CHALLENGES OF GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE (HR) PRACTICES IN BUSINESS PROCESSING & OUTSOURCING (BPO) INDUSTRY IN CHENNAI – A STUDY

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ABSTRACT
The Global warming threats and unpredictable climatic changes is the major factor effecting green movements and significant environment oriented sustainable initiatives. Post Industrialisation and Globalisation era are evidencing the excessive exhaustion of natural resources which is questionable to sustainability at present. Accountability and responsibility of such happenings are bounded with the Government and the stakeholders of the related business. The increased industries, which are a potential contributor of negative environmental impact, should take remedial measures to adhere with global sustainability. This paper seeks to study the challenges of practicing green human resource (HR) measures in the Business processing and Outsourcing (BPO) industry in specific. The research work is empirical in nature; the primary data of the study is collected through structured questionnaire given to the HR professionals in Chennai BPOs by utilising judgment sampling method. Journals, books, website sources constitute the secondary data for the study.

Key words: BPO industry, Green HR, Sustainability, Business.

INTRODUCTION

Indian business environment is enriched with quality workforce and potential opportunities. Day by day the Indian government is welcoming numerous global investors to do business and to augment the foreign reserves of the country. Depletion of natural resources by the industries is compromised in any developing nations as it is racing with varied economic expectations and challenges at a global level. This typical materialistic behaviour and business attitude is threatening the global environmental sustainability to a greater extend (Suhaimi Sudin, 2011). The Government of India is strongly encouraging the corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities by varied business organisations in order to give back something in return to nature and society.

Green practices and initiatives to create positive impact on the environment are receiving equal importance among the industrial hub as it ensures environmental integrity. Improved productivity and sustainability, Reduction in negative environmental impact by the company can be achieved by the organisation by implementing green HR policies and programmes (Jacob Cherian & Jolly Jacob, 2012).Implementation of green human resource policies will cultivate a green business culture(Smith & Perks, 2010).Nowadays, Organisations are stepping forward to green measures and sustainability to enrich their business goodwill (Haridas PK, 2014).By following green HRM policies, the corporate can enhance its image and brand(Mohammad Main Uddin & Rabiul Islam, 2015).Business processing and outsourcing(BPO) industry is one of the popular ventures of global business especially in the developing nations like India. So, the researcher has chosen the BPO industry in order to study the green human resource (HR) practices. This research paper attempts to shed some light on the various challenges of green HR practices in the BPO industry.

GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE (HR) PRACTICES

Green HR consists of two major elements namely Environmental friendly HR practices and the preservation of knowledge capital. (Sushma Rani & Misra, 2014).Green business is defined as using fewer natural resources to complete the tasks needed and using sustainable methods and materials such as recycling and using sustainable products (Morebusiness.com).The Green HR practices facilitate the reduction in environmental wastage and create positive environmental impact in the business activities. Green Induction, Green Performance Management, Green Training and Development, Green Compensation, Green Employee Relations, Green Health and Safety Management, Green Employee Discipline Management, Green Building, Paperless Office, Conservation of Energy, Recycling and Waste Disposal and HR sustainability are the popular Green practices (Laveena D'Mello, H. H. Manjush & Meena Monteiro, 2016).

BUSINESS PROCESSING & OUTSOURCING (BPO)

Business process outsourcing (BPO) is the contracting of non-primary business activities and functions to a third-party provider. BPO services include payroll, human resources (HR), accounting and customer/call centre relations (techopedia.com).BPO is also said to be Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES).Business process outsourcing is known as offshore outsourcing if the outsourcing is sent to another country. It is known as near shore outsourcing if it is done with a neighbouring country.BPO is a method of subcontracting various business related operations to a third party. When

business process outsourcing began, it applied chiefly to manufacturing entities, such as soft drink manufacturers. However, it is now applicable to the outsourcing of services (investopedia.com).

CHALLENGES OF GREEN HR PRACTICES IN BPO INDUSTRY

BPO industry is contributing significant share in the national GDP of Indian service sector. Moreover, the concept of call centres are diminishing or converting into well organised BPO included with all sorts of business functions and proceedings. In the recent past, the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM)are working on the transformation of BPO to Business Processing and Management (BPM) which evidences the notable development of BPO industry in India. BPO industry carries out all the formal business functions within it and also uses the workforce and natural resources extensively. HR professionals of BPO sector need to be more aware while hiring the workforce as the major business process is depending on them (Venkatesh, Lissy & Vaishnavi Bhatt, 2014). Proceeding with the HR functions and new practices in BPOs is quite challenging and tiresome due to the complex work force. Defining the scope and depth of green HR practices in the organizations is the most critical challenge for HR mangers (Sana Arz Bhutto &Auranzeb, 2016).

Green HR practices in BPO industry involve so many challenges at varied levels of execution and implementation. Green practices such as reduced usage of paper, controlling the carbon emission, nominal utility of energy, usage of alternative sources etc are the attractive initiatives that are in existence (Laveena D'Mello, H. H. Manjush & Meena Monteiro, 2016). Enforcing green practice in the HR functions is not an easy task as the management needs to carry out green initiatives in each and every functions and activities of business. Moreover, the cost of green HR practices is really high and can break even only in a long run depending on the performance. Convincing and making the workforce used to new practices in the organisation is a strenuous task (Pooja Popli, 2014).

Inadequate awareness, Underdeveloped value chains, Expensive conventional alternatives, Limited financial options and Lack of adaptability to India specific markets are the major challenges of green HRM implementation in industries (Yamini Saraswat, 2015).Training and development programmes, Employees' knowledge about project autonomy and E-HRM promotes sustainability in the organisations (Venkatesh, Lissy & Vaishnavi Bhatt, 2014). Engaging and embedding environmental practices were the greatest challenges for HR managers with employees towards in order to provide better service and quality (Julie Haddock-Millar, Chandana Sanyal & Michael Muller-Camen, 2015). Cost of Implementation, Cost of Maintaining, Lack of support by management and employees slowdown the implementation process of green HR initiatives (SabaJafri, 2012).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gill Mandip (2012) stated that the green HR practices are to be implemented in all the phases of business functions and in all sort of HR functions. Sumanta Dutta (2012) research work revealed that the green employees in the organisations adheres to all the green practices and initiatives in the work environment which in return eliminated environmental waste in the business as well as boost the profitability of the organisation. Mathapati (2013) studied that HR professionals got a major responsibility in following effective green HR practices in the organisations. VishalS.Rana & SonamN.Jain (2014) study revealed that the HR professionals and the behavioural attitudes of the workforce have a significant impact towards the green HR practices. Akshata Sakhawalkar & Anand Thadani (2015) exclaimed that the organisation needs to upgrade the technology in all its varied business functions in order to enhance the positive environmental impact. Anton Arulrajah, Opatha & Nawaratne (2015) advised that all the HR functions that persist in the business in order to find the transformation of existing organisations into green entities.

Shaikh.M. W(2015) found that the reduction of paper usage, reduction of travel, increased Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes are the major initiatives that are incorporated by the business entities in India. Parida Ruchismita, Raj Shitij, Sharma Pallavi & Yadav Vivek (2015) found that the cost is the major barrier in the implementation segment of green HR practices. Moreover, the study strongly said that both the business and the workforce will be benefitted in a long run practice of green HR initiatives. Parul Deshwal (2015) study explored that the environmental friendly HR practices and preservation of knowledge capital are the two major elements encompassing the effectiveness of green HR initiatives in the organisations. Pavithra devi V & Sandhya Rani C (2016)research concluded that the demographic factors and the designation of employees matters a lot in regards to the green HR practices in the workplace.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Earlier Research works on Green HR have concentrated only in manufacturing sector and information technology (IT) firms. No significant research was done in the area of BPO industry. This research work aims to specifically study the challenges of green HR practices in the BPOs from the point of view of a HR professional. Moreover, the BPO industry is abundant in Chennai, the capital city of Tamil Nadu state in India. So, this study helps to enhance the implementation process of green

HR practices in BPOs through a well-planned strategic approach to create a positive and productive impact over nature and society.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
1. To study the various Green HR practices in BPO industry.
2. To study the challenges in practicing Green HR practices in BPO industry.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY
1. H_o– There is no significant association between the nature of BPO and the Clusters of Challenges of Green HR Practices in BPO industry.
2. H_o– There is no significant difference between the nature of BPO and the various Green HR practices in BPO industry.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
The research work is empirical in nature. A survey questionnaire designed and distributed under Judgment sampling method to the HR professionals of BPO industries in Chennai in order to find out the Challenges of Green HR practices. Out of 60 respondents only 50 valid samples are considered for the study. Books, Journals and web sites constitute the secondary data.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
1. The sample for the study is confined to BPO Industries in Chennai City only. Hence the findings cannot be treated as representative of the entire Nation and also towards any other industries.
2. The judgment sampling method and the limited sample of 50 respondents have limited the findings of the study.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION
The data analysis is completely done with the help of SPSS (15th version). The reliability of the data per Cronbach's Alpha is 89.8%. In order to achieve the objectives of the study statistical techniques such as Descriptive analysis, Chi-square test, F-test and Multivariate Analysis including Factor Analysis, Cluster Analysis and Discriminant Analysis are used and the results are presented below.

Table: 1 showing the Descriptive analysis of various Green HR practices in BPO Industry

Descriptive Statistics			
Green HR practices in BPO industry	N	Mean	SD
Conducting awareness programs/workshops for employees	50	3.28	1.144
Implementing Energy reduction strategies	50	2.82	.962
Use of Solar energy	50	2.92	.922
Measures for Water conserving	50	3.10	1.074
Adopting environmental accounting	50	2.98	.937
Setting up Green clubs/committees to ensure practices	50	2.88	.895
Providing awards for Green Employees	50	3.20	1.143
Making offices paperless	50	3.26	1.103
Adopting environment auditing in organisation	50	3.20	1.010
Providing materials as e-resource to employees	50	3.46	1.054
Overall Mean value of the Variables:		3.11	

Source: Computed Data

The various green HR practices in BPO industries ranges with a score of 5 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree). The overall mean score of the variable pertaining to the Green HR practices is 3.11. The BPO industries are engaging in implementing green HR practices in their organisations. However, e-resource materials to employees, Adopting environmental auditing, Awarding green employees, Making paperless offices and Awareness programs are the major Green initiatives taken by the HR in their organisations.

Table: 2 showing the Association between the nature of BPO and the Clusters of Challenges of Green HR Practices in BPO industry

Nature of BPO	Challenges of Green HR Practices			Total
	Moderately Agree Group	Agree Group	Disagree Group	
Health Care Services	5	5	4	14
Transportation Services	3	5	1	9
Banking Services	9	2	16	27
Total	17	12	21	50
Chi-Square Value: 12.209	P-Value: 0.016	* 5% Level of Significance		
Source: Computed Data				

H_o – There is no significant association between the nature of BPO and the Clusters of Challenges of Green HR Practices in BPO industry. Chi-Square test is conducted to test this hypothesis.

It is inferred from the above table that the p-value 0.016 is less than the table value 0.05 at 5% level of significance. Hence null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is significant association between the nature of BPO and the Clusters of Challenges of Green HR Practices in BPO industry. Chi-Square test is conducted to test this hypothesis.

Table: 3 showing the one-way analysis of variance between Green HR practices in BPO industry and its Nature

ANOVA			
Green HR practices in BPO industry & Nature of BPO	Mean Square	F-Value	P-Value
Conducting awareness programs/workshops for employees	3.364	2.757	0.074
Implementing Energy reduction strategies	4.209	5.351	0.008*
Use of Solar energy	0.359	0.411	0.665
Measures for Water conserving	2.495	2.276	0.114
Adopting environmental accounting	3.200	4.112	0.022*
Setting up Green clubs/committees to ensure practices	2.065	2.761	0.074
Providing awards for Green Employees	7.499	7.192	0.001*
Making offices paperless	3.694	3.324	0.044*
Adopting environment auditing in organisation	0.090	0.085	0.919
Providing materials as e-resource to employees	1.603	1.471	0.240
* 5% Level of Significance, Source: Computed Data			

H_o – There is no significant difference between the nature of BPO and the various Green HR practices in BPO industry. ANOVA test is conducted to test this hypothesis.

It is inferred from the above table that the p-value of the variables Implementing Energy reduction strategies (0.008), Adopting environmental accounting (0.022), Providing awards for Green Employees (0.001) and Making offices paperless (0.044) are less than the table value 0.05 at 5% level of significance. Hence null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is significant difference between the nature of BPO and the various Green HR practices in BPO industry.

Table: 4 showing the Factor Analysis Output of Challenges of Green HR practices in BPO Industry
An exploratory factor analysis was performed on the 10 variables included in the questionnaire in order to determine the challenges of green HR practices in BPO industry. Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was conducted. The factor loading matrix is presented in the below tables, and also includes tables on KMO and Bartlett's Test, Communalities, Total Variance Explained, Component Matrix and Rotated Component Matrix. The analysis of the data in these tables is presented below.

KMO and Bartlett's Test	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.815

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity				Approx. Chi-Square	352.999
				df	45
				Sig.	.000
Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.849	58.485	58.485	3.702	37.022	37.022
2	1.163	11.629	70.114	3.309	33.092	70.114
Rotated Component Matrix		Component	Communalities	Factors		
Difficult to Change the Employees Behaviour on Green practice		.901	.480	IMPLEMENTATION FACTOR		
Lack of motivation among employees		.862	.681			
Promotion of Green HR practice is problematic		.805	.883			
Green HR culture in organisation is a cumbersome process		.653	.790			
High Investment Cost		.528	.611			
Slower rate of return		.864	.680	MANAGEMENT FACTOR		
Recruiting Green employees is a tiring task		.751	.739			
Difficult to measure the Green HR effectiveness		.746	.749			
No strong support from Government		.728	.747			
Delayed implementation process		.612	.650			
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.						
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.						

Source: Computed Data

The KMO statistic indicates that correlations are relatively compact. Bartlett test also signifies that there is relationship between the variables. In this context of the present study, Principal component analysis is performed for the challenges of green HR practices in BPO industry to verify whether it is possible to reduce the variables into few significant variables. The Eigen value associated with each linear factor is given in the table. Initially before extraction there are 10 linear components and the first factor explains 37.022% of the variance whereas subsequent factor explain small amount of variance. It is clear that two factors can be extracted. Before rotation factor 1 accounted for considerably more variance than the remaining one (33.092%).The communalities of 10 variables range from 0.480 to 0.883 indicating large amount of variance has been extracted by the factor solution. Using varimax orthogonal criterion and by suppressing the factor loadings less than 0.5 the rotated component matrix is obtained and is given in table. It is evident that all the variables are highly loaded in the first 2 components. In other words, 10 variables are grouped into two factors on the basis of the inter relationship among themselves. Factor 1 (Implementation Factor) contains maximum number of variables and explains most of the variance in comparison to the Factor 2 (Management factor). Hence, it is concluded that the Implementation factor and Management factor are the two major factors affecting the challenges of green HR practices in BPO industry.

Table: 5 showing the Final Cluster Centres of Challenges of Green HR practices in BPO Industry
Cluster analysis (CA) is an exploratory data analysis tool for organizing observed data into meaningful groups or cluster which maximizes the similarity of cases within each cluster while maximizing the dissimilarity between groups that are initially unknown. A cluster is a group of relatively homogeneous cases or observations. Cluster analysis is the statistical method of partitioning a sample into homogeneous classes to produce an operational classification. The k-means clustering method will produce the exact k different clusters demanded of greatest possible distinction. In K-means clustering, KM application data that has 10 variables with regards to challenges of green HR practices in BPO industry.

Final Cluster Centres			
Challenges of Green HR Practices in BPO Industry	Cluster		
	1	2	3
Difficult to Change the Employees Behaviour on Green practice	3	4	2
Lack of motivation among employees	4	4	2
Promotion of Green HR practice is problematic	4	4	2

Green HR culture in organisation is a cumbersome process	4	4	2
High Investment Cost	4	4	2
Slower rate of return	3	4	2
Recruiting Green employees is a tiring task	4	4	2
Difficult to measure the Green HR effectiveness	3	4	2
No strong support from Government	3	4	2
Delayed implementation process	3	4	2

Cluster	Number of Cases
Moderately Agree Group	17.000
Agree Group	12.000
Disagree Group	21.000
Total	150.000
Source: Computed Data	

From the above table we identify the Grouping Clusters that indicates that majority of the respondents belong to Disagree Group (21 Cases) whereas 17 cases belong to the Moderately Agree group and 12 cases belong to the Agree group. Since the total of agree and moderately agree group constitutes the majority of the respondents it is understood that the BPO industry is facing challenges in practicing green HR practices.

Table -6 showing the Summary of Canonical Discriminant Functions with regards to Challenges of Green HR practices in BPO Industry
Discriminant analysis is then performed with the original parameters by considering the groups formed by the k-means algorithm. In order to run Descriminant analysis, the variables assigned to measure the challenges of green HR practices in BPO industry were considered as Independent variables and the Clusters are considered into the grouping variables. The summary of canonical Discriminant functions is included with Eigen values and Wilks' lambda. The Eigen values of each Discriminant function assess relative importance as they reflect the percents of variance explained in the depending variable. Wilks' Lambda indicates the significance of Discriminant function. The below table of Wilks' Lambda indicates a highly significant function (p<0.000) and provides the total variability not explained. So, we have 13.0% unexplained.

This section is to explore the possibility of challenges of green HR practices in BPO industry using unsupervised classification techniques. An attempt is made to analyse the challenges of green HR practices in BPO industry to arrive at the three clusters, reviewing the observation scale preferences of 50 respondents. The prediction group membership is the predicted frequencies of groups from the analysis. The numbers going down each column indicate how many were correctly and incorrectly classified. From the above table it is inferred 98.0% of original grouped cases are correctly classified with 94.1% (16) in Cluster 1, 100% (12) in Cluster2 and 100% (21) in Cluster3.

| Eigen values					Discriminant Function Classification Results				
Function	Eigen value	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Canonical Correlation	Predicted Group Membership				
1	6.753(a)	87	87	0.933	Cluster Number of Case	1	2	3	Total
2	1.012(a)	13	100	0.709	Moderately Agree Group	16	1	0	17
a) First 2 canonical Discriminant functions were used					Agree Group	0	12	0	12
Wilks' Lambda					Disagree Group	0	0	21	21
Test of Function(s)	Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	Df	Sig.	Moderately Agree Group	94.1	5.9	0	100
1 through 2	0.064	166.754	20	0	Agree Group	0	100	0	100
					Disagree Group	0	0	100	100
Source : Computed Data					a. 98.0% of original grouped cases correctly classified.				
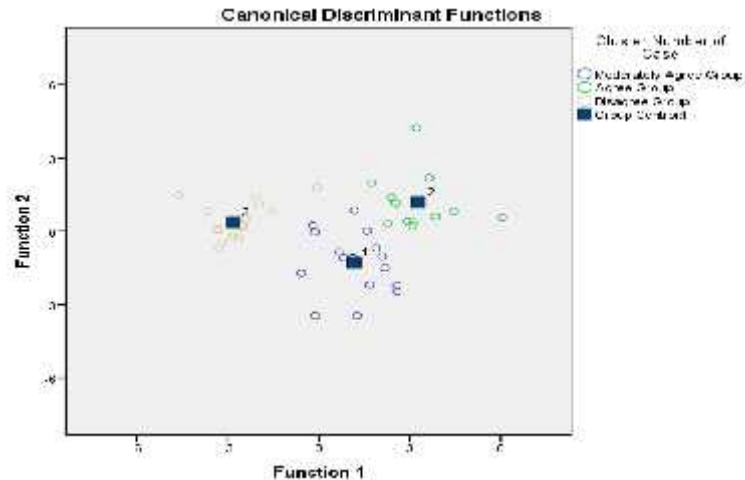
Figure: 1

The present analysis shows that only three groups could be meaningfully formed for each category. Further those are classified into Cluster one, Cluster two, Cluster three categories based on the observation scale parameter, on comparing the preferences of these approaches in terms of clustering the challenges of green HR practices in BPO industry.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. The overall mean score of the variable pertaining to the Green HR practices is 3.11. The BPO industries are engaging in implementing green HR practices in their organisations. However, e-resource materials to employees, Adopting environmental auditing, Awarding green employees, Making paperless offices and Awareness programs are the major Green initiatives taken by the HR in their organisations.
2. There is significant association between the nature of BPO and the Clusters of Challenges of Green HR Practices in BPO industry. Chi-Square test is conducted to test this hypothesis.
3. There is significant difference between the nature of BPO and the various Green HR practices in BPO industry such as Implementing Energy reduction strategies, Adopting environmental accounting, and providing awards for Green Employees and Making offices paperless.
4. The Implementation factor and Management factor are the two major factors affecting the challenges of green HR practices in BPO industry.
5. The challenges of green HR practices in BPO industry in their organisation belonging to Cluster 2 (C2) are more affected than those of Cluster 1 (C1) and Cluster 3 (C3). Similarly the cases belonging to Cluster 2 are affected than those of Cluster 3 (C3). The respondents belonging to Cluster 3 (C3) are not affected.
6. 98.0% of original grouped cases are correctly classified with 94.1% (16) in Cluster 1, 100% (12) in Cluster 2 and 100% (21) in Cluster 3 with regards to the challenges of green practices in BPO industry.

SUGGESTION

Implementation and management of the green HR practices in the BPO industry is important to achieve environmental sustainability. Minimal green HR practices are strongly followed in many BPOs, so more innovative and technology oriented green initiatives are to be developed in a well customised manner to suit the workforce of the business. Investment on research and development pertaining to green HR practices need to be made by the employer to reduce the financial constraints. Nature of BPO significantly influencing the effective implementation of green HR practices. Hence, the HR professionals should tailor suitable green practices in order to match its nature of business proceedings. Green clubs, Green reward programmes and Events should be organised to emphasise importance of Green practices, Green awareness programmes should be introduced in the work place to achieve increased green effectiveness in the organisations.

CONCLUSION

The Government of India, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change, and the NASSCOM should watch and support the Indian industries in order to achieve 100% green practices in business which will result in sustainability of environment in the nation. New and innovative policies, programmes and measures need to be introduced by the government to enforce and encourage the business entities. Every business organisation should be rewarded and recognised with a green brand if they undergo the conversion process of corporate entities to green entities. The current environmental situation is highly in need of green initiatives to create sustainability, this demand might create Green BPOs to be the next new brand of

the service industries, so by ensuring the complete green HR practices along with other green initiatives in the Indian BPO industry can definitely make the industry reach greater heights with good sustainability in its business also.

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