standards

in performance management at all departmental levels and obtaining useful data on the environmental performance of employees. Performance management can be initiated in an organization by typing the performance ratings to job descriptions which describe the specific green goals and tasks. Achieving the discussed objectives would be the basis of performance appraisals and to link with pay and reward (Mandid, 2012). The organizations must focus on triple-bottom line i.e. social, environmental and financial performance of their organization as well as employees. Different techniques for performance management mentioned in the literature above can enhance the performance of employees' and consequently of the organization as well.

### 2.2.4. Employees' Involvement and Participation

Employees' involvement is necessary making environmental strategies, so that they can make and extend the knowledge needed to market green products. The employees' participation in Green HR activities has been noted to prevent pollution from the workplace (Phillips, 2007). The employees' participation in environmental projects can be ensured in two ways. The senior and specialist staff is more involved in the initiation of the projects. On the other hand the lower or junior staff is more concerned with the implementation of those strategies proposed by the senior staff. Other ways for employees' encouragement are to follow green commuting habits like flexible work weeks, offering free transportation passes, telecommuting etc. (Mandip, 2012). Implementation of Green HR in an organization involves changes in HR strategies. In two ways employees' can actively participate in environmental projects, one is to give beneficial suggestions and the other way to find out the creative solutions for the existing problems. Employees' can also be encouraged and they can actively participate by telecommuting or e-work.

### 2.2.5. Rewards and Compensation

In order to change the behavior of employees' about the green performance, compensation must be linked to the performance of employees. A variable pay component and benefit package can be added to the payment system for

rewarding the employees' as the organizations will get the benefit from satisfying discarded reduction practices (Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004). The reward packages should be linked to obtaining chosen skills and abilities in performance over the long term for betterment of natural environment. The organizations should develop a reward system in order to yield required behavior in green performance, and it requires effective practices of incentives as well as disincentives (Mandip, 2012).

The above mentioned practices take place in telecom sector in one shape or in other. These practices are practically implemented in said sector. Although there are no such formal guidelines to channelize these practices, but these are performed in in different shapes for the betterment of general environment, organization and employees.     The study identified that the previous work in this regard hasn't revealed that which type of reward system must be introduced in different types of organizations. Only those types of reward system must be identified and developed which are environment friendly.
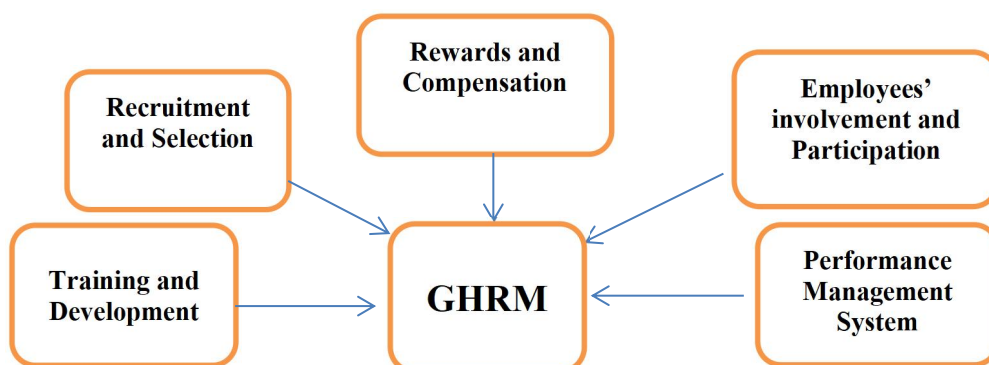
## 2.3. Conceptual Framework



***Fig.1. Conceptual Framework***

## 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Research Approach

Qualitative studies are usually used for explanatory purposes (Kothari, 2008). According to Myers 2009), the inductive research approach is mainly used in qualitative research studies. In this research approach an empirical

observation is carried out which leads the researcher to specific results. According to Saunders (2009), induction owes to interpretivism, but we think that this classification is potentially ambiguous and they do not have any practical value. One of the major strengths of inductive approach is the development of the understanding of the way by means of which the researchers interpret their social world (Saunders et al. 2009). According to Easterby-smith et al. (2008) via Saunders et al. (2009), inductive research approach is more specifically concerned with the particular situations in which the events take place, so the study of a small sample might be appropriate.

In current study, in depth study of various HR practices is carried out in selected sector. According to Strandberg (2009), detailed study of HR practices taking place in an organization is necessary to develop a roadmap for organization to serve the environment. A detailed study of GHRM activities is done and on the basis of that, a concise conclusion is derived that GHRM take place in targeted organizations. This understanding is then generalized.

## 3.2. Research Design

Exploratory research is an important source to find out the insights of what is happening, to ask questions and to evaluate the phenomena in the new context (Robson 2002:59). According to Saunders et al. (2009), the exploratory research can be carried out in three principal ways, a search of the relevant literature, interviews of experts in that specific field and carrying out focus group interviews.

The research design for this study is developed for the first time from the literature. This design is known as the pre-empirical framework which is discussed in detail in the literature review chapter. It includes the basic HR practices (recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, employees' involvement and reward and compensation) which play an important role in environmentally friendly activities. After the case study analysis and the detail study of the HR practices in the selected

organizations, a conclusion is drawn on the basis of the collected data. On the basis of that conclusion another framework is developed which is known as post-empirical framework. This newly developed framework included the abstractions derived from the literature about the green human resource management which were practically implemented in the targeted organizations.
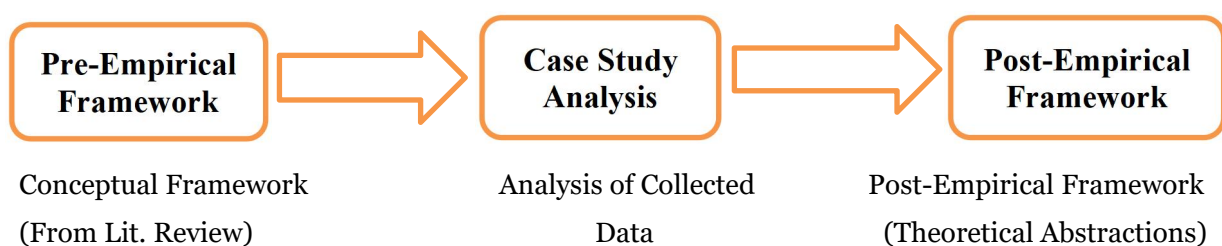
| Pre-Empirical Framework | → | Case Study Analysis | → | Post-Empirical Framework |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Conceptual Framework (From Lit. Review) | | Analysis of Collected Data | | Post-Empirical Framework (Theoretical Abstractions) |

*Figure 3: Research Design*

## 3.3. Data Collection Method

According to Kvale & Brinkman (2008), semi-structured interviews can be used as a qualitative research methodology. Semi-structured interviews can be used to collect data from different organizations about green HRM (Susan E. Jackson, 2012). According to Shu-Ling Wu (2012), the interviews are a good source to get information about various HRM practices used for the betterment of the environment. Becker et al. (2013) have used interviews for data collection about green HRM. According to Harris and Tregidga (2006), the data about green human resource management can be collected by means of structured interviews with key HR personnel. Duffy et al. (2006) have used structured interviews for data collection about GHRM.

Since majority of the researchers have used structured interviews as a tool for data collection about GHRM, therefore this can be concluded that this procedure is suitable for data collection in this research study as well. The semi-structured interviews are used to collect data about Green HRM from all five selected companies of telecom sector. The secondary data about GHRM practices of selected companies have been collected from their websites, annual reports and newsletters.

## 4: ANALYSIS

### 4.1. Thematic Analysis

According to Krippendorff (1980) and Weber (1990), thematic analysis is a replicable and systematic technique for condensing many word of a text into fewer categories of content based on explicit rules of coding. Thematic analysis is a method for making interpretations by objectively and systematically recognizing specific features of a message (Holsti, 1969. P. 14). According this definition of thematic analysis, this technique is not limited to the domain of textual analysis, but it can also be used in other areas such as actions examined in videotaped studies (Stigler et al. 1999). According to Krippendorff (19980, p. 51), the thematic analysis is superior to other analysis techniques because of the inferences from the symbolic data, while using other methods of analysis that would be either too costly or no longer possible.

In thematic analysis six main issues must be addressed i.e. nature of data, definition of it, population, relative context to which the data analysis take place, boundaries of analysis and the targeted inferences (Krippendorff, 19980). The data might be in verbal form print, electronic form and those data might have been acquired from open ended questions, narrative responses, interviews focus groups etc. (Kondracki & Wellman, 2002). Main focus of thematic analysis technique is to give knowledge and comprehension of the phenomenon under study (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992, p. 314). According to Weber (1990, p.37), a group of words having same meanings or connotations is known as category. In written messages there are seven main factors that can be counted in thematic analysis (Berelson, 1952). These are words, themes, characters, paragraphs, items, concepts and semantics.

### 4.2. Steps of Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis technique is used for the analysis of collected data.

#### 4.2.1. Deciding to use Thematic Analysis

According to GAO (United States General Accounting Office) (1989), a researcher should think about either to use or not the thematic analysis on the

basis of objectives of the study and availability of the data. In the current study, the research objectives as well as research questions focus on Green Human Resource practices and their implementation in telecom sector. It also focuses on the positive outcomes of these GHRM practices for the environment as well as for the organization.

### 4.2.2. Decide what Material to be Counted in Thematic Analysis

Selection of samples for thematic analysis most often includes sampling documents (Babbie, 1973, pp.91-102). In the current study the hand written notes as well as the videotaped semi-structured interviews have been used as input data counted in thematic analysis. Other sources such as annual reports and websites of targeted telecom companies have also been used to get more data.

### 4.2.3. Selection of Unit of Analysis

In thematic analysis technique, researcher usually defines come specific units of analysis, these are known as "recording units" or "units of context". It is not always necessary to use lengthy documents as context units. Paragraphs or even sentences may also be good choices (GAO, 1989). In this research study, the unit of analysis used is mobile company, as the telecom sector is target population for this study.

### 4.2.4. Developing Categories (Themes)

According to Berelson (1952, p. 147),*"Thematic analysis stands or falls by its categories. Particular studies have been productive to the extent that the categories were clearly formulated and well adapted to the problem and to the content."*

The themes should be exhaustive which means that all relevant data can be placed in the same category. These themes must be mutually exclusive i.e. no item might be coded in more than one theme or category. These themes

should be independent of each other i.e. they shouldn't affect each other (GAO, 1989).

### 4.2.5. Categorize the Collected Data

The collected data is categorized mainly on two bases, the recurrence of themes and equal weight or importance of different themes, so that they can be compared with others (GAO, 1989). In the current study the themes have been derived from the literature and on the basis of those themes a semi structured interview has been conducted in all five mobile companies. The data collected from these companies have been put in different themes.

### 4.2.6. Analyze and Interpret the Results

According to GAO (1989), the main purpose of thematic analysis is to analyze the data collected in such a way to interpret the results in an understandable format. Results from data collected of current study are discussed under heading analysis of the semi structured interviews in this chapter.

### 4.3. Thematic Analysis Model

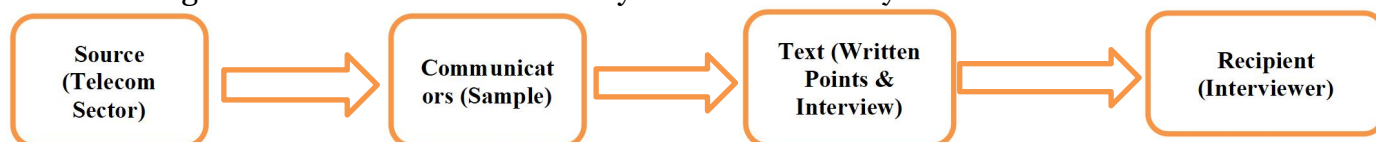Following is the model used in this study for thematic analysis.

Source (Telecom Sector) → Communicators (Sample) → Text (Written Points & Interview) → Recipient (Interviewer)

**Fig.1.Thematic Analysis Model (Lagerberg, 1975)**

## 5: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1. Findings of GHRM Practices in Telecom Sector in Peshawar

| HR Practice | Telecom Sector | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Mobilink** | **Warid** | **Zong** | **Telenor** | **Ufone** |
| Green Human Resource Management | -Reduction of pollution -Protection of natural environment | -Green Management -Preservation of trees | -HR practices for safety of environment -Clean and Green Environment | -Plantation -Reduction of emission of radiations | -Reduction of waste material -Reduction of environmental hazards |
| Recruitment and Selection | -80% is online -20% is manual | -Online Advertisements -Online | -Online Recruitment & Selection | -Online Recruitment & Selection | -Online Recruitment & Selection |
| Training & Development | -Online Training & Development Programs -Hardship Training -Educating employees | -Visits to hilly areas -Online Training & Development Programs -Educating employees about environment | -Visits to hilly areas -Training & Development programs are online | -Majority of Training & Development programs are online -Some training programs are manual | -Online as well as manual |
| Performa | -Care of office plants | -Care of office plants | -Quality visits of franchises | -No smoking in the office | -Taking care of office plants |

| nce Management ent | -No smoking in workplace -No smoking in office area | by him/herself | -Smoke free area | | -Smoke free offices |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employee Involvem ent & Participat ion | -Employees involvement is compulsory | -All employees participate in GHRM practices | -Employees participate in such practices | -All departments employees take part in GHRM activities | -Participation of all employees in GHRM practices is mandatory |
| Rewards and Compens ation | -Financial and non-financial rewards are connected with GHRM practices | -Bonuses, gifts and increments -Recognition | -Certification -Financial rewards as well | -Benefits are given to participants of GHRM practices | -Financial benefits are increments and gifts, while non-financial are certification |

### 5.2. General Understanding of GHRM and its Practices

According to their understanding, these are different Human Resource Management practices which can be used for the welfare of general public, organization, and environment and for the benefit of employees as well. It is actually keeping the environment clean and green and preserving it from various types of hazards such as pollution. Analysis of the data shows that employees from all levels and departments participate in Green Human Resource Management practices.

### 5.3. Conclusions

The followings conclusions are drawn.

1. Although, the telecom sector organizations perform GHRM practices but they are not clearly aware of their worth and have not streamlined these activities.

2. These organizations cannot evidently link GHRM practices with organizational environment and organizational sustainability.

3. These organizations lack proper HR departments in their regional offices.

### 5.4. Recommendations

Following recommendations are suggested.

1. As long as, organisations do not realise the importance of HR as key department, it would be hard to realise the importance of GHRM.

2. Organisations are important social entities and should contribute positively to host communities in the form of CSRs. The CSRs should have green components in HRM as well as other operational, production, and marketing activities.

3. Advocacy related to green environment should not just target individuals and communities but organisations that operate in these communities as well.

5. Researchers should be encouraged to engage in GHRM related topics so that the issue is highlighted and resources are generated for advocacy and practice.

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