

# Greening the Workplace: A Study of Green HRM Practices Adopted by Indian Corporates

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**Abstract:** There is a growing need for the integration of environmental management into Human Resource Management (HRM) practices; such effort is known as Green HRM initiatives. Green HRM means using every employee interface in such a manner in order to promote and maintain sustainable business practices as well as creating awareness, which in turn, helps organizations to operate in an environmentally sustainable fashion. Hence, Green HRM encompasses two major elements: environmental-friendly HR practices and the preservation of the knowledge capital. The purpose of this study is to explore the status and challenges of green human resource management practices in India, an under-researched area. This paper concentrates on studying the present Green Human Resource Management practices adopted by the Indian organizations, their awareness and implementations, and growth rate in Indian scenario. This study explores the success rate of implementing Green Human. This study fulfils the need to explore green human resource management in emerging economies like India.

**Keywords:** Green HRM, Green HRM Practices, Environment

**JEL Codes:** O15, J24, J64

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Green HRM, also known as environmentally sustainable human resource management, is a relatively new concept that has gained momentum in recent years. This approach to HRM integrates sustainability principles into various HR functions, including recruitment, training and development, compensation and benefits, employee engagement, and performance management. Green HRM aims to enhance organizational sustainability by promoting employee awareness and commitment to environmental issues, reducing resource consumption, and improving the overall environmental performance of the organization (Deshwal, 2015).

As the world continues to face environmental challenges, the implementation of Green HRM practices has become increasingly important for organizations to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

This paper explores the concept of “Green HRM”, which refers to the integration of environmentally sustainable practices into HRM policies and practices. Drawing on a review of relevant literature, the paper highlights the potential benefits of Green HRM, including improved environmental performance, enhanced employee engagement, and strengthened employer brand. The paper also examines the key components of Green HRM, including recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, compensation and benefits, and employee engagement. Overall, the paper suggests that Green HRM has the potential to contribute to both organizational sustainability and employee well-being and calls for further research on this important topic.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Ahmad (2015) observed the increasing awareness of Indian Corporates for going green and adopting various environment management techniques. The paper focussed on various Green HRM practices pursued by the organizations and explains the simplified meaning of Green HRM. Organization across the globe are incorporating and working towards implementing Green HRM which will indirectly help them to achieve a competitive advantage in this fast-moving corporate world. Complete adoption is not possible because it would require a changed approach towards the existing HR practices. Mishra (2017) studied the existing green HRM practices adopted by Indian Corporates but they found that these practices are neither formally organized nor they are being diligently followed. For the study, the author conducted the research in two phases, in the first phase archival research and in the second case study technique was employed. The author observed that organizations are making efforts to increase awareness through informal means rather than formal means which tends to be expensive. In the case of recruitment and selection organizations have not paid any consideration for accessing green personality and skills in the selection process. Overall, it was found that there is high scope for Indian manufacturing sector to improve their Green HRM practices.

Peerzadah et al. (2018) explored in their study if green HRM practices contribute positively to organizational reputation and higher employee engagement. The authors' study was based on secondary sources and used the archival method of literature review. They observed that the green performance, green behaviours, and green competencies of human resources can be shaped and reshaped through adoption of green HRM practices. Green HRM can develop inspiration, willingness, and commitment to employees to contribute their ideas and efforts which would help in converting the organization into green entities. Jalaja (2018) discussed the various green HRM practices that are evolving as a result of depleting environment. Increased

greenhouse gas emissions and other factors are leading to acute global warming issues, corporates must readily move forward and act in favour of achieving the “green” in their business missions. HR managers face challenges while they try to incorporate green practices as their mission and vision statement. Indian organizations are still in the growing stage. Acceptance of green culture will lead to sustainable use of resources and reduce the negative impacts of the organizations. Majeed & Khan (2019) reviewed literatures and addressed the need of green HRM. For the study, they have emphasized on the various practices adopted by Indian corporates and discussed suggestions for implementing such practices at a larger scale. Apart from being responsible to the environment, the study exclusively discusses the positive image that a corporate creates by implementing green practices. The study suggested ways in which environmental management can be integrated with human resource management to achieve an upper hand among various corporates. Rizvi & Garg (2021) in their study used qualitative as well as quantitative research in order to get an in-depth knowledge about green HRM in Indian corporates. The study discusses the green practices and its impacts on organizational performance and its management along with the relationship between strategies related to human resource and sustainability of the organizational environment. Updating green knowledge and skills, creating a workforce with environmentally friendly mindset, training and development of the workforce with issues relating to environment and strategy formulation by keeping in mind the importance of “green” and sustainability. Contributions have been made by various corporates to instil a culture of environment friendly and sustainability willingness among the workforce.

From the above review, we found that some studies have explored the implementation of Green HRM practices in specific industries or regions, more research is needed to understand how these practices can help organizations and HRM professionals to execute the such strategies in order to promote sustainability and employee well-being. Keeping this in mind, we have found the need to examine Green HRM practices in Indian Corporates in the current years, and by virtue of our paper we will address this gap.

### **3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To comprehend the prevalent green HRM strategies.
2. To outline several initiatives adopted by the different corporates in India.

### **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The paper is theoretical in nature and is primarily based on secondary data collected from different databases, websites, journals, and other available sources. The study encompasses and assembles information regarding green HRM practices in general. Moreover, we have selected 10 companies belonging to different sectors to get a comprehensive overview of the Green HRM adoption by the various sectors in recent times.

## **5. THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF GREEN HRM INITIATIVES**

Today corporates are acting mindful about the hazardous impacts of their work centers. Organizations are shifting to a resource effective construction technique that minimizes the negative impacts on the environment. Usage of solar power, recycled resources, proper sewage, water conservation, etc. In addition, organizations today are shifting towards adoption of paperless work environment. IT sector especially has been converting their official documents to digital format. This act reduces wastage and energy of natural resources. Firms also started practicing green recruitment and selection. By applying these methods, corporates these days are aiming to hire professionals who are sensitive and aware of environmental concerns. Individuals must possess a willingness to protect the environment and be aware of the green practices to carry out things. Wastage disposal and recycling reduces waste discarded, saves energy, and reduces the carbon footprint of organizations. The 3R's- Reduces, Recycle and Reuse is currently adopted by many corporates to save the environment and win competitive edge over others. Moving towards energy conservation, organizations these days are opting for 100% renewable energy, reducing carbon footprint, e-vehicles, to potentially reduce the negative environmental impacts. Corporates are striving to be eco-friendly for a sustainable future.

Green appraisal and performance management are approaches that organizations can adopt to evaluate and manage the performance of their employees in the context of sustainability and environmental responsibility. Green appraisal involves assessing employees' performance based on their contributions to environmental sustainability, while performance management refers to the ongoing process of setting goals, providing feedback, and evaluating employees' performance to ensure that they are meeting the organization's expectations and contributing to its success. Incorporating sustainability metrics into performance management can help organizations promote sustainability and environmental responsibility while also improving employee engagement and performance. Green training and development are considered as a process through which organizations equip their employees with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to promote environmental sustainability and reduce the organization's environmental impact. This type of training may include education on sustainable practices, such as energy conservation and waste reduction, as well as strategies for integrating sustainability into business processes and decision-making. Green training and development can help organizations promote sustainability and meet their environmental goals, while also enhancing employee engagement and motivation. By investing in employees' skills and knowledge in sustainability, organizations can create a culture of environmental responsibility that is embedded in their operations and supported by their workforce. Additionally, green training and development can have broader benefits for society and the environment by increasing awareness and understanding of environmental issues and promoting sustainable behaviours

outside of the workplace. Overall, green training and development is an important tool for organizations seeking to enhance their environmental performance and build a sustainable future. Green rewards and compensation are incentives and bonuses used by organizations to motivate and reward employees for their contributions to environmental sustainability and the reduction of the organization's environmental impact. This approach fosters a culture of environmental responsibility and can attract and retain employees who prioritize sustainability. Examples include bonuses for exceptional commitment to sustainability, recognition programs, and additional compensation for innovative solutions to reduce the organization's environmental footprint. Green rewards and compensation reinforce an organization's commitment to sustainability and encourage employees to prioritize sustainability in their work. In today's business landscape, sustainability has become an increasingly important consideration for organizations of all sizes and industries. As companies strive to reduce their environmental footprint and promote sustainable practices, it's clear that employees play a critical role in achieving these goals. Green employee relations, therefore, has emerged as an important aspect of promoting sustainability in the workplace. This involves creating policies and practices that engage employees in sustainability initiatives, providing them with the knowledge and resources to make sustainable choices, and fostering a culture of environmental responsibility that extends beyond the workplace. Effective green employee relations can enhance an organization's environmental performance, improve employee engagement and motivation, and promote sustainability more broadly.

## 6. GREEN HRM PRACTICES ADOPTED BY INDIAN CORPORATES

**Table 1: Green HRM Practices Adopted by Indian Corporates**

<i>Companies</i>	<i>Program Name</i>	<i>Strategy</i>
1. Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL)	Sustainable Living Plan	Through the Sustainable Living Plan, HUL has introduced green HRM practices such as promoting green commuting, implementing energy-efficient measures, and providing green training programs to employees.
2. Larsen & Toubro (L&T)	Sustainability Vision 2021	The Sustainability Vision 2021 has three main focus areas: people, planet, and performance. Under each focus area, the company has set specific targets and initiatives to achieve its sustainability goals.
3. IndusInd Bank	Hum aur Hariyali	It was the first to introduce solar powered ATMs in India as a green banking initiative. "Hum aur Hariyali" is the initiative taken by the bank to upgrade its CSR activities along with publishing its green office manual.
4. Wipro	The Eco Eye	Wipro adopted an exhaustive plan to achieve environmental sustainability. The company aims at reducing carbon footprint, minimize wastage, value water, and actively adopt other green practices.

<i>Companies</i>	<i>Program Name</i>	<i>Strategy</i>
5. ITC Limited	Sustainability 2.0	The program aims to build on ITC's earlier sustainability initiatives and set more ambitious targets to reduce the company's environmental footprint and enhance its social and economic impact.
6. Reliance Industries Limited (RIL)	Green Commuting and Employee Engagement	RIL promotes green commuting by encouraging employees to use public transport, bicycles, or carpooling.
7. Godrej	Godrej Green Campus	This is a sustainability program that focuses on reducing the carbon footprint of Godrej's campuses by incorporating sustainable design principles and energy-efficient technologies.
8. TATA Motors	Water Conservation	It has adopted large scale water harvesting techniques and reduced freshwater utilization in its manufacturing plants.
9. ONGC	Harit Moksha	The company actively participates in tree plantation across India, especially in its project areas. Apart from this, according to the Harit Moksha plan, it aims at saving wood utilization which would reduce the air and water pollution along with minimising greenhouse gas emissions.
10. GAIL	Pankh	This initiative pushes to build strong and sustainable eco system for green technologies and invest in green startups. Apart from this GAIL has been actively participating in efficient energy saving methods, reduction of emissions, planting trees.

Source: Compiled from different sources

## 7. CONCLUSION

It is not unknown to us that human resource is nothing but oxygen to any organisation. Currently, corporates are focusing on green human resource management. Environmental initiatives are being taken up by companies to gain competitive advantage over others. Green practices in various aspects are vital for a corporate to win over its competitors. HR managers, however, are facing immense challenges as corporates are shifting to incorporate environmental concerns to its mission and vision statements. Nonetheless, corporates can cope up and achieve sustainability. Green HRM improves the working conditions and improves the mindset of the workforce making it more inclined towards environment and sustainability. Ultimately, green HRM practices would bridge the gap between sustainable development of an organisation and the potential human capital.

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