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Role of HR in Promoting Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility

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Abstract

This article focuses on human resources (HR) and its possibilities to improve environmental sustainability and CSR within companies. HR departments are in a solid position to support sustainable practices and a CSR culture as companies give ESG (environmental, social, and governance) problems top priority more and more importance. The study looks at HR policies that support employee involvement, training, leadership development, and ethical recruiting so that sustainability and CSR may be included in business objectives. Human resources' impact on corporate strategies prioritizing community involvement, employee well-being, and environmental sustainability is also examined. The study uses qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the effects of HR-driven initiatives on organizations' performance, reputation, and long-term viability. The findings show that HR is essential for advancing CSR objectives and creating a sustainable workforce. The report concludes with suggestions on how human resource managers might better contribute to sustainable business practices and responsible corporate citizenship.

Keywords: HR; CSR; Organizational Performance; Reputation; Training; Development and Organizational Culture.

1. Introduction

HR plays a central role in promoting sustainability and CSR within organizations. Most companies recognize the importance of ideas related to ethical, environmental, and social considerations in the business model. HR takes Responsibility for fostering the workplace culture with sustainability and CSR (Sharma et al., 2009). To integrate these values with the company's mission, core values, and vision. HR helps to build employee engagement with ownership; it helps to promote awareness followed by training and awareness (Foruzesh, 2014). Talent acquisition and retention mean employees are connected through CSR and focused on various programs that contribute to job satisfaction and loyalty (Hammad et al., 2022). Training and development play an essential role among employees regarding sustainability practices. HR is responsible for developing policies that promote an eco-friendly workspace, remote work, energy consumption, and waste reduction (Mukhuty et al., 2022; Kassim, 2017; Amiri et al., 2015).

Most organizations adopt a sustainability strategy in business, followed by a legal or values-based strategy (Aukhoon et al., 2024). HR plays an important role (Khlefha, 2024). The function of the Human resource department should be to formulate and achieve environmental and social goals to balance the objectives. The HR function is the partner to determine possible works to formulate the corporate values and sustainable strategy (Malik et al., 2021). HR played an important role in ensuring that employees are implemented with strategy across the organizations (Geetha & Pugazhenthi, 2015). Sustainable Human resource management refers to and is followed by values, trust, and skills, and it is a motivator for achieving the triple bottom line approach (Admodisastro et al., 2022). Here are some examples for HRM, such as encouraging the employees through training and compensation, which is the easiest way to reduce the use of environmental damage through chemicals with the products (Shah et al., 2021). Another issue is that staff members recognize recycled materials as kid-friendly playgrounds but lack access to safe play areas. Incorporating equity development and well-being into the design of an organization's human resource management system promotes long-term health sustainability for both internal and external communities (Cohen et al., 2010).

2. Background Information

Sustainability is defined as the ability of an organization to meet the various needs of present ideas without mentioning future needs. It mainly focuses on short-term profits, environmental, society, stakeholder analysis, and long-term values. Recent years have discussed the significant importance of organizational success followed by various factors such as ecological, Social Responsibility, Regulatory pressure, consumer preferences, Investor priorities, and risk mitigations. Following environmental concerns, growing awareness about climate change led to consumer and employee analysis of the ecological consequences. Organizations demonstrate their commitment to sustainable



practices to gain a competitive advantage by attracting various consequences among customers and investors. Social Responsibility Most of society expects multiple organizations to contribute to communicating the different operations (Anand et al., 2024). Social Responsibility should address social issues and local communities and promote ethical practices. Implementing the government and international bodies are defined as global challenges. Consumer preferences mean most organizations are incorporated with sustainable products and services from responsible companies (Sarvaiya et al., 2021).

Most organizations incorporate sustainability among the products, services, and operations, all used to enhance brand loyalty. Risk mitigation, which means sustainable practices, helps organizations manage the risks associated with various types of resource scarcity, potential legal liabilities, and reputational damages. Human resource functions should play an essential role in promoting sustainability among organizations. Integrating sustainability among HR practices is followed by various advantages such as retaining talent, building a sustainable culture, developing sustainable leadership, and performing management for sustainability. This is followed by a simple analysis of the impact of CSR on business and society, which means operating through profit maximization. The concept of CSR not only maximizes profit but also contributes to society. ISO 26000 mentioned the guidance related to CSR related to Organizations (Farooq et al., 2021). The following areas are covered by CSR, such as Human rights, which means the organization should hold social Responsibility and protect employee rights. Diversity in the form of discrimination is used to eliminate the International Human Rights law; it is essential for fairness and social justice. Labor Practices refer to the organization's benefits, followed by economic Responsibility. Environmental experiences impact various activities carried out through different organizations. Environmental changes include the depletion of natural resources and climate change in the whole system. Fair operating practices are socially responsible for an organization's promotion of anti-corruption with fair business practices, which provides a relationship with society's consumer issues, as most organizations take Responsibility for consumers and customers. Quality of goods and services are included in these types of responsibilities. Community involvement and development: Most organizations are expected to contribute to healthy employment, which is used to improve the population's quality of life. Most organizations take a responsible approach to community involvement and development. Organizational governance is closely related to how other areas should be implemented (Sharma et al., 2009).

3. Literature Review

The author (Juan Herrera, 2020) describes HRM and CSR as being followed by current policies related to the moderate components of this relationship. It also provides the relationship between organizational management and HR management. Various tools are used to improve CSR, such as technological development, competition, and globalization among the various organizations. Author (Sadai Cheema, 2017). The overall strategic development goals should be integrated to make a practical environment. Organizational adaptation strategies influence different types of variables. Examples are stakeholder pressure, company image, and financial performance. HRM was defined as a collection of interconnected functions, procedures, and activities meant to develop, retain, and attract an organization's people resources. Building on the literature in organizational economics and ESG accounting, researchers such as Jackson et al. (2019) and Gray et al. (2017) emphasize the growing importance of aligning HR metrics with sustainable performance outcomes. Their work demonstrates that HR departments, once viewed solely as administrative units, are now recognized as strategic actors in value creation through sustainability integration. This study contributes to this expanding field by positioning HR as both a cost center and a strategic enabler in achieving corporate ESG objectives. Most of the innovative tools used in management should affect organizational sustainability through competitive advantage promotions. The various frameworks used to achieve the recruitment strategies are defined here, such as pay, reward systems, and training programs. To implement effective HR practices, business strategy and company cultures are followed. Effective corporate management requires the technical skills of the employees (Admodisastro et al., 2022). According to Moser et al, (2022), in order to match organizational goals with social and environmental objectives, human resource functions are essential. Employers can develop a staff dedicated to sustainability and moral behavior by including sustainability in HR procedures like hiring, training, and performance reviews. Green recruitment practices, in which HR selects applicants with a strong commitment to environmental Responsibility, frequently reflect this integration (Moser & Williams, 2022). Building on the literature in organizational economics and ESG accounting, researchers such as Jackson et al. (2019) and Gray et al. (2017) highlight the need for aligning HR metrics with sustainable performance outcomes. This study contributes to that growing body of knowledge by evaluating HR's role as a cost center and strategic asset in corporate sustainability.

4. CSR and Sustainability

This study adopts a **mixed-method approach**, combining **qualitative content analysis** of HR practices with **quantitative survey-based evaluation**. Data was gathered from 150 HR professionals across public and private sector firms in Kerala using structured questionnaires and interviews. The responses were analyzed using **descriptive statistics and thematic analysis**, ensuring triangulation and methodological rigor. The sample was stratified across industries to capture sectoral diversity and strengthen external validity. Sustainability means that sustainable development should meet the needs of future generations and their own. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development adopted the definitions of sustainable development in 2005. According to the IFC, ensuring long-term business success contributes to economic and social development, and a healthy environment benefits all sustainable businesses. CSR and sustainability contain different sets of concepts with different origins. The main areas, such as sustainability, are broader and reached through the wider environment with the traditional way; it is focused on the triple line bottom approach, such as economic, social, and environmental. Two kinds of concepts follow separate types of origins. CSR and sustainability are connected economically, impactfully, and environmentally (Emeka-Okoli et al., 2024).

4.1 Triple-Bottom-Line Approach

This approach consists of HR contribution and sustainability followed by people, profit, and planet. HR practices help promote the employee's well-being and engagement through people dimensions. To integrate sustainability with the organizational culture, HR should note planet dimensions, which foster conscious behavior and practices. The profit dimension includes cost savings, enhanced brand reputation, and improved stakeholder relations. The triple bottom line approach is the key framework connected through people, planet, and profit. As part of the people, sustainability must be focused on social Responsibility among the individual communities. This involves remoting labor practices, diversity, inclusion, and ensuring employee health and safety. It also contributes to communities with organizations that should be operated. The planet, which means environmental dimensions, helps minimize the organization's ecological footprint and conserves natural resources. Environmental responsibility is to adopt the regulations and contribute to combating climate change and

environmental degradations. Profit among the economic impacts in sustainability is to ensure the financial status among the long-term profitability by considering the organizational impact on society and the environment. Sustainable business practices are used to analyse cost savings and operational efficiency and provide investment opportunities. Most organizations are integrated with profit, people, and planets to ensure financial success and environmental Responsibility (Abraham, 2024). From an accounting perspective, HR-driven sustainability initiatives also affect non-financial performance indicators such as ESG scores, which are increasingly linked to investor decisions. Integrating cost-benefit analysis into HR-led training, wellness programs, and CSR efforts can quantify ROI in terms of reduced attrition, improved productivity, and brand equity. These metrics could be aligned with GRI reporting standards or ESG frameworks to enhance financial transparency and sustainability accounting.

4.2 Role of Human Resource

In most Organizations, HR is important in staff recruitment and selection, compensation, performance appraisal, and training development. Compared to various definitions of HRM, it helps organizations address sustainability issues related to this. It provides the link between the employees and executive management. Most issues are defined in the HR function and are usually perceived by priority actions through employee issues. GRI (Global Reporting Initiative) helps to understand the organization's values and discusses the impacts of sustainability issues related to labour relations, human rights, and health and safety (Nowak & Sadowska, 2024).

Table 1: GRI Indicators and HR-Owned Sustainability Issues

GRI Indicator	HR Owned Sustainability Issues
Human Rights	Health and safety, Training and Education, Equal-Remuneration for Men and Women, and Provision of Em-
	ployment.
Society	Child labor, employee security Practices, Human Rights, Prevention of forced labor, employee Security Prac-
	tices.
Labor Practice work	Laws and regulations, Engaged with Local people (Ogbechie et al., 2016).

Table 1 outlines the alignment between Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) indicators and HR-owned sustainability issues. It highlights key areas such as human rights, labor practices, and societal responsibilities, emphasizing HR's role in promoting fair labor standards, employee well-being, and community engagement.

Training and Development:

HR helps develop various training programs to raise awareness of CSR and sustainability risks and help people understand social
accountability and sustainability.

Selection, Recruitment, and Talent Management:

• Sustainability requires the employee not to be concerned about organizational profits, financial benefits, society, and the environment. HR should implement various strategies related to employee recruitment, employee productivity, and socio-economic benefits. It should also be aware of the advantages of establishing equal opportunity and guaranteeing no discrimination based on race, gender, or tribe. Lastly, HR should ensure that the different policies promote diversity in hiring and selection.

Compensation and Rewards:

HR should implement procedures that ensure fair compensation, equality, and well-being. Workers who follow socially and sustainably
conscious corporate practices should also receive rewards.

Employee engagement

• Employee engagement in an environment that encourages creativity, innovation, and idea-sharing results in satisfied customers and propels company expansion. HR should develop and implement plans that help staff members see themselves as collaborators in the sustainability movement. This can be accomplished by hearing about employees' sustainability ideas and projects and motivating them to participate in their implementation. HR is responsible for creating quantifiable sustainability metrics and incorporating them into employee performance reviews. Employee performance reviews should include community service, involvement in CSR, and environmental initiatives.

Leadership Development

 HR must promote a culture of growth by investing in workers' leadership development, particularly for those with a strong chance of rising to the position of future social leaders.

Change Management

HR must promote the essential shift to more sustainable organizations. HR should be at the forefront of communicating to employees
and other internal and external stakeholders the sustainable culture of parent companies in prosperous economies and multinational
corporations in emerging nations.

Diversity and Multiculturalism

In addition to recruitment and selection procedures, HR must implement policies and practices that promote diversity and multiculturalism throughout the organization. Policies and procedures about performance reviews, training and development, and pay and rewards should promote multiculturalism and diversity. In emerging economies, companies should pay their workers enough to maintain a respectable quality of living.

Ethics and Governance

• In this regard, HR's Responsibility is to guarantee that all employees obtain legal and governance training. Moral principles should also serve as a reference for HR procedures and guidelines.

Values Creation and Inculcation

• The organization's principles should be reflected in every facet. Promotion and rewards should not be determined only by performance. Instilling ethical principles should also be the foundation for promoting top performers.

Collaboration and Teamwork

• Due to its unique role within the company, HR can lead cross-functional teams while collaborating with all other departments. When specific CSR and sustainability teams are lacking, HR must lead the organization of sustainability activities. HR can provide guidance on productive cooperation and collaboration within the company, even when such teams are present (Sattar et al., 2015).

4.3 Role of HR in Wellness Consulting

This section successfully incorporates wellness into the CSR initiative. HR professionals benefit from support provided by consulting organizations. Global healthcare resources offer consulting services tailored to the specific needs of corporate clients. They provide various options, including comprehensive programs to help HR enhance employee well-being while supporting CSR objectives. Various services are highlighted here, such as program development, assessment and analytics, support and guidance, and training and education. Program development entails international healthcare experts working with human resources specialists to create a wellness program that supports engagement among staff members and is in line with the organization's CSR aims. In addition to encouraging work-life balance, this promotes specific health issues and healthy behavior. Assessment and Analytics: Global healthcare resources help identify HR department areas and improve the effectiveness of wellness initiatives. This is followed by an analysis of how it helps improve the effectiveness

this promotes specific health issues and healthy behavior. Assessment and Analytics: Global healthcare resources help identify HR department areas and improve the effectiveness of wellness initiatives. This is followed by an analysis of how it helps improve the effectiveness of wellness initiatives. Training and Education Global Healthcare Resources offers training sessions to give Human resources managers the knowledge and tools to implement successful wellness programs. HR professionals effectively communicate to promote wellness initiatives among employees (Hu & Sinniah, 2024). They also provide comprehensive reports that are metrics that impact wellness programs and allow the HR professional to evaluate and refine the initiatives (Derok,2024). Most experts agree that organizations are set up to achieve CSR with wellness objectives.

5. Analysis of the HR Department in CSR

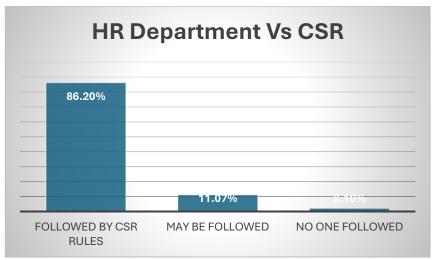


Fig. 1: HR Department Vs CSR

Figure 1. HR Department vs. CSR Engagement. This figure illustrates the level of HR involvement in CSR implementation among survey participants. A majority (86.2%) reported active HR participation in addressing environmental and social challenges, reinforcing the department's strategic role in sustainability execution. This analysis shows that, for most respondents, 86.2%, HR played an important role in addressing environmental degradation in terms of social Responsibility. HHR functions impact sustainability and provide a positive relationship among environmental and social challenges. They responded 11.7% noted as may be followed, 86.20% as followed by CSR rules, and 2.10% did not follow the CSR rules. After evaluating the overall analysis, the HR function was important in addressing the environmental and social challenges. For environmental degradation, grown up through social Responsibility, HR promotes ethical practices that foster environmental and social Responsibility (Divya Bajpai, 2023). As shown in Figure 1, over 86% of respondents recognized HR as a key driver in CSR policy implementation, especially in managing environmental degradation and social governance metrics. This supports the claim that HR is central to embedding sustainability values across the organization.

5.1 HR Practices for Sustainability

5.1.1 Sustainable Recruitment and Selection Strategies

HR professionals use sustainability-related skills, experiences, and values in job postings to communicate the organization's commitment to sustainability. During the candidate evaluation, HR evaluates applicants based on their prior engagement with sustainable practices, environmental consciousness, and social Responsibility. Organizations create a workforce that shares their vision by elevating sustainability in the HR department's people selection (Jepsen & Grob, 2015).

5.1.2 Retention Practices for Sustainable Talent Management

Incentives and recognition initiatives that acknowledge and reward staff members' efforts toward sustainability can be implemented by HR professionals. By doing this, businesses strengthen the importance of sustainable practices and give workers a feeling of direction and significance in their work. Because they feel linked to the organization's overarching goal of making a beneficial impact on society and the environment, employees are more engaged and loyal when they have a sense of purpose. These retention tactics support long-term employee satisfaction and dedication to sustainability objectives while fostering a sustainable culture within the company (Mujtaba & Mubarik, 2022).

5.1.3 Sustainable Strategies and Policies

The role of HR is to integrate sustainability metrics followed by performance evaluation and feedback, which are instrumental in promoting sustainable practices within the organization. HR professionals act as sustainability advocates closely related to different departments to

ensure the sustainability goals are integrated with respective strategies and operational plans. Sustainability strategies are enhanced to check the organizational ability to address various challenges comprehensively. During the comprehensive analysis, the various guidelines follow the sustainability policies essential for translating the organizational commitment. To work with HR professionals as key stakeholders in developing policies with organizational sustainability vision and environmental, social, and economic aspects. HR also ensures that these policies are effectively communicated to all employees, providing training, monitoring progress, and creating a culture of accountability. To assess the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives, most organizations need to identify the relevant indicators and consider measurement methods. HR should contribute to organizational sustainability progress and track the data regularly. HR facilitates a data-driven approach for decision-making and enables, through improved sustainable performance, measurement of the impacts of people, profit, and planet (Hunjra et al., 2024).

5.1.4 HR Role Fostering Stakeholder Engagement for Sustainability

HR played an important role in fostering stakeholder analysis for sustainability and combined with employees, suppliers, customers, and communities. HR professionals work through the purpose and commitment of employees to promote open communication channels. HR contributed to building a sustainable relationship with the customers to understand their sustainability preferences. To engage with local communities, HR provides the efforts through community needs and provides the relationship through social impacts. HR professionals work with the procurement supply chain to ensure the criteria are followed to integrate the supplier selection and management process (Topalova et al., 2024). To promote sustainability, HR collaborates with suppliers to identify areas for improvement to reduce environmental impacts and enhance social Responsibility through ethical practices. Implementing sustainable procurement strategies helps the responsible supply chain and minimizes social, environmental, and regulatory risks. To evaluate the suppliers, HR establishes that HR ensures that organizational procurement practices contain sustainability goals and values (Adegoke et al., 2024).

6. Conclusion

The emerging concepts of sustainable HRM have important implications for both organizational performances. HR functions support developing and implementing a sustainable corporate strategy that uniquely contributes to the business's success. HR should recognize the new sustainability context through business, provide solutions for sustainable organizations, and manage HR functions sustainably. HR plays an important role in promoting sustainability and CSR within an organization. HR to take Responsibility for embedding sustainability values consists of company culture and employee engagement with CSR goals. It also ensures that sustainability practices are reflected in development, training, and recruitment. HR department provides the leadership for creating long-term strategies; it is not only for improving the organization's social and environmental impacts but also for improving its reputation. HR serves as the relationship between the organizational values and the workforce.

Policy Implications

HR departments should implement structured sustainability training programs, including modules on ESG compliance, environmental ethics, and stakeholder engagement. These programs can be supported by government subsidies or tax incentives for green workforce development. Organizations should also adopt standardized sustainability metrics (e.g., employee carbon footprint, CSR participation rates) to track and report non-financial performance. Regulatory bodies like SEBI or MCA can mandate ESG disclosures that include HR metrics as part of integrated reporting frameworks.

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