



The Impact of Green Human Resource Management on Employee Job Satisfaction and Quality of Work Life

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Abstract – This study examines how Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) practices influence employee job satisfaction and quality of work life (QWL) in Indian organizations. As environmental sustainability gains strategic priority, understanding the human dimensions of green initiatives is essential for both scholars and practitioners. A conceptual and empirical review of published literature from 2010 to 2024 was undertaken. Peer-reviewed articles, institutional reports, and case evidence from manufacturing and service sector organizations were analysed to construct a structured framework linking GHRM practices to employee outcomes. Green HRM practices—spanning environmentally conscious recruitment, green training and development, eco-performance appraisal, and green rewards—positively influence employees' sense of purpose, organizational commitment, and overall job satisfaction. Furthermore, organizations embedding sustainability into their people management strategies report measurable improvements in employees' quality of work life, including reduced role stress, enhanced autonomy, and stronger perceived organizational support. The study synthesizes fragmented evidence into a coherent conceptual model that maps specific GHRM dimensions to job satisfaction and QWL outcomes. It contributes original theoretical propositions and offers actionable recommendations for HR practitioners seeking to align human capital strategy with environmental goals

Keywords – Green HRM, Job Satisfaction, Quality of Work Life, Sustainability, Environmental Management, Employee Well-being, Indian Organizations.

I. INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century has placed environmental sustainability at the centre of corporate strategy. Escalating climate volatility, tightening regulatory frameworks, and growing stakeholder expectations have compelled organizations to integrate ecological responsibility into every dimension of their operations. Within this evolving landscape, the human resource function has emerged as a powerful lever for institutionalizing green values—giving rise to the concept of Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM).

Green HRM refers to the systematic alignment of HRM policies and practices with an organization's environmental objectives. Rather than treating sustainability as an add-on corporate social responsibility initiative, GHRM embeds environmental consciousness into the very processes through which organizations attract, develop, evaluate, and reward their people. The logic is straightforward: because employees are the primary agents of organizational behaviour, shaping their attitudes and behaviours toward the environment is a prerequisite for any credible sustainability transformation.

Yet, the scholarship on GHRM has thus far focused predominantly on organizational-level outcomes such as carbon footprint reduction, ISO 14001 certification attainment, or eco-innovation. The employee perspective—how GHRM practices are experienced by workers, whether those practices enhance or detract from their satisfaction and well-being, and how they shape the overall quality of employees' work lives—has received comparatively less

systematic attention. This gap is particularly pronounced in the Indian context, where rapid industrial growth intersects with significant workforce heterogeneity and an emergent but maturing sustainability consciousness among corporations.

This paper addresses the gap by asking two interrelated questions. First, through which mechanisms do GHRM practices influence employee job satisfaction? Second, how do these practices affect the broader quality of work life experienced by employees? In pursuing these questions, the paper makes three contributions. It develops a structured typology of GHRM practices drawing on contemporary literature; it proposes theoretical pathways linking each practice to satisfaction and QWL outcomes; and it synthesizes case evidence to derive recommendations for HR practitioners.

II. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Defining Green HRM

Green HRM is most usefully understood as the application of HRM policies to promote the sustainable use of resources within business organizations, and more generally, promote the cause of environmentalism (Renwick, Redman & Maguire, 2013). This definition captures three essential elements: the primacy of HRM policy as the vehicle, the conservation of resources as the proximate target, and the advancement of environmental values as the ultimate purpose.

Scholars have organized GHRM practices along three broad domains. The first is green recruitment and selection, which



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involves attracting candidates who possess environmental values and competencies, and using selection tools that identify ecological awareness as a criterion alongside traditional job-related attributes (Guerci et al., 2016). The second domain is green training and development, encompassing formal instruction and experiential learning programmes that build employees' environmental knowledge, skills, and motivation. The third is green performance management and rewards, which integrates environmental indicators into appraisal systems and links compensation and recognition to ecological behaviour (Ahmad, 2015).

Beyond these three core domains, researchers increasingly recognize green employee engagement and green culture as cross-cutting dimensions. Employee participation in environmental decision-making—through green committees, eco-suggestion schemes, and voluntary sustainability initiatives—amplifies the effects of formal GHRM practices by creating intrinsic motivation for green behaviour (Yong et al., 2020).

Job Satisfaction: Concept and Determinants

Job satisfaction is a multidimensional affective and cognitive evaluation by employees of their work role and work environment (Locke, 1976). It encompasses satisfaction with the nature of the work itself, relationships with colleagues and supervisors, remuneration, growth opportunities, and the organizational climate. Research consistently demonstrates that job satisfaction is a powerful antecedent of employee retention, organizational citizenship behaviour, and overall productivity (Judge et al., 2001).

Contemporary scholarship has expanded the determinants of job satisfaction to include person-environment fit and person-organization value congruence. When employees perceive alignment between their own values—including environmental values—and those espoused and enacted by their employer, job satisfaction increases (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). This value congruence pathway constitutes a key theoretical bridge between GHRM practices and job satisfaction outcomes.

Quality of Work Life: Dimensions and Measurement

Quality of Work Life (QWL) is a broader construct than job satisfaction, encompassing the totality of conditions under which employees perform their roles. Walton's (1975) foundational framework identified eight dimensions of QWL: adequate and fair compensation; safe and healthy working conditions; opportunities for learning and career development; social integration and cohesion in the work organization; constitutionalism in the work organization; work and total life space; social relevance of work; and opportunity for continued growth and security.

Contemporary conceptualizations have added dimensions such as psychological safety, autonomy, meaningful work, and work-life balance. These expanded frameworks suggest that QWL is shaped not only by material conditions of

employment but also by the meaning and purpose employees derive from their work—a dimension particularly susceptible to influence by GHRM practices that connect employees' day-to-day activities to a broader environmental mission.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) posits that employees and organizations engage in reciprocal exchanges. When an organization invests in employees—through training, recognition, or a healthy work environment—employees reciprocate with positive attitudes and discretionary effort. Applied to GHRM, organizations that provide green training signal their commitment to employee development; employees respond with higher satisfaction and organizational commitment. Similarly, eco-friendly working conditions communicate organizational care for employee health, eliciting reciprocal loyalty and engagement.

Person-Organization Value Congruence

Person-Organization (P-O) fit theory argues that employees experience greater well-being when their values align with those of their employing organization (Cable & Judge, 1996). As environmental awareness increases among the workforce—particularly among younger cohorts—employees who work in organizations actively committed to sustainability experience higher P-O fit. GHRM practices signal and reinforce the organization's environmental values, thereby enhancing value congruence, which in turn boosts job satisfaction and QWL.

Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment theory (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990) identifies four cognitive dimensions—meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact—that together constitute the experience of empowerment. GHRM practices can activate each of these dimensions. Green training enhances competence; participation in environmental decision-making fosters self-determination; eco-performance feedback demonstrates impact; and alignment between personal and organizational values generates a sense of meaning. Empowered employees, research confirms, exhibit higher job satisfaction and better-perceived QWL.

IV. GHRM PRACTICES AND THEIR IMPACT ON JOB SATISFACTION AND QWL

Green Recruitment and Selection

Organizations that communicate their environmental credentials during recruitment attract candidates with aligned environmental values. This process of ecological employer branding—increasingly visible through sustainability reports, environmental award citations, and corporate communications—serves as a powerful attractor for environmentally conscious talent (Renwick et al., 2016).



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The implications for job satisfaction are significant. Employees who self-select into green organizations on the basis of shared values enter their roles with higher intrinsic motivation and stronger organizational identification. Longitudinal studies in European manufacturing firms suggest that employees hired through green recruitment channels report higher job satisfaction at six-month and two-year tenures compared to those recruited through conventional channels (Guerci et al., 2016). The mechanism is straightforward: value-aligned employees experience their work as meaningful, which is one of the most robust predictors of job satisfaction identified in the literature.

From a QWL perspective, green recruitment also shapes social integration. Work units composed of individuals with broadly aligned environmental values tend to exhibit stronger interpersonal cohesion and more collaborative working norms, both of which are recognized dimensions of quality work life.

Green Training and Development

Green training programmes provide employees with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to enact environmentally responsible behaviours in their day-to-day work. Formats range from structured classroom learning on environmental regulations and sustainability frameworks, to experiential learning through environmental audits, to peer-learning communities organized around eco-challenges (Zoogah, 2011).

The impact on job satisfaction operates through multiple channels. First, green training signals organizational investment in employees, triggering social exchange reciprocity in the form of higher commitment and satisfaction. Second, the acquisition of new, valued competencies enhances employees' sense of professional growth—a key driver of intrinsic job satisfaction. Third, when training explicitly connects employees' individual roles to broader organizational and societal environmental goals, it generates a sense of meaningful contribution that amplifies satisfaction.

Research in Indian service organizations corroborates these mechanisms. Mehta and Shah (2021) found that employees who participated in structured environmental training programmes reported significantly higher scores on purpose and role clarity dimensions of job satisfaction compared to non-participating counterparts. The effect was mediated by environmental self-efficacy—the belief in one's capacity to make a positive environmental difference—suggesting that training's benefit lies not merely in knowledge transfer but in psychological empowerment.

Green training also contributes to QWL by reducing role ambiguity. Employees who clearly understand what environmentally responsible behaviour looks like within their specific role context experience less uncertainty and

lower stress—both of which are key constituents of high-quality work life.

Green Performance Management

Integrating environmental Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) into appraisal systems institutionalizes green behaviour expectations and signals that environmental performance is a genuine organizational priority rather than peripheral rhetoric. Typical green KPIs include energy consumption per unit of output, waste generation rates, paper usage, travel emissions, and participation in environmental initiatives (Jackson et al., 2011).

For job satisfaction, the critical variable is fairness. When employees perceive that environmental KPIs are relevant to their roles, objectively measurable, and consistently applied across the organization, inclusion of these metrics is associated with higher satisfaction. Conversely, poorly defined or inconsistently applied green metrics generate perceptions of unfairness, undermining satisfaction. This underscores the importance of participatory design: organizations that involve employees in defining green performance criteria achieve greater legitimacy and correspondingly better satisfaction outcomes.

The QWL implications of green performance management are particularly pronounced in the dimension of constitutionalism—employees' expectation that organizational procedures will be fair, transparent, and respectful of individual rights. A well-designed eco-appraisal system that provides regular feedback, supports goal setting, and rewards genuine effort rather than mere outcomes strengthens constitutionalism and thereby enhances QWL.

Green Rewards and Recognition

Reward systems that recognize environmentally responsible behaviour—through financial bonuses tied to departmental environmental targets, non-financial recognition in the form of eco-awards, or career advancement opportunities linked to environmental leadership—reinforce the signaling function of green KPIs while providing direct material and psychological returns to employees (Jabbour & Santos, 2008).

The impact on job satisfaction is well-supported empirically. When environmental effort is visibly recognized and rewarded, employees experience equity—the perception that their contributions are valued—which is a foundational component of job satisfaction. Non-financial recognition, particularly public acknowledgment of eco-contributions, has been shown to have effects on satisfaction that exceed their material value, suggesting that symbolic affirmation of environmental effort taps into employees' identity and sense of purpose.

At the QWL level, green rewards contribute to the dimension of social relevance of work. When employees see their environmental contributions recognized not merely within their immediate team but across the



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organization and, in some cases, communicated externally through sustainability reporting, they experience their work as socially significant—a powerful dimension of quality work life.

Green Employee Engagement and Participation

Beyond the formal GHRM practices outlined above, green employee engagement initiatives—environmental committees, volunteer green audits, eco-hackathons, and sustainability suggestion schemes—provide informal channels through which employees exercise agency in their organization's environmental journey (Opatha & Arulrajah, 2014).

These participatory mechanisms are particularly potent for QWL outcomes across the dimensions of self-determination and social integration. When employees experience that their environmental ideas are genuinely solicited and implemented, they report higher psychological ownership and autonomy. Cross-functional green committees additionally generate social bonds that transcend departmental boundaries, enriching employees' social experience of organizational life.

Research in Indian manufacturing organizations indicates that companies with active green employee engagement programmes report lower voluntary turnover among environmentally aware employees, suggesting that participation channels play a role not merely in enhancing current QWL but in sustaining long-term organizational attachment.

V. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM INDIAN ORGANIZATIONS

The Indian corporate landscape presents a distinctive context for studying GHRM. On one hand, India's rapid industrial expansion and significant environmental challenges—air quality degradation, water scarcity, solid waste management—provide strong societal pressure for corporate environmental accountability. On the other hand, the diversity of organizational sizes, ownership structures, and sectoral contexts means that GHRM adoption is highly heterogeneous.

Large-scale manufacturing firms, particularly those operating in export-oriented sectors subject to international environmental standards, have been among the earliest adopters of formal GHRM systems. Studies of automotive component manufacturers in Pune and Coimbatore found that employees in firms with structured green training and eco-performance management systems reported job satisfaction scores that were, on average, 14 to 18 percentage points higher on validated instruments than employees in comparable firms without such systems (Chaudhary, 2019). The differential was most pronounced in dimensions of meaningful work and organizational pride.

In the Indian information technology sector, where human capital is the primary competitive resource, green

workplace practices—paperless offices, green building certifications, flexible remote-working options that reduce commuting emissions—have been positioned as both environmental and employee experience initiatives. Surveys of IT professionals across Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Pune found that employees in organizations with visible and communicated green workplaces rated their overall QWL significantly higher, with the effects strongest in the dimensions of work-life balance (attributable to flexible work arrangements), physical working conditions (attributable to green building features), and social relevance of work (attributable to organizational sustainability reputation).

Among public sector organizations in India, the GHRM adoption trajectory is slower, constrained by institutional inertia and limited discretionary resources. However, where environmental training has been systematically implemented—as in select units of National Thermal Power Corporation and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited—employee satisfaction with professional development opportunities has shown measurable improvement, illustrating that even partial GHRM adoption can yield meaningful human capital benefits.

VI. A CONCEPTUAL MODEL: GHRM PRACTICES, MEDIATORS, AND OUTCOMES

Drawing on the theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence reviewed above, the following conceptual model is proposed. The model identifies five categories of GHRM practice as antecedents: green recruitment and selection, green training and development, green performance management, green rewards and recognition, and green employee engagement. Three mediating mechanisms translate GHRM practices into outcomes: value congruence (the degree of alignment between individual and organizational environmental values), psychological empowerment (encompassing environmental self-efficacy, sense of impact, and role meaning), and organizational support perceptions (the belief that the organization genuinely cares for employee well-being and values environmental effort).

The two primary outcome variables are job satisfaction (comprising affective satisfaction with the work itself, growth opportunities, recognition, and organizational climate) and quality of work life (encompassing safe and healthy conditions, fair compensation, learning opportunities, social integration, constitutionalism, work-life balance, and social relevance of work).

The model further acknowledges two categories of moderating variables. At the individual level, employees' prior environmental orientation moderates the strength of GHRM-to-value-congruence pathways: employees who enter organizations with strong pre-existing environmental values experience sharper increases in congruence when GHRM practices are implemented. At the organizational



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level, the consistency and visibility of GHRM practices moderate their effect on organizational support perceptions: practices that are inconsistently applied or poorly communicated fail to generate the supportive perceptions necessary to translate into satisfaction and QWL gains.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HR PRACTITIONERS

On the basis of the preceding analysis, the following recommendations are offered to HR professionals seeking to leverage GHRM for improved employee satisfaction and QWL outcomes.

Design for Value Alignment from the Outset

Recruitment communications should authentically represent the organization's environmental values, performance, and aspirations. Employers should incorporate environmental values-based assessments—scenario-based questions exploring candidates' ecological attitudes and past behaviours—as a structured component of selection processes. This approach not only attracts value-aligned talent but sets clear expectations that environmental responsibility is a genuine role requirement.

Invest in Contextually Relevant Green Training

Generic environmental awareness workshops have limited impact on satisfaction and QWL. Training programmes should be designed to illuminate the specific environmental dimensions of employees' own roles, demonstrating concretely how individual actions aggregate to organizational environmental performance. Role-specific environmental competency frameworks provide useful scaffolding for this design process.

Involve Employees in Environmental Goal-Setting

Green KPIs developed without employee input risk being perceived as externally imposed and inherently unfair. HR teams should facilitate participatory processes through which employees contribute to defining relevant, measurable, and achievable environmental performance indicators for their roles. This participatory design not only improves legitimacy but activates the psychological empowerment mechanisms identified in the theoretical framework.

Diversify Green Recognition Mechanisms

Relying solely on financial incentives for environmental performance is both costly and, over time, subject to hedonic adaptation. Organizations should develop portfolios of recognition that include peer acknowledgment, public environmental achievement profiles in internal communications, and inclusion of environmental leadership in promotion criteria. Symbolic recognition that connects individual environmental effort to organizational mission and social impact generates the meaning-based satisfaction gains that material rewards alone cannot sustain.

Create Structural Channels for Green Participation

Informal participation in environmental initiatives—ad hoc and contingent on individual initiative—is insufficient to generate the consistent QWL benefits associated with green engagement. HR professionals should institutionalize green participation through formal structures: cross-functional environmental committees with clear mandates, protected time for environmental volunteer activities, and feedback mechanisms that close the loop between employee eco-suggestions and organizational action.

Measure and Communicate GHRM Outcomes

Organizations that monitor and communicate the environmental outcomes of their GHRM practices—energy saved through green training initiatives, waste reduced through employee-led environmental audits—provide employees with tangible evidence of their collective impact. This evidence-based communication strengthens the sense of social relevance of work, one of the most powerful levers for QWL enhancement available to HR practitioners.

VIII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This study is subject to several limitations that future research should address. First, as a conceptual and literature review, it does not provide primary empirical validation of the proposed model. Future studies employing structural equation modelling on representative samples of Indian organizations would allow formal testing of the proposed mediation and moderation relationships.

Second, the review is weighted toward manufacturing and IT sector evidence. Sectors such as agriculture, construction, healthcare, and education—which together account for a substantial share of Indian employment—remain underrepresented in the GHRM literature. Sector-specific studies would yield richer understanding of how contextual factors shape GHRM-to-satisfaction pathways.

Third, the review does not systematically address gender, generational, or socioeconomic variation in GHRM responses. Given that environmental values differ across demographic cohorts, and that quality of work life dimensions are experienced differently by employees at different organizational levels, future research should explicitly examine these moderating characteristics.

Finally, this study does not examine the temporal dynamics of GHRM impacts. Whether green training effects on job satisfaction persist, strengthen, or attenuate over time is an important question with practical implications for HRM programme design. Longitudinal designs are needed to address this question.

IX. CONCLUSION

This paper has demonstrated that Green Human Resource Management is not merely an organizational strategy for



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environmental compliance—it is a human strategy with profound implications for how employees experience their work. Through mechanisms of value congruence, psychological empowerment, and perceived organizational support, GHRM practices spanning recruitment, training, performance management, rewards, and participation collectively shape both job satisfaction and the broader quality of work life.

For Indian organizations navigating the dual imperatives of competitive performance and environmental accountability, GHRM represents a rare opportunity to advance both agendas simultaneously. Employees who experience their organization's environmental commitment as authentic and pervasive—not merely performative—bring higher engagement, deeper loyalty, and stronger innovation capacity to their roles. The challenge for HR practitioners lies in moving beyond rhetorical sustainability commitments to systematic, evidence-based GHRM implementation that genuinely enriches the experience of work.

As the evidence reviewed in this paper suggests, when organizations invest in their people through the lens of sustainability, they create workplaces where environmental responsibility and human flourishing are not competing priorities but mutually reinforcing dimensions of organizational excellence.

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