An Outside-in Approach to Human Resource Management

Dev Raj Adhikari

Abstract: This article explains the outside-in approach to comprehending human resource management (HRM) in the context of sustainable development goals (SDGs). Based on the literature review, the author states four qualitative propositions to link long-term business challenges with sustainable HRM goals. This article indicates that a much broader scholarly and professional outlook is required to conceptualize and practice sustainable HRM and solve business challenges in the long run. Since sustainable HRM literacy is very low in Nepal, this article attempts to elaborate on and explain the concepts. As this is a conceptual paper, it will be necessary to expand on and test the propositions in the future.

Keywords: Business challenges; Externalities; Inside-out; Outside-in; Sustainable HRM

I. INTRODUCTION

Brundtland Commission (WCED, 1987) defines sustainable development as ‘development that meets the need for the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’ This definition of sustainable development has become a common reference to developmental studies and is a starting point for many researchers to engage in sustainability research. Sustainable HRM, rooted in the concept of ‘business sustainability’ (BS), is an outside-in approach for the preservation, regeneration, and development of environmental (ecological), economic and social resources of a system together with profits and return on investment (Dyllick & Muff, 2015; Ulrich et al., 2012; Ehnert, 2009; Kramer, 2014; Senna & Shani, 2009; Gardberg & Fombrun, 2006; Elkington, 1997, Scott et al., 2003).

As a relatively young field of study, there has been growing academic interest in sustainable HRM theory building. A simple online search of titles and terms used by google

1 Prof. Adhikari is the Chairman of University Grants Commission. He can be reached at devraj_adhikari@hotmail.com
A number of scholarly research papers on sustainable HRM fields have been published in the last three decades (e.g., Taylor et al., 2012; Ehnert, 2009; Krammer, 2014; Aust et al., 2019). Notwithstanding the increasing number of research in this field, researchers are still not providing appealing and convincing opinions to implement sustainable HRM by balancing the contradictory but appealing environment, economic, and social goals (Paulet 2019; Bush, 2018). Despite the empirical and conceptual arguments by the scholar on the relationship between sustainable HRM and the well-being of employees for environmental outcomes, there is not enough policy back-up to implement sustainable HRM practices in reference to SDGs at the organizational level (Chamsa & García-Blandónb, 2019). It might be due that organizations being less engaged with sustainable activities or not ready to work out the impact of externalities that may affect BS over a while. Some difficult questions may arise how does HRM help to mitigate the unprecedented effects of industrialisation on climate change? Is HRM capable of eradicating poverty and hunger as visualized by the SDGs? Furthermore, there is no evidence that how much HRM is to blame for the pollution, poverty, starvation, climate change, and other issues that we have been dealing with for a long time. Neither does the existing HR literature give a solution. Realizing this, the author made a small attempt to study this emerging field of study.

In the West, David Orr, Bill McKibben, Al Gore, and Greta Thunberg are actively warning the government, industries, and people in society about the frightening consequences of climate change on human life through social media and authorship. A large number of scientific articles published contributed to expanding the understanding of sustainability concepts. Interestingly, a few articles (e.g., Ehnert, 2009; Leal Filho, 2000) even used synonyms to broaden the understanding of the term sustainability. Researchers have been engaged in forming opinions in this area, as mirrored in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015), also known as "grand challenges" (Dyllick & Muff, 2015) or "Common Good Agenda" (WCED, 1987). In poor and least-developed countries, full literacy and understanding of sustainability, as well as the risk that may arise due to our unsustainable behaviours still lacking. Such behaviours may affect future generations’ existential demands.

Although it appears that incorporating SDGs into an organization's mission is ambitious and rhetorical, HR scholarships are devoted to bringing these problems to the
attention of HR practitioners. They recommend an outside-in strategy to HRM, which is different from mainstream HRM, in order to inculcate business challenges into the organizational mission (e.g., Ulrich et al., 2012; Wright et al., 2003). However, there has been very little research in the field of outside-in HRM, particularly in the context of developing and least-developed countries. Because of low literacy in this field of HRM, these countries have a limited understanding of the sustainable HRM landscape. With these caveats in mind, this article just attempts to promote the literacy of sustainable HRM. The author attempts to elaborate its concepts by applying an outside-in approach. To define and expand the sustainable HRM landscape, the extant literature concentrates to elaborate on the terms preservation, regeneration, and development of resources to achieve economic, social, and environmental goals (e.g. Sena & Shani 2009; Dyllick & Muff, 2015; Ehnert, 2009; Krammer, 2014). Following their footsteps, this article elaborates on these three terms as long-term business challenges in order to conceptualise sustainable HRM. In this article, these three terms collectively signify ‘business challenges’. With all these conceptual and empirical contributions in mind, the two-fold aim of this article is to define the outside-in approach and suggest the potential area of contributions that HR professionals can make in preserving, renewing, and developing resources in order to achieve long-term business goals.

To materialize these aims, the article proceeds to review the literature to assess performance outcomes and then highlight the potential areas where HR professionals can contribute to adopting the outside-in approach. To identify the areas of potential contributions, the article takes references from synonyms and antonym terms signifying business challenges. Antonyms and synonyms of these terms not only aid to comprehend the terrain of sustainable HRM but also provide in-depth insights into potential negative externalities when not pursuing sustainability goals. Then after, the article suggests the process to implement sustainable HRM. Finally, the article outlines the implications and offers conclusions and limitations.

II. METHODOLOGY

Concerning methodology, the author used conceptual research based on existing literature and internet resources in the field of sustainable HRM. The study is being performed to address the knowledge gap in this area. According to Saunders (2021), a conceptual paper synthesizes knowledge from prior work on a specific issue and presents it in a new context to serve as a springboard for future studies to fill knowledge gaps. With the evaluation of recent literature, this paper develops qualitative propositions valid for future research. “Qualitative propositions are ‘hypotheses, typically written in a directional form’ that is developed in the final stage of qualitative analysis to delineate the interrelationship of elements of the advanced research model” (Creswell 2007, 240 cited in Johnson, 2019, p.1). Analysis of inside-out vs outside-in approaches, theoretical foundations, and long-term HRM performance outcomes based on relevant literature to derive four qualitative propositions.
III. LITERATURE REVIEW

a. Inside-out vs outside-in approach

The concept of ‘outside-in’ is rooted in the term ‘externality’ in economics. The core idea of externality, pioneered by the British economist Pigou (1920), is dominant in understanding its implications in HRM. In economics, an externality is defined as an unpriced spill over impact of company activity. Costs and advantages associated with the production and consumption of products are known as externalities. They could be favorable or unfavorable for business sustainability. The value/benefit gained by society from production and consumption is known as positive externalities. Customers satisfied with the goods will purchase them again and again. Negative externalities are the harm/cost to society caused by the production or use of products. The usage of coal in the manufacture of goods pollutes society, eventually resulting in the greenhouse effect.

Wright et al. (2003) state that the inside-out and outside-in are two different approaches to HR strategy. Adopting an outside-in approach, HR professionals develop HR systems after identifying the vital business needs and challenges. Simultaneously, they analyse how people fit in and the human outcomes required to address these issues and challenges. Thus, while applying this approach, HR functions start with reviewing business issues and challenges. Wright et al. further suggest that to develop an outside-in approach, line management involvement and a system of tracking the potential workforce (e.g., demographics) and business are imperative. It also implies that HR professionals contribute to business goals if they plan to achieve environmental performance (sustainability). Their roles and responsibilities are focused on innovative HRM through the recruitment of talent and addressing changing the needs and expectations of employees. Alternatively, an organization with an inside-out approach first considers what HR is doing, then identify the key people outcomes to be focused on, and finally attempts to fit HR to get positive business outcomes. This approach is short-term and may bring negative externalities in the long run.

Explaining the outside effect of employee retrenchment Mariappanadar (2003, p. 921) succinctly states that “it is important that the companies need to be aware of the unsustainable effect of retrenchment on the community and government because without social harmony the existence of capitalism itself will be jeopardized.” This statement implies that when organizations do not consider outside-in policies, negative externalities may develop. Mariappanadar (2003) offers a tripod approach to elaborate on this approach. Author further goes on to argue that the tripod approach comprises the company, community, and government perspectives regarded as the founding pillar of a sustainable society. He suggests developing an HRM strategy to maximize the value of the tripod. In his research, he applies the sustainable (external economies) and unsustainable (diseconomies) effects of retrenchment on a community, government, and company.

To elaborate on the outside-in concept of HRM, the scholarly contributions of Ehnert, Ulrich and Kramer are frequently referenced in sustainable HRM literature. A
closer look at their research reveals certain commonalities in their findings. Ehnert's (2009; 2016) research is frequently cited when defining sustainable HRM. She defines sustainable HRM as “the adoption of HRM strategies and practices that enable the achievement of financial, social and ecological goals, with an impact inside and outside of the organization and over a long-term time horizon while controlling for unintended side effects and negative feedback effect on the HR systems on the HR base and thus on the company itself” (Ehnert et al. 2016, p. 90). She further noted that for BS, sustainable HRM contributes to creating a balance in resource reproduction and consumption (see Ehnert 2009) to minimize the spill-over effects on the environment, society, and economy. In other words, the basic sustainable HRM concept entails ‘the preservation, regeneration, and development of the ecological, economic, and social resources of a system’ (Sena & Shani 2009, p. 84).

Ulrich et al. (2012, p.1) aptly state that:

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\text{The real business is external: the context and setting in which the business operates, the expectations of key stakeholders (customers, investors, communities, partners, employees, and so forth), and the strategies that give a company a unique competitive advantage. If HR professionals are truly to contribute to business performance, then their mindset must center on the goals of the business. They must take that outside reality and bring it into everything they do, practicing their craft with an eye to the business as a whole and not just their own department.}
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This statement clearly indicates that HR professionals can only add meaningful and sustainable value if they think and behave from an outside-in perspective. For this to achieve, HR professionals must have professional capacity and motivation. Explaining the outside-in approach, Kramar (2014) provides encompassing definition of sustainable HRM as ‘the patterns of planned or emerging HR strategies and practices intended to enable the achievement of financial, social and ecological goals while simultaneously reproducing the HR base over a long term’. (p. 1084). This definition clearly states that planned and emerging HR strategies and practices are required to address future business challenges that arise from the deterioration of the HR base, resulting in negative externalities and adversely affecting economic, social, and environmental outcomes to business sustainability in the long run. These concepts and approaches contribute to the elaborate meaning of sustainable HRM and the expansion of research in this field. Furthermore, theoretical harmonization and conceptual and empirical contributions are indispensable to expanding its landscape from an outside-in approach.

\[b. \text{Theoretical foundations for the study of outside-in HRM research}\]

After understanding the outside-in and inside-out concepts, it is imperative to become familiar with a few theories that aid in the development of a framework for future research. There are a number of theories that can be employed to do research in this field. The application of these theories to uncover the knowledge gap, and assess and anticipate events related to sustainable HRM benefits researchers. These theories include
e.g. human capital theory (Becker, 1975), institutional theory (Scott, 1987), stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), paradox theory (Poole & Ven, 1989; Smith & Lewis, 2011), risk society theory (Beck, 1992), organizational development theory (Porras and Robertson, 1986), systems theory (Bertalanffy, 1950), a resource-based view (Wernerfelt, 1984), ability-motivation-opportunity (AMO) theory Appelbaum et al. 2000), social exchange theory (Homans, 1958) and green theory (Eckersley, 2007). These theories not only provide a base to comprehend sustainable HRM but also benefit researchers to initiate research ideas, and searching for a gap, anticipant events, and long-term consequences.

According to the human capital theory, education and training boost employee productivity. Intellectual and human capital is viewed as renewable resources that help to increase productivity. The institutional theory supports legitimizing sustainable HRM rules and policies. It helps to reframe organizational structure, reform the governing mechanism, and establish a holistic organizational structure and policies to implement long-term HRM practices. Stakeholder theory directs to follow HR strategy and actions to support sustainable practices harmonizing the interests of shareholders. It guides to consideration of stakeholders' interests while making any decisions.

Paradox theory explains the competing demands between nature and management to assess interrelation and contradiction in an organization's decisions that exist simultaneously and persist over time. Risk society theory is aware of HRM to minimize the risk associated with technology transformation and its implications for the social and natural environment and guides in dealing with ethical questions. Organization development theory provides ground for promoting trust, commitment, culture, employee involvement, and collaboration and cooperation at work. The promotion of these elements fosters sustainable behavior at work through a number of interventions. The system theory explains the interconnectedness of the sub-system and its interaction with the external environment. It further supports to exchange of information and resources with the external environment which represents the important domain of sustainable HRM. The resource-based view supports HRM for the development of human capital to protect natural resources and the environment in order to ensure a competitive advantage.

To take examples, researchers frequently adopt the AMO theory to assess the impact of major HRM domains on environmental consequences. Based on AMO theory, De Prince et al. (2014) categorize three HRM practices—developing green abilities, motivating green employees, and providing green opportunities. Based on this theory Renwick et al. (2013) conclude that the development of employees’ green abilities followed by opportunities to participate in environmental management enhances environmental and organizational performance. The AMO theory nurtures sustainable HRM practices by promoting employees’ eco-friendly ability and greeting attitude and providing opportunities to work in a decent work environment. Social exchange theory explains mutual and reciprocal job support between employees and organizations to yield performance outcomes. The green theory advocates for considering ecological challenges- climate change, pandemics, pollution, loss of biodiversity, etc. while making business decisions rather than just political boundaries of economic advantage. These
theories not only serve to explain sustainable HRM from multiple angles, but they also help to focus research efforts in a specific direction.

**c. Sustainable HRM performance outcomes and the areas of potential contributions by HR professionals**

Sustainable HRM systems play a dual role with regard to corporate sustainability. As a means, HR professionals contribute to developing sustainable work culture and mindsets inside the organization, and as an end, they contribute to promoting CSR, green HRM practices, community involvement, and HR regeneration (Taylor et al., 2012). Research in the past indicates the relationship between socially responsible HR practices and affective commitment is stronger than between socially responsible HR practices and the other two attitudinal dimensions, i.e., motivation and trust (Kundu & Gahlawat, 2016). The empirical study by Guercil et al. (2018) predicted a positive association between sustainable HRM to job satisfaction and a negative association between sustainable HRM and turnover intention. Mariappanadar (2020) finds that SHRM reduces the side effects of work at the employee level, and focuses on improved financial and environmental performance.

The study by Michaelson et al. (2014) reveals a positive association between sustainable HRM and job satisfaction and a negative association with turnover intention as mediated by meaningful HRM work. Renwik et al. (2013) conclude that by building employees' green abilities, motivating them to perform well in the environment, and providing green opportunities within the organization improve employee involvement and environmental management practices. To assess relations between green HRM and environment management in the future, the authors suggest using mediating variables such as tacit knowledge, employee empowerment, engagement, and supportive work culture. The study also finds that HR professionals and managers who engage in sustainable HRM activities regard their professions as more relevant, resulting in increased job satisfaction and fewer turnover intentions (Guercil et al. 2018). Through green HRM practices, HRM can improve the firm’s environmental performance (Renwick et al. 2013; Paillé et al. 2014; Dumont et al. 2016). Almarzooqu et al. (2018) conclude that sustainable HRM has a direct effect on long-term employee performance and perceived organizational support. In their study organizational knowledge sharing (OKS) and employee empowerment, both have variable degrees of mediation effect.

Although past research establishes some evidence of relations between sustainable HRM practices to job satisfaction, turnover intention, professional motivation, commitment, and environmental performance, still there is no sufficient ground to believe how far these relations build on an outside-in approach. Furthermore, it is unclear to what extent these findings support resource preservation, regeneration, and development for environmental, societal, and economic benefits. If similar methodology, HR variables and activities, and performance outcomes appear and continue to conceptualize sustainable HRM, it would be hard for others to distinguish between mainstream and sustainable HRM. With an understanding of the outside-in approach and current sustainable HRM
research, the question that arises, "What happens if we do not really consider future business challenges and opportunities related to resource preservation, regeneration, and development first to the fate of sustainable HRM to business sustainability?" This question cannot be answered just by establishing relations between green HR practices and employee satisfaction. To clarify this question, we search synonyms and antonyms of the terms related to business challenges, as other researchers did earlier (e.g., Leal Filho, 2000; Ehnert, 2009).

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, a synonym is a word or expression that has the same or nearly the same meaning as another in the same language.’ In contrast, an antonym is ‘a word that means the opposite of another word.’ Let us look at the synonyms and antonyms of preservation, regeneration, and development. To quote Merriam-Webster dictionary (https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/preservation), the literal definition of the word ‘preservation’ is ‘the act or activity of keeping something in an existing and usually satisfactory condition’, and its synonyms are care and feeding, conserving, maintenance, sustentation, and upkeep. Unintended side effects and undesirable outcomes, such as abandonment, exposure, peril, insecurity, impairment, infringement, injury, and damage(https://www.synonyms.com/antonyms/preservation), occur if the resources are not preserved. Sustainable HRM, in generic view, aids in the implementation of minimum wage and social security provisions, the elimination of in-work poverty, health and sanitation awareness and arrangements, medical benefits, children's education, and the development and dissemination of core values and culture within the organization, among other things. Applying green selection, development, and compensation methods, HRM may assist firms in maintaining a healthy work environment. It helps to encourage personnel, boost capacity upgrading abilities, manage chemical exposure, avoid anxiety, regulate drug abuse, and offer health and wellness facilities to preserve human and intellectual resources. HRM serves a critical role in looking after employees, maintaining work-life balance, conserving human capital, reducing turnover, and ensuring job security through offering meaningful jobs.

Merriam-Webster defines ‘regeneration’ as formed or created again; reborn or converted; restored to a better, higher, or more worthy state. The synonyms are reanimation, rebirth, renewal, restoration, recovery, revitalization, revival, revivification (https://thesaurus.plus/synonyms/regeneration). The antonyms of the term regeneration are: stagnation, decrease, extinction, expiration and death (https://thesaurus.plus/antonyms/regeneration). At this point, the concept of employee vitality is necessary to discuss. Employee vitality refers to their energy, enthusiasm, and spontaneity at work (Ryan & Frederick, 1997). It increases resource regeneration ability, helps to maintain a balance between performance and renewal of energy, and enhances employee relations. HRM adds to the vitality of supply-chain personnel outside the organization and may create relationships with institutions such as colleges and business schools. The exchange of relations with external institutes supports the regeneration of the human resource base and checks stagnation, decrease, extinction, and the expiration of human skills. Performance-based pay, green hiring and compensation methods, green training and development,
and management support for green organizational structure configuration contribute to regenerating resources. In addition, CEO remuneration, capacity to understand business externalities and handling them, employees’ motivation and satisfaction, respect for work, work-life policies, partnership and networking with academic and social institutions add value to the resource regeneration process. Similarly, knowledge and talent management practices, workforce diversity, inclusiveness, minimum use of child labor, healthy work environment, employment of differently-abled and transgender workforce, union-management relations, green collective bargaining and many more are the different dimensions to stop social capital extinction and promote regeneration of resources base. The Free Dictionary defines development as ‘the act or process of growing, progressing, or developing’ (https://www.thefreedictionary.com/development). Synonyms of the word ‘development’ are advancement, betterment, improvement, perfection, refinement, maturation, flourishing, augmentation, enhancement, and evolvement (https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/development). The antonyms of ‘development’ are decline, degradation, decay, deterioration, downfall, regression, and disaster (https://www.powerthesaurus.org/development/antonyms). Sustainable HRM contributes to the development of innovative skills that aid in the deployment of cutting-edge technology, the use of alternative energy, the reengineering of work and ergonomics, and so on. These dimensions are linked to improving the working environment and, as a result, assisting the organization’s economic, social, and environmental performance.

HR professionals’ contributions in these areas may help to increase employee performance, which ultimately improves environmental, social and economic performance. But until and unless these contributions encompass the broad business challenges, practices of sustainable HRM remain rhetoric than reality. The antonym terminology represents the negative externalities thus researchers in the future should provide meaning to these and HR professionals have to communicate the negative externalities in organisations. Furthermore, to mitigate negative externalities, HR professionals have to have knowledge, skill and ability to add value to their performance. Researchers also have to explore what professional knowledge, skill and ability currently prevail to predict and manage externalities and what is lacking.

**IV. PROPOSITIONS**

Notwithstanding these arguments, sustainable HRM scholarship agrees that organizational change and transformation initiatives begin if a business focuses on sustainable development initiatives (Kemp et al. 2010; Lindgreen et al. 2008; Wilkinson et al. 2001). They further argue that sustainable HRM emerged as a different approach to integrating HRM strategy into business strategy to achieve a longer-term business and environmental advantage. Contrary to sustainable HRM, mainstream strategic HRM tends to be short to medium-term focused and thus pays little attention to regenerating input from the environment and society for achieving the economic goal (Paulet, 2019). Research in mainstream HRM increasingly concentrated on establishing relations between
HRM and organizational performance. Influenced by the neoliberal thought of business sustainability, mainstream HRM research primarily focused on achieving competitive advantage with less consideration for societal dimensions of sustainability (e.g., Ehnert 2009; Elkington, 1987), thus maximising negative externalities (Mariappanadar, 2003). Few researchers even decried that the previous HRM researchers neither found the causal relations between strategic HRM practices and organizational performance nor positively contributed to the advancement of knowledge on the complexity of an organization's life (Jackson et al., 2014; Kaufman, 2015). Considering lacunae in mainstream HRM research and deriving an appealing approach to sustainable HRM research, this article illustrates the following qualitative propositions for future research combining HRM policies, theoretical foundations and long-term SB challenges:

a. HRM policy research on minimum wage and social security, eliminating in-work poverty, and providing health and sanitation awareness and arrangements contribute to long-run resource preservation for BS if it is built on relevant theories (e.g., AMO theory, stakeholder theory, paradox theory, etc.).

b. HRM policy research on performance-based pay, green hiring and compensation, and green training and development contributes to long-term resource generation if it is built on relevant theories (e.g., AMO theory, stakeholder theory, paradox theory, etc.).

c. HRM policy research on promoting innovative skills, use of alternative energy, work reengineering, and ergonomics contributes to long-run development challenges if it is built on relevant theories (e.g., AMO theory, stakeholder theory, paradox theory, etc.)

d. HR professionals' abilities and delivery quality contribute to long-term business resource preservation, regeneration, and development if they implement HRM policies derived from the research on the above three propositions.

V. IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE HRM IN ORGANIZATIONS

Implementing sustainable HRM to gain three-dimensional goals (environmental, social and economic) appears ambitious and rhetorical unless getting support from all stakeholders. HRM specialists, CEOs, mid and lower-level line managers, and employees must play significant roles in integrating sustainability goals within the business process to accomplish BS while avoiding side effects and negative feedback (Vilanova & Dettoni, 2011; Kramer, 2014). In organizations, the sustainable HRM manifestation process emanates from the supportive attitude of the top management, extensive level of communication, employees’ motivation, learning, knowledge management, ability to take risks, a longer-term perspective, and skills to use available resources optimally (Blake & Gano-an, 2020). Jobs are to be designed in meaningful ways by encouraging autonomous teams; employees are to be offered a variety of training and development opportunities to promote new ideas in regeneration; and organizational culture has to be developed to implement sustainable HRM (Benn et al., 2012). Looking at the complex nature of
relations among environmental, social, and economic outcomes, HR professionals need to expand sustainable culture, change the mindset of stakeholders, and elaborate synonym and antonym effects of the sustainable concepts. More importantly, everyone in the organization must ‘feel’ great about their work rather than ‘do’ the great work (Lai, 2017).

The HR professionals should consider the following outside-in approach to implement sustainable HRM policies and practices in organisations:

- **Endorse SDGs challenges:** At this point, organisations have to endorse the SDGs. These goals are the common good agenda that clearly explain future business issues and challenges. After endorsing SDGs, it is necessary to reshuffle the SDGs’ into business challenges to develop HRM policies and strategies. For example, SDG: 10 is for reducing inequalities within and among countries (UN, 2015). SDG: 10.1 states ‘progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 percent of the population at a rate higher than the national average’ (UN, 2015, p.21). It offers business challenges for the regeneration and preservation of resources in the long run. Business challenges will not be transformed into opportunities unless we reduce inequalities in compensation within the industry, and in comparison to regional countries, ensure sustained income growth for employees at the bottom of the pyramid, empower and promote social, economic, and political (union) inclusion of employees, develop non-discriminatory policies, and provide opportunities for employees’ representation to hear their voices.

- **Discuss business issues and challenges:** Considering both synonyms and antonyms of preservation, regeneration, and development, top management develops business goals, plans and strategies for business sustainability. Expectations of the key stakeholders (customers, investors, communities, partners, employees, and so forth), as discussed earlier, must be considered while framing a business plan. The professional contributions of the HR department require during the discussion and preparation of the business plan. The selection of any course of action does have a positive (synonym) or negative (antonym) effect on three sustainability outcomes- environment, social, and economy.

- **Regular tracking:** Top management, line management, HR professionals and other key stakeholders have to assess the HR issues and challenges with reference to business goals (Ulrich et al., 2012). For this, regular tracking of the progress in the preservation, regeneration, and development of resources is essential to developing an emergent sustainable HRM strategy. Customer satisfaction, employees’ feelings at work, supply-chain activities, partnerships with external institutions, universities, vocational schools, media news and reports, and CSR activities needed tracking.
- **Legitimize sustainable HRM**: To ensure a long-term sustainable HRM culture, it is imperative to legitimize holistic governing rules and adopt HR practices accordingly. Conventional laws and regulations, as well as structure, need to be reframed and reorganized. To embrace sustainable practices, each department must have to create and communicate sustainable criteria and indicators. Each department's norms and rules must be set to follow sustainable procedures.

- **Development of HRM policies and strategies**: Develop and legitimize policies for long-term recruitment, growth, and incentive. HR rules should make employees feel like they are working on something worthwhile for the common good. HR professionals must be trained in a different way than they had been when they were designing mainstream HRM policies.

- **Monitoring and reporting sustainable activities and outcomes**: Progress in sustainable activities and the benefits from sustainable HRM practices require regular monitoring and timely reporting. A yearly audit of sustainable HRM performance should be conducted in conjunction with long-term business challenges.

**VI. CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS**

This article contributes to the conceptualization of sustainable HRM.

- Elaborates the outside-in approach taking support from synonym and antonym terms of the three major business challenges.

- Pave the way to consider different theories (e.g. AMO theory, stakeholder theory, paradox theory, resource-based theory) researching to develop the sustainable HRM theory.

- Motivates researchers to convince stakeholders how sustainable HRM can contribute to BS.

- Develops propositions for future research to elaborate on the concept of sustainable HRM.

- Suggests endorsing SDGs to expand the terrain of sustainable HRM.

**VII. IMPLICATIONS**

This paper aimed to comprehend the outside-in approach to sustainable HRM and assess the potential contributions to be made by the HR professional to implement sustainable HRM. The synonyms and antonyms of the words 'preservation, regeneration, and development,' as well as a survey of relevant literature, were used to conceptualize sustainable HRM. Following a review of the existing literature and an analysis of future business challenges, it appears that HR professionals will have to adapt policies such as minimum pay for life support to prevent in-work poverty, health and sanitation facilities, and finally, disseminate an organization's core values and culture depending on business resource preservation challenges. HR professionals contribute to promoting
employees’ vitality, developing partnerships with universities and business and technical schools, and line management depending on the resource preservation goals of the business. Green HR practices, employees’ engagement in knowledge enhancement and talent management, employment of a diverse workforce, and harmonious relations between management trade unions depend on resource regeneration goals. Finally, HR professionals plan for sustainable innovation, apply cutting-edge technology and work on reengineering and ergonomics depending on the resource development goals of the business.

Therefore, the next challenge for researchers is to elaborate concepts of sustainable HRM in line with the business challenges drawing from SDGs and literate stakeholders on both synonyms and antonym effects. A number of theories, as described earlier, offer ground to identify knowledge gaps, explain business conditions, events and challenges, and expand the landscape of sustainable HRM. Before that, researchers, HR professionals, employees, and we all have to agree that the notion of 'real business is external' demands an outside-in HRM approach (Ulrich et al., 2012). It is a conceptual article, and the ideas presented here need to be fleshed out and tested further.

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