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Green HRM Practices for Achieving Organizational Sustainability: Evidence from Indian Manufacturing Firm

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Abstract: *Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) refers to the embedding of ecological objectives within core people-management activities (hiring, training, appraisal, rewards and staff participation) so that employees act in environmentally responsible ways and firms perform more sustainably. This paper asks what part GHRM plays in helping Indian manufacturers become sustainable organisations. It is a desk-based synthesis of published scholarship that traces how green hiring, training, appraisal, compensation and involvement relate to the environmental, social and economic strands of sustainability. Across the studies reviewed, GHRM is associated with better use of resources, improved employee wellbeing and stronger financial results. It also appears to nurture a sense of social responsibility that supports lasting competitive strength. At the same time, the literature is uneven: manufacturing, and small firms in particular, is under-studied; measures of GHRM and sustainability differ from one study to the next; and the social pillar receives comparatively little attention. The paper concludes that GHRM should be built into corporate strategy rather than run as a stand-alone HR programme if Indian manufacturers are to secure durable sustainability gains.*

Key Words: *Green HRM, organisational sustainability, triple bottom line, Indian manufacturing, secondary data review.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Background of the Study

Sustainability at the organisational level describes a firm's capacity to keep its economic, social and environmental obligations in balance so that it can survive and adapt over the long run (Elkington, 1997). Elkington's triple bottom line (people, planet and profit) turns this idea into a three-part yardstick. Firms that adopt it seek to limit ecological damage, treat stakeholders fairly and remain financially healthy at the same time. Concern for the natural environment has grown sharply in this century, and development agendas worldwide now place sustainability at their centre. Regulators, shareholders and customers are all raising their expectations, which pushes companies to build sustainable thinking into daily operations and long-term strategy. Human resource departments are well placed to respond, because they shape norms, culture and conduct at work. Bringing ecological management ideas into HR policy has given rise to a distinct field, Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM or GHRM). In practical terms, GHRM means aligning a firm's people policies, systems and routines with its environmental targets. Its purpose is to encourage employees to behave in ecologically sensible ways, shrink the environmental footprint of the business and advance wider sustainability aims. The main instruments are environmentally oriented hiring, training, performance management and pay, together with staff participation in green programmes (Renwick et al., 2013). Taken together, these are intended to build a workforce that cares about the environment and is willing to support responsible growth. Manufacturing is a major contributor to India's output and jobs, yet it is also a heavy consumer of energy and a leading source of waste and carbon emissions. With national programmes such as Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat positioning the country as a worldwide production base, cleaner industrial growth has become increasingly urgent.

1.1 Statement of the Problem:

Long-term growth and competitiveness now depend heavily on how well firms handle sustainability. By weaving environmental concerns into HR policies and procedures, Green HRM offers a route to sustainable operation. For Indian

manufacturers, however, there is little systematic documentation of how GHRM is put into practice or what it delivers. Researchers have examined individual GHRM elements and their links to sustainability, but no comprehensive work has pulled these findings together from secondary sources. Without such a synthesis it is hard to see how GHRM shapes environmental, social and economic results. This paper therefore reviews and consolidates the available literature and published evidence in order to judge the overall effect of GHRM on sustainability in Indian manufacturing organisations.

1.2 Objectives

1. To identify and evaluate the function of Green HRM practices in Indian manufacturing companies.
2. To analyse how these practices influence organisational sustainability in the same setting.

1.3 Scope of the Study

The study covers Green HRM practices, namely green hiring, training, performance appraisal, compensation and employee involvement, and considers how they jointly advance sustainability in its environmental, social and economic senses. Only secondary material is used, and the geographical boundary is India.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Manufacturing managers, HR practitioners and policymakers can draw on the findings when designing strategies that build sustainability into people management. By collating the scattered evidence on Green HRM in India, the paper also narrows a documented research gap. From an academic standpoint, it adds to the sustainable management literature and offers a starting point for later empirical work.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The research follows a descriptive-analytical design and relies entirely on secondary data to understand how Green HRM contributes to sustainability in Indian manufacturing. Material was drawn from trustworthy sources such as academic journals, books, research papers, official publications and industry reports issued between 2010 and 2025. Search terms included Green HRM, sustainability, manufacturing industry and India. Content analysis and comparison across studies were then used to pick out recurring patterns, relationships and unresolved gaps. In the interest of reliability, only peer-reviewed and verifiable sources were retained. The dependence on secondary information is an acknowledged limitation; nevertheless, every source is credited and accepted ethical norms were observed throughout.

3. CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS:

The analysis rests on a set of related constructs that connect GHRM with organisational sustainability. Each is defined below and tied to the aims of this paper.

3.1 Green Human Resource Management (GHRM)

GHRM means building ecological management principles into HR policies and routines so that resources are used sustainably and employees commit to the firm's environmental goals. Its components are green recruitment and selection, green training and development, green performance appraisal, green compensation and rewards, and employee engagement in environmental programmes.

3.1.1 Green Recruitment and Selection

This practice concerns attracting and choosing candidates who care about the environment, and making sure that hiring approaches reflect the firm's sustainability values (Tang et al., 2018).

3.1.2 Green Training and Development

Green training builds the knowledge, skills and attitudes that employees need to carry out environmental tasks and nurtures a sustainability-minded culture. It is typically delivered through targeted programmes and workshops that develop environmental competence (Jabbour, 2011).

3.1.3 Green Performance Appraisal

Green performance appraisal evaluates staff on the extent to which they advance environmental goals and sustainable practice (Paillé et al., 2014). Environmental targets, such as saving energy, cutting waste or meeting regulatory standards, are written into the appraisal criteria.

3.1.4 Green Compensation and Reward Systems

Green compensation and rewards place environmental results among the indicators used to recognise and reward employees (Yusliza et al., 2019). Firms may offer incentives, bonuses or public recognition to those who take part in sustainability projects or display eco-friendly conduct.

3.1.5 Employee Involvement in Environmental Management

Employee involvement denotes staff taking an active part in environmental decisions, innovation and programmes that advance sustainability (Luu, 2019).

3.1.6 Green Organizational Culture

Green organisational culture is the set of shared values, beliefs and norms that put environmental protection and responsible behaviour first. A firm with such a culture keeps its employees pulling in the same direction as its ecological goals, encourages collective responsibility and helps GHRM practices take root.

3.2 Organizational Sustainability

Organisational sustainability is a firm's capacity to reach lasting economic, social and environmental goals by managing resources and stakeholder relationships responsibly. It has three dimensions: environmental (lowering ecological impact), social (employee wellbeing and ethical conduct) and economic (staying profitable and efficient).

3.2.1 Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability aims to shrink the firm's ecological footprint through efficient use of resources, lower waste and emissions, and responsible environmental practices that protect long-term ecological balance.

3.2.2 Social Sustainability

Social sustainability concerns the wellbeing, fairness and ethical treatment of people in and around the firm. It covers fair labour practice, a healthy and safe workplace, diversity and inclusion, employee engagement and a positive contribution to the community, all of which build lasting trust and social responsibility.

3.2.3 Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability is the ability to deliver financial performance over time while using resources efficiently and limiting environmental costs. It rests on eco-efficient operations, innovation and cost-saving measures such as reducing waste, conserving energy and greening the supply chain.

4. RESULTS:

4.1 The Role of Specific Green HRM Practices

International scholarship has repeatedly linked GHRM practices with organisational sustainability. Renwick et al. (2013) argued that embedding sustainability in HR policy and organisational culture improves environmental performance in European companies. Jabbour and Santos (2016) similarly showed that when HRM is aligned with environmental strategy, both operational and ecological results improve, which makes HR a driver of sustainable competitiveness. Tang et al. (2018), studying Chinese manufacturers, reported that green training initiatives raise employees' environmental awareness and commitment and so lift sustainability performance. Yong et al. (2019) found that GHRM helps stimulate green innovation and organisational citizenship behaviour for the environment (OCBE), which motivates staff to join eco-friendly activities. Taken together, these studies suggest that GHRM lowers environmental impact while also raising engagement, innovation and long-run resilience, giving firms a strategic advantage. Research on GHRM in India is still maturing, although it is growing steadily. Cherian and Jacob (2012) reported that Indian firms applying GHRM experience better morale and greater environmental efficiency, a double benefit. Mishra (2017) stressed that green training and appraisal systems are important for improving sustainability, especially in manufacturing. Jain and Sharma (2019) noted that leadership commitment and employee engagement are critical to adopting GHRM effectively. Yusoff and Ramayah (2021) reported that firms combining green recruitment with reward systems tend to do better environmentally and enjoy a stronger corporate image. Mani et al. (2022) showed that placing environmental considerations in HR policy encourages a green culture and spurs innovation in Indian industry. Even so, most Indian studies have a narrow focus: they usually examine single practices instead of assessing how all the dimensions together shape organisational sustainability.

4.2 Green HRM and Organizational Sustainability Outcomes

Renwick et al. (2013) treat Green HRM as the meeting point of environmental management and HRM, arguing that recruitment, training, appraisal, reward and participation activities turn into strategic capabilities when they are linked to environmental goals. In their review, GHRM develops firm-specific human capital that improves environmental performance and gives legitimacy to sustainability efforts. Ahmad (2015) likewise sorts the main GHRM policies (recruitment, training, performance management, rewards and involvement) and argues that how well they are implemented determines how far a firm attains environmental and social sustainability. Using these ideas as a base, the sections below examine the effect of GHRM on each pillar: environmental, social and economic.

4.2.1 Environmental Outcomes (Planet)

GHRM improves environmental sustainability mainly by shaping how employees behave and how the organisation operates. Cherian and Jacob (2012) reported that green recruitment, training and rewards raise environmental awareness and lower waste and resource use. In manufacturing, Mishra (2017) found that green appraisal and training bring gains in energy efficiency, waste handling and regulatory compliance. Mandip (2012) observed that green training sharpens environmental sensitivity and prompts employees to take up eco-friendly habits, while Jaya and Verma (2014) noted that green induction and performance evaluation help embed an environmentally responsible culture. In services, Arulrajah, Opatha and Nawaratne (2015) found that GHRM improves environmental management and reduces

ecological footprints. Overall, the evidence points to both ecological and economic gains, including stronger compliance, innovation and market competitiveness (Guerci et al., 2016; Dutta, 2012; Mishra, 2017).

Dumont et al. (2017) offer empirical support for the view that GHRM lifts environmental performance chiefly through mechanisms at the employee level: a green psychological climate, personal green values and pro-environmental conduct. They also warn against leaning too heavily on cross-sectional, perception-based data and call for multi-level research that links HR practices to objective measures of environmental performance.

4.2.2 Social Outcomes (People):

Research on Indian organisations suggests that GHRM raises employees' environmental awareness and builds a green organisational culture, which in turn improves morale and retention. Cherian and Jacob (2012) showed that green recruitment, training, motivation and rewards deepen employee participation in environmental programmes and foster favourable attitudes towards sustainability. Mishra (2017) placed GHRM within India's institutional and resource setting and stressed that employee involvement, environmental training and learning across functions produce social benefits including commitment, cooperation and wellbeing. Sector studies in Indian hospitality and banking point the same way: green training and flexible work arrangements raise engagement and work-life balance, which lowers the intention to quit. Gehi (2023), for example, reported that, in Kolkata's five-star hotels, GHRM practices clearly strengthened employee engagement and wellbeing.

In IT and manufacturing, job satisfaction and identification with the organisation are reported to rise alongside green training, green-team membership and green performance management. Haridas et al. (2016) found that in Kerala IT firms, environmental training combined with employee involvement markedly improved pro-environmental attitudes and perceived organisational support. Indian research increasingly links GHRM with psychological wellbeing as well, suggesting that green workplaces and supportive HR policies create a climate that reduces stress and makes work feel more meaningful. Ahmad's (2015) review, although international in scope, includes Indian examples showing that green training and involvement raise employee satisfaction, an important social outcome. Beyond wellbeing, some Indian studies highlight the contribution of GHRM to occupational health and safety and to fair pay for employees engaged in sustainability work. Mishra (2017) and Chakraborty (2020) observed that formalising green health and safety measures, and acknowledging green contributions in appraisals, builds employee trust and lends social legitimacy to sustainability programmes.

4.2.3 Economic Outcomes (Profit)

The evidence indicates that GHRM strengthens economic performance by raising efficiency, cutting costs and encouraging innovation. In the Indian setting, studies report that green recruitment, training and appraisal systems improve energy efficiency, compliance and lower operating costs (Cherian & Jacob, 2012; Mishra, 2017). Ahmad (2015) and Mandip (2012) note that linking HR indicators with sustainability goals, and offering green training, builds employee competence and leads to process innovation and lower material costs. Green induction and performance evaluation, when institutionalised, further improve resource efficiency and reduce running expenses (Jaya & Verma, 2014). Findings from Kerala's IT and hospitality sectors suggest that the engagement and workplace efficiencies generated by GHRM boost retention and profits (Haridas et al., 2016; Gehi, 2023). In addition, defining green roles and recognising contributions raise productivity and remove hidden costs (Chakraborty, 2020; Dutta, 2012). On balance, GHRM encourages eco-innovation, efficiency and employee commitment, which reinforce the financial sustainability of Indian firms.

Table 1: Synthesis of reviewed evidence on GHRM practices and sustainability outcomes

GHRM practice	Outcomes reported in the reviewed studies	Illustrative sources
Green recruitment and selection	Higher environmental awareness; lower waste and resource use; better environmental results and corporate image	Cherian & Jacob (2012); Yusoff & Ramayah (2021)
Green training and development	Stronger environmental awareness and commitment; energy efficiency; pro-environmental attitudes; process innovation	Tang et al. (2018); Mishra (2017); Mandip (2012); Haridas et al. (2016)
Green performance appraisal	Improved compliance, energy use and waste handling; embedded green culture; employee trust and legitimacy of programmes	Mishra (2017); Jaya & Verma (2014); Chakraborty (2020)
Green compensation and rewards	Greater participation in green initiatives; productivity gains; lower hidden costs	Cherian & Jacob (2012); Yusoff & Ramayah (2021); Chakraborty (2020); Dutta (2012)

GHRM practice	Outcomes reported in the reviewed studies	Illustrative sources
Employee involvement	Commitment, teamwork, wellbeing and job satisfaction; green innovation and OCBE	Mishra (2017); Gehi (2023); Haridas et al. (2016); Yong et al. (2019)

5. DISCUSSION, GAPS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS:

GHRM has become a strategic approach that brings environmental, social and economic aims into HR functions in pursuit of organisational sustainability. For Indian manufacturers, the reviewed evidence suggests that it advances environmental sustainability through green hiring, training and performance management that raise energy efficiency, reduce waste and support regulatory compliance. It supports the social dimension by fostering wellbeing, involvement and loyalty via green initiatives and principled workplace conduct, nurturing a culture of environmental responsibility. It also promotes economic sustainability by improving resource efficiency, reducing operating costs and encouraging eco-innovation, which strengthens competitiveness and long-term profitability. Implementation in Indian manufacturing remains uneven, however. Large organisations are increasingly adopting green practices, whereas small and medium enterprises frequently struggle with limited finance, low awareness and weak institutional backing. Most studies are also descriptive and concentrate on perceptions instead of measurable sustainability results, which constrains our understanding of how GHRM translates into quantifiable gains in environmental performance, employee welfare and economic efficiency. Although scholarly interest keeps rising, several gaps stand out. The first is a measurement gap: most studies lack objective indicators of environmental performance. The second is a sectoral gap, since manufacturing, particularly among SMEs, has attracted less attention than services. The third is an integration gap, because GHRM is commonly handled as a separate HR function instead of being aligned with wider sustainability strategy. The fourth is a methodological gap: few longitudinal studies examine the long-term effects of GHRM on organisational sustainability.

Table 2: Research gaps and suggested directions

Gap	Description	Suggested direction
Measurement	Reliance on perceptual data; few objective environmental performance indicators	Link HR practices to objective environmental indicators using multi-level designs
Sectoral	Manufacturing, especially SMEs, receives less attention than services	Focus empirical work on manufacturing SMEs
Integration	GHRM treated as a separate HR function	Align GHRM with corporate sustainability strategy
Methodological	Few longitudinal studies of long-term impact	Adopt experimental and longitudinal designs

Future work should move beyond correlational designs to experimental and longitudinal studies that test how particular bundles of GHRM practices influence sustainability across the environmental, social and economic dimensions.

6. CONCLUSION:

This review concludes that Green HRM practices are central to advancing organisational sustainability in Indian manufacturing. Building green initiatives into recruitment, training and performance management can substantially raise environmental efficiency, financial performance and social responsibility. For lasting impact, firms should tie GHRM more closely to overall business strategy, and adoption should widen across industrial sectors.

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