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Article

Green HRM Policies and Practices to Promote Good Health and Well-Being in The Employees' Community: With Reference to The Corporate Sector of Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract: This study investigates the adoption, impact, and challenges of Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) practices within the corporate sector of Andhra Pradesh, India. Focusing on the nexus between environmental sustainability and employee well-being, the research employs a concurrent mixed-methods design, gathering data from 300 employees and 50 HR managers across key industries, including IT, manufacturing, and pharmaceuticals. The analysis reveals a high level of adoption for specific practices, most notably flexible/remote work options (85%) and green workspace initiatives (78%). Statistical findings demonstrate strong, significant positive correlations between these practices and key well-being outcomes, specifically between green workspaces and reduced employee stress ($r=0.71$, $p<0.01$) and between flexible work and improved work-life balance ($r=0.67$, $p<0.01$). Employee perception data further substantiates these links, with majorities reporting higher job satisfaction (74%) and reduced stress levels (68%) in green workplaces. However, the benefits are not uniform across all Green HRM practices, indicating that employee satisfaction is closely tied to how directly a practice addresses personal comfort and autonomy. The implementation of these initiatives is significantly constrained by three primary barriers: high initial costs (reported by 68% of HR managers), difficulty in measuring return on investment (60%), and insufficient external green infrastructure in cities (55%). The study concludes that while Green HRM is a potent strategy for enhancing workforce health and building organizational resilience, its scalable success in Andhra Pradesh depends on creating a synergistic ecosystem. This requires corporations to strategically select high-impact, employee-centric practices and necessitates parallel, enabling action from policymakers to address financial constraints and critical urban infrastructure gaps.

KEYWORDS: Green HRM, Employee Well-being, Sustainable Workplace, Andhra Pradesh Corporate Sector.

INTRODUCTION

The corporate landscape of the 21st century is undergoing a profound transformation, driven by the dual imperatives of environmental sustainability and human-centric well-being. This paradigm shift has given rise to Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM), a strategic fusion of environmental management objectives with human resource functions (Renwick et al., 2013). Green HRM transcends traditional HR by embedding ecological consciousness into the entire employee lifecycle from recruitment and training to performance management and compensation while simultaneously fostering a healthier, more engaged workforce. This paper argues that Green HRM is not merely an ethical or regulatory compliance tool but a strategic lever for enhancing employee health and well-being, which in turn drives organizational resilience and productivity.

In the context of India, and specifically Andhra Pradesh, this intersection is critically important. Andhra Pradesh, under its visionary Sustainable Andhra Pradesh mission and policies like the *AP Industrial Development Policy 2023-28*, is aggressively positioning itself as a hub for sustainable industries, including green energy, electronics, and sustainable manufacturing (Government of Andhra Pradesh, 2023). The state's corporate sector, spanning burgeoning IT clusters in Visakhapatnam and Tirupati, pharmaceutical hubs in Vizag, and massive renewable energy projects across the Kurnool and Anantapur regions, stands at the forefront of this green transition. However, the focus has predominantly been on technological and infrastructural greening, often overlooking the human dimension of sustainability.

Employee health and well-being, aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3), are increasingly recognized as vital components of corporate social responsibility and long-term competitiveness (WHO, 2022). A green workplace, characterized by improved indoor air quality, biophilic design, reduced toxic exposure, and a culture of sustainability, directly mitigates physical health risks and psychological stress (Wei et al., 2018). Simultaneously, practices like green training and participative eco-initiatives foster a sense of purpose and community, enhancing mental and social well-being.

Therefore, this study seeks to bridge a significant gap by investigating how Green HRM policies and practices are being implemented within the corporate sector of Andhra Pradesh and evaluating their tangible and perceived impact on the health and well-being of the employee community. It moves beyond a theoretical discourse to provide a contextual analysis, offering insights for policymakers, corporate leaders, and HR practitioners aiming to build sustainable and humane organizations in a rapidly industrializing state.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Evolution and Definition of Green HRM

The concept of Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) has evolved from the intersection of corporate environmental management and strategic human resource management. Initially emerging as "environmental HRM" in the late 1990s, the concept gained theoretical rigor through the seminal work of Renwick, Redman, and Maguire (2013), who defined it as "HRM aspects of environmental management" and established its three-pillar framework focusing on green competencies, motivation, and opportunities. This framework provides the analytical structure for understanding how HR functions can systematically promote environmental sustainability while simultaneously addressing human capital needs. Subsequent scholars like Jabbour and Santos (2008) expanded this definition to include "the policies, practices, and systems that make employees of the organization green for the benefit of the individual, society, natural environment, and the business," explicitly linking organizational practices with individual and societal well-being.

Theoretical Foundations Linking Green HRM and Employee Well-being

Multiple theoretical perspectives explain the relationship between Green HRM and employee health outcomes. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) positions green workplace features such as natural lighting, improved air quality, and flexible work arrangements as valuable job resources that buffer work-related stress and reduce emotional exhaustion. Simultaneously, the Social Identity Theory perspective suggests that participation in organizational sustainability initiatives enhances employees' sense of purpose and organizational identification, fulfilling higher-order psychological needs (Ones & Dilchert, 2012). Additionally, the Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989) helps explain how green practices conserve employees' physical and psychological resources by reducing environmental stressors and providing meaningful work engagement, thereby preventing resource depletion and promoting well-being.

Green Workplace Design and Physical Health Outcomes

Biophilic design principles and green workplace interventions have demonstrated measurable impacts on employee physical health. Research by Browning, Ryan, and Clancy (2014) established that incorporating natural elements such as indoor plants, natural light, and views of nature reduces symptoms

of sick building syndrome, including headaches, respiratory issues, and eye strain. Nieuwenhuis et al. (2014) conducted controlled experiments showing that "green" office spaces with plants improved cognitive function and perceived air quality by 15-20%. In the Indian context, studies by Agarwal et al. (2020) found that manufacturing units implementing green ergonomics and pollution-control measures reported 30% fewer occupational health incidents. These findings establish a direct causal pathway between physical workplace greening and employee health metrics.

Psychological and Mental Health Benefits of Green HRM Practices

Beyond physical health, Green HRM practices significantly influence psychological well-being through multiple mechanisms. Green participation initiatives such as employee green teams, sustainability suggestion schemes, and environmental volunteering enhance psychological empowerment and reduce feelings of helplessness, as demonstrated by Hauff et al. (2022). Furthermore, eco-wellness programs that integrate nature exposure with traditional wellness activities (e.g., walking meetings in green spaces, mindfulness in garden settings) leverage the restorative benefits documented in attention restoration theory (Kaplan, 1995). Gladwell et al. (2013) empirically validated that "green exercise" combining physical activity with nature exposure produces greater reductions in stress biomarkers and improvements in mood compared to indoor exercise. These psychological benefits translate into reduced absenteeism and lower healthcare costs for organizations.

Green HRM Implementation Frameworks and Sectoral Variations

Implementation frameworks for Green HRM vary significantly across industrial sectors, a crucial consideration for Andhra Pradesh's diverse corporate landscape. In knowledge-intensive sectors like IT and ITES, Green HRM typically emphasizes paperless operations, energy-efficient workspaces, and extensive remote work policies, with strong impacts on work-life balance (Mishra, 2017). In contrast, manufacturing and pharmaceutical sectors focus more on green safety protocols, waste management training, and reducing exposure to hazardous materials, directly addressing occupational health risks (Tang et al., 2018). The renewable energy sector demonstrates the most integrated approach, where environmental values are embedded in organizational culture, creating synergistic effects on employee well-being (Saeed et al., 2019). These sectoral differences must inform context-specific implementation strategies.

Measurement and Outcomes of Green HRM Initiatives

Measuring the impact of Green HRM on employee well-being requires multidimensional metrics. Objective health indicators include reductions in sick days, healthcare utilization rates, and biometric improvements (blood pressure, stress hormone levels). Subjective measures encompass job satisfaction surveys, organizational commitment scales, and specifically developed Green Work Engagement instruments (Zibarras & Coan, 2015). Research by Wei et al. (2018) established that comprehensive Green HRM implementation correlates with a 25-40% improvement in employee well-being scores and a 15-30% reduction in turnover intention. However, measurement challenges persist, particularly in isolating the causal effects of Green HRM from other organizational factors and in quantifying the return on investment for green wellness initiatives.

Indian Context and Regional Development Considerations

The Indian literature on Green HRM has grown substantially but exhibits significant geographical and sectoral gaps. National-level studies by Mishra (2017) and Agarwal et al. (2020) establish baseline adoption rates but overlook regional industrial ecosystems like Andhra Pradesh's specialized clusters. The state's unique position with its ambitious "Sustainable Andhra Pradesh" vision, rapid industrialization in renewable energy corridors, and emerging knowledge economy creates a distinctive context where Green HRM implementation intersects with regional development priorities (Government of Andhra Pradesh, 2023). Furthermore, cultural factors specific to the region, including community orientation and environmental values shaped by coastal and agricultural heritage, may influence how employees perceive and engage with green initiatives, creating both opportunities and implementation challenges distinct from other Indian states.

Barriers and Enablers in Emerging Economy Contexts

Implementation in emerging economy contexts like India faces distinctive barriers. Studies identify high perceived costs, lack of management awareness, and inadequate regulatory incentives as primary obstacles (Tang et al., 2018). However, enablers specific to the Andhra Pradesh context include strong state-level sustainability policies, the presence of global corporations with established environmental management systems, and growing employee expectations for healthier workplaces. Research indicates that successful implementation often depends on "green champions" in leadership, integration with existing CSR initiatives, and clear

communication linking environmental practices to personal health benefits (Zibarras & Coan, 2015). The role of industry associations and sector-specific networks in Andhra Pradesh as potential accelerators for Green HRM diffusion represents an under-explored area in current literature.

Integration with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Green HRM serves as a practical implementation mechanism for multiple Sustainable Development Goals. Most directly, it advances SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) through healthier workplaces and wellness programs, SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) through enhanced job quality and safety, and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) through sustainable workplace practices (WHO, 2022). In developing regions, this integration offers corporations a framework for aligning business operations with broader development priorities. The "triple bottom line" approach balancing environmental, social, and economic outcomes becomes operationalized through Green HRM policies that simultaneously reduce ecological footprints while enhancing human capital development, creating synergistic value for organizations and communities.

RESEARCH GAP

Despite growing interest in Green HRM globally and in India, significant research gaps persist regarding Andhra Pradesh's corporate sector. First, there is a lack of empirical studies mapping current adoption levels across the state's key industries renewable energy, pharmaceuticals, IT/electronics, and textiles. Second, the interaction between state-level sustainability policies (like the AP Industrial Development Policy 2023-28) and firm-level HR practices remains unexplored. Third, cultural and regional factors that might moderate the relationship between Green HRM and employee well-being in the South Indian context require investigation. Finally, longitudinal studies examining how Green HRM implementation affects long-term health outcomes and organizational performance in Andhra Pradesh's rapidly evolving industrial landscape are entirely absent from current literature, representing a critical gap this study aims to address.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS, OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Research Questions

1. What is the current level of adoption of various Green HRM practices (e.g., green workspace, flexible work, environmental training) among corporations in Andhra Pradesh, and how does this adoption vary across key industrial sectors?
2. To what extent do employees perceive that implemented Green HRM practices contribute to improvements in their physical health, mental well-being, job satisfaction, and sense of purpose?
3. What are the most significant barriers (e.g., financial, managerial, infrastructural) hindering the effective implementation and scaling of Green HRM policies in the corporate sector of Andhra Pradesh?

Research objectives

1. To assess the current adoption levels and sectoral variation of key Green HRM practices in the corporate sector of Andhra Pradesh
2. To analyze the perceived impact of specific Green HRM practices on employee health, well-being, and organizational attitudes.
3. To identify the primary barriers and challenges faced by organizations in Andhra Pradesh when implementing Green HRM initiatives.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Sample

The study adopted a concurrent mixed-methods design. A purposive sample of 300 employees and 50 HR managers was drawn from corporate organizations across four urban centers in Andhra Pradesh: Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Tirupati, and Amaravati. The sample represented five key sectors IT/ITES, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, renewable energy, and services to enable sectoral comparison and a holistic perspective.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected in 2023–2024 using a structured questionnaire (5-point Likert scale) for employees and semi-structured interviews with HR managers. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS (v28), applying descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and multiple linear regression to assess adoption levels, relationships, and predictors of employee well-being.

Formulation of Hypotheses

H_1: There is no significant positive correlation between the implementation of green workspace initiatives and employees' perceived reduction in stress levels in Andhra Pradesh corporations.

H_2: There is no significant positive correlation between the availability of flexible/remote work options and employees' perceived work-life balance in Andhra Pradesh corporations.

H_3: There is no significant difference in employee satisfaction levels across Green HRM practices with varying adoption rates in Andhra Pradesh corporations.

H_4: The challenges to Green HRM implementation are uniformly distributed, with no single barrier being significantly more prevalent than others.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: ***Adoption Level of Green HRM Practices (n=50 firms)***

Green HRM Practice	% of Companies Implementing (Fully/Partially)	Average Employee Satisfaction (1–5)
Green workspace (plants, lighting)	78%	4.2
Waste reduction & recycling programs	72%	3.9
Flexible/remote work options	85%	4.4
Sustainable transport support	56%	3.8
Organic food/healthy canteen	44%	4.1
Environmental training	62%	3.7
Green rewards/recognition	39%	3.5
Wellness programs in natural settings	48%	4.3

Inference: Table 1 shows significant variation in average employee satisfaction scores (ranging from 3.5 to 4.4) across the eight different Green HRM practices. This non-uniformity indicates a significant difference in satisfaction levels, contradicting the null hypothesis.

Table 2: ***Perceived Impact on Employee Health & Well-Being (n=300 employees)***

Health/Well-Being Indicator	% Reporting Improvement (Compared to Non-Green Workplaces)
Reduced stress levels	68%
Improved physical health	57%
Higher job satisfaction	74%
Better air quality at work	61%
Enhanced mental focus	52%
Increased sense of purpose	49%

The above table indicates a strong and broad positive impact on employee well-being in workplaces implementing Green HRM practices. A substantial majority of employees report improvements across key indicators, most notably in higher job satisfaction (74%) and reduced stress levels (68%). These high percentages suggest that green initiatives are strongly associated with enhanced psychological and emotional well-being. Furthermore, the reported improvements in physical environmental factors like air quality (61%) and physical health (57%) highlight the tangible benefits of such practices. While all areas show positive outcomes, the slightly lower figures for enhanced mental focus (52%) and increased sense of purpose (49%) suggest these more abstract benefits, though still positively affected, may be less directly perceived or achieved by current green workplace strategies. Overall, the results strongly support the holistic value of Green HRM for employee health and satisfaction.

Table 3: ***Correlation between Green HRM Adoption and Health Outcomes***

Variable Pair	Pearson Correlation (r)	Significance (p-value)
Green workspace ↔ Reduced stress	0.71	$p < 0.01$
Flexible work ↔ Work-life balance	0.67	$p < 0.01$
Environmental training ↔ Pro-environment behavior	0.58	$p < 0.05$
Sustainable transport ↔ Physical activity	0.42	$p < 0.05$

Inference: The data provides direct statistical evidence to reject H1 and H2, as Table 3 reveals strong and statistically significant positive correlations, with a correlation of $r=0.71$ ($p<0.01$) between green workspace initiatives and reduced stress levels, and $r=0.67$ ($p<0.01$) between flexible work options and work-life balance, thereby confirming the significant positive relationships that the null hypotheses sought to deny.

Table 4: ***Challenges in Implementing Green HRM (HR Managers' Perspective, n=50)***

Challenge	% of HR Managers Reporting
High initial costs	68%

Lack of management commitment	42%
Employee resistance to change	37%
Insufficient green infrastructure in city	55%
Difficulty in measuring ROI	60%

Inference: Table 4 shows a non-uniform distribution of challenges. Barriers like "High initial costs" (68%) and "Difficulty in measuring ROI" (60%) are reported at markedly higher rates than others like "Employee resistance" (37%). This significant disparity means the challenges are not uniformly distributed.

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study provide strong empirical support for the core premise that Green HRM practices significantly enhance employee health and well-being within the corporate sector of Andhra Pradesh. The rejection of all four null hypotheses offers a clear narrative. The statistically significant positive correlations for H1 (r=0.71) and H2 (r=0.67) confirm a direct, strong link between specific Green HRM practices and desired employee outcomes. This aligns with the theoretical frameworks of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, where green workspaces act as a resource to buffer stress, and Social Identity Theory, where flexible work arrangements support a positive work-life identity. The high adoption rates of these practices 78% for green workspace and 85% for flexible work suggest that corporations in Andhra Pradesh are intuitively or strategically investing in high-impact areas, with employee satisfaction scores (4.2 and 4.4, respectively) validating this focus.

The rejection of H3 underscores a critical insight: not all Green HRM practices yield equal satisfaction returns. While high-adoption practices like flexible work score high, lower-adoption practices like green rewards (39% adoption, 3.5 satisfaction) or environmental training (62% adoption, 3.7 satisfaction) show a disconnect. This variation suggests that satisfaction is not a generic outcome of "green" labeling but is closely tied to how directly a practice addresses employee-centric needs (e.g., immediate comfort, autonomy) versus organizational or environmental goals. The high satisfaction from wellness programs in nature (4.3) further reinforces that practices with direct, tangible personal health benefits are most valued. The data from Table 2 powerfully contextualizes these correlations. The high percentages reporting improved job satisfaction (74%) and reduced stress (68%) demonstrate a broad-based perceptual shift among employees, creating a fertile ground for Green HRM's benefits to materialize. The slightly lower scores for "increased sense of purpose" (49%) and "enhanced mental focus" (52%) suggest that while physical and psychological well-being are positively affected, deeper cognitive and existential benefits may require more integrated, value-driven corporate sustainability cultures rather than isolated practices.

The rejection of H4, based on Table 4, reveals the pragmatic hurdles in the state's green transition. The dominant barriers high initial costs (68%) and difficulty measuring ROI (60%) point to a classic challenge in sustainable business: the tension between long-term social/environmental value and short-term financial metrics. The significant reporting of insufficient city infrastructure (55%) is a particularly salient finding for Andhra Pradesh, suggesting that even willing corporations are constrained by external, state-level developmental gaps in areas like public transport and waste management systems. This highlights the need for stronger public-private policy alignment.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY

Future research should explore sector-specific implementations of Green HRM across Andhra Pradesh's core industries to understand contextual variations. Longitudinal studies tracking the long-term health and productivity impacts of these practices are also needed. Furthermore, investigating how regional policies and cultural factors moderate the relationship between Green HRM and employee well-being would provide valuable insights for designing more effective, localized strategies.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that Green HRM meaningfully improves employee health and satisfaction in Andhra Pradesh's corporate sector. However, its impact is uneven, with initiatives offering direct personal benefits like green workspaces and flexible work being most valued. Widespread adoption faces major hurdles: high costs, difficulty proving financial returns, and gaps in supportive city infrastructure. Therefore, achieving the state's sustainable development goals requires a unified approach. Businesses must strategically implement employee-centric green practices. Simultaneously, the government must enable this shift through targeted policies and investments in urban green infrastructure. Only this combined effort can build organizations that are both environmentally responsible and powered by a healthy, engaged workforce.

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