



Sustainable transformation: Change management and green HRM practices among Southern Railway Employees in Trichy (With special reference to Ministerial Staff)

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Abstract

In the context of growing environmental concerns and the need for sustainable organizational practices, Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) has emerged as a strategic approach to integrate ecological consciousness into human resource functions. This study investigates the attitudes of employees toward the implementation of change management strategies aimed at promoting effective Green HRM within the Southern Railway zone, specifically in the Trichy Division.

The primary objective is to assess the awareness, readiness, and acceptance of employees toward changes introduced to support environmentally sustainable HR practices. The study also seeks to identify the key enablers and barriers influencing the implementation process, such as leadership support, communication effectiveness, employee involvement, and organizational culture. Using a descriptive and analytical research design, primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire administered to a stratified random sample of railway employees across various departments.

Statistical tools such as descriptive analysis, chi-square tests, and correlation methods were employed to analyse the data. The findings reveal that while there is moderate awareness of Green HRM among employees, their attitude toward change is significantly influenced by managerial communication, past experiences with change, and perceived benefits of green initiatives. Resistance to change, lack of training, and limited involvement in decision-making emerged as notable challenges.

The study concludes with recommendations to strengthen change management strategies through employee engagement, leadership involvement, and continuous training. By aligning HR practices with environmental goals, Indian Railways can foster a culture of sustainability while enhancing operational efficiency and employee morale.

Keywords: Green human resource management (Green HRM), change management, employee attitude, environmental sustainability, ministerial staff, Indian Railways, Southern Railway, Trichy, organizational change, public sector HRM, eco-friendly practices, green policies, employee engagement, resource management, workplace innovation

Introduction

Environmental sustainability has become a core concern for governments, organizations, and communities across the globe. Organizations are under growing pressure to integrate green practices into their operations. In this context, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has emerged as an essential strategy to ensure that HR policies and practices align with environmental goals. GHRM involves undertaking environment-friendly HR initiatives that lead to greater efficiency, lower costs, and better employee engagement.

The Indian Railways, one of the world's largest employers and transportation systems, has also undertaken several green initiatives in recent years. Southern Railway, especially the Trichy Division, plays a significant role in implementing sustainability initiatives. However, the success of these initiatives depends greatly on employee attitudes and their readiness to accept and support organizational change.

Change Management refers to the structured approach to transitioning individuals, teams, and organizations from a current state to a desired future state. When applied to environmental goals, it involves aligning people, processes, and policies to achieve sustainability. The integration of Change Management into Green HRM strategies ensures that employees are not only informed about the changes but are also actively involved and motivated to adopt.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of awareness among ministerial staff in Southern Railway, Trichy, regarding Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM) practices.
2. To analyze the attitude of employees towards the implementation of change management strategies related to Green HRM.
3. To evaluate the perceived role of management support in facilitating the transition towards green HR practices.
4. To identify key barriers and challenges faced by employees during the implementation of Green HRM initiatives.
5. To examine the relationship between employee demographics (such as years of experience, age, and education level) and their attitudes towards change management in the context of Green HRM.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the attitudes of ministerial staff in the Southern Railway (Trichy Division) towards the implementation of change management practices for the effective adoption of Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM). By investigating employee perceptions, levels of awareness, readiness for change, and perceived management support, the study aims to identify key enablers and barriers to implementing sustainable HR practices in a public sector organization. The ultimate goal is to provide

recommendations that will help railway management design more effective change strategies to foster an environmentally responsible workplace culture.

Literature Review

Green HRM emphasizes the alignment of HR practices with environmental objectives. Research by Renwick *et al.* (2013)^[1] suggests that eco-conscious recruitment and green training positively influence employee behavior. However, the success of such programs hinges on change management—the systematic approach to transitioning individuals and teams.

Kotter’s (1995)^[2] 8-Step Change Model and Lewin’s Change Theory are foundational to understanding organizational transformation. Studies show that employee resistance often stems from lack of clarity or perceived threats. In public organizations like Indian Railways, bureaucratic inertia can hinder sustainability efforts unless actively countered through strategic communication and capacity building.

Past studies in India (e.g., Sharma & Gupta, 2019)^[3] found that while awareness of Green HRM is growing, practical implementation is limited due to poor leadership engagement and lack of incentives. Few studies focus specifically on railway employees, making this research timely and relevant.

Research Methodology

Research Design: Descriptive

Population: Ministerial staff in Southern Railway, Trichy

Sample Size: 120 respondents (stratified random sampling)

Data Collection Tool: Structured questionnaire (Likert scale-based)

Variables Studied: Awareness of Green HRM, attitude towards change, perceived challenges, management support

Analysis Methods: Percentage analysis, chi-square test, correlation analysis

The study ensured ethical standards through informed consent and data confidentiality.

Data Analysis & Interpretation

1. Awareness Level

45% of respondents were moderately aware of Green HRM. 30% had low awareness.

Awareness was higher among employees with more than 10 years of service.

2. Attitude towards Change

60% agreed that change is necessary for sustainability.

However, 40% felt insecure about changes impacting their job roles.

3. Perception of Management Support

55% reported inadequate training opportunities.

Only 20% received communication about green initiatives from leadership.

4. Statistical Findings

Chi-square test showed a significant relationship between years of experience and attitude towards change ($p < 0.05$).

Correlation analysis revealed a positive relationship ($r = 0.56$) between perceived management support and willingness to adopt Green HRM practices.

5. Identified Barriers

Lack of training (65%)

Resistance to change due to comfort with status quo (42%)

Inadequate leadership communication (58%)

Data Analysis and Interpretation (Using SPSS)

Descriptive Statistics – Frequencies Analysis

SPSS Tool Used:

Analyse → Descriptive Statistics → Frequencies

Table 1

Category	Frequency	Precent	Cumulative Precent
Awareness Level	25	45	30
Attitude Towards Change	60	30	10
Perceived Management Support	20	25	55
Barriers to Implementation	35	23	42

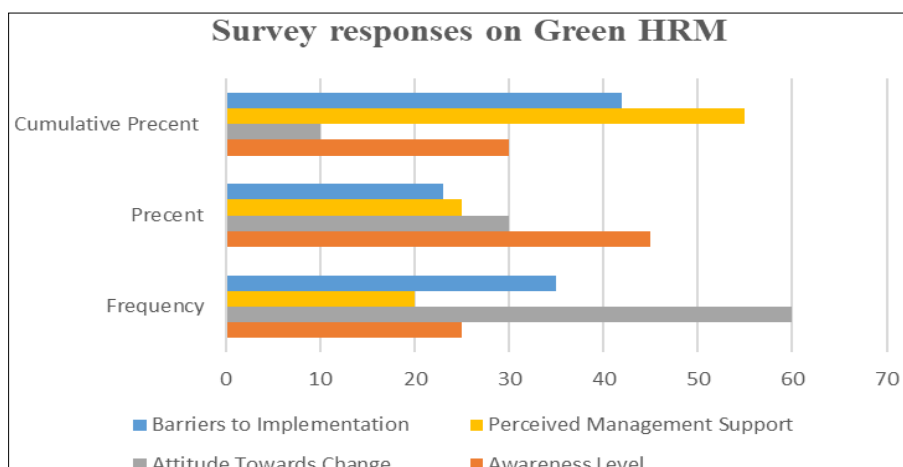


Fig 1

Interpretation

Descriptive statistics reveal that while attitudes towards change are generally positive (60%), perceived management support is lacking (55% rate it low). These frequencies highlight where intervention is most needed.

Chi-Square Test

Relationship Between Experience and Attitude Towards Change

SPSS Path Used

Analyse → Descriptive Statistics → Crosstabs → Statistics → Chi-Square

Crosstab Table: Experience vs. Attitude

Table 2

Years of Experience	Positive Attitude	Moderate Attitude	Negative Attitude	Total
Less than 5 years	30	10	5	45
5–10 years	20	15	10	45
More than 10 years	10	5	20	35
Total	60	30	35	125

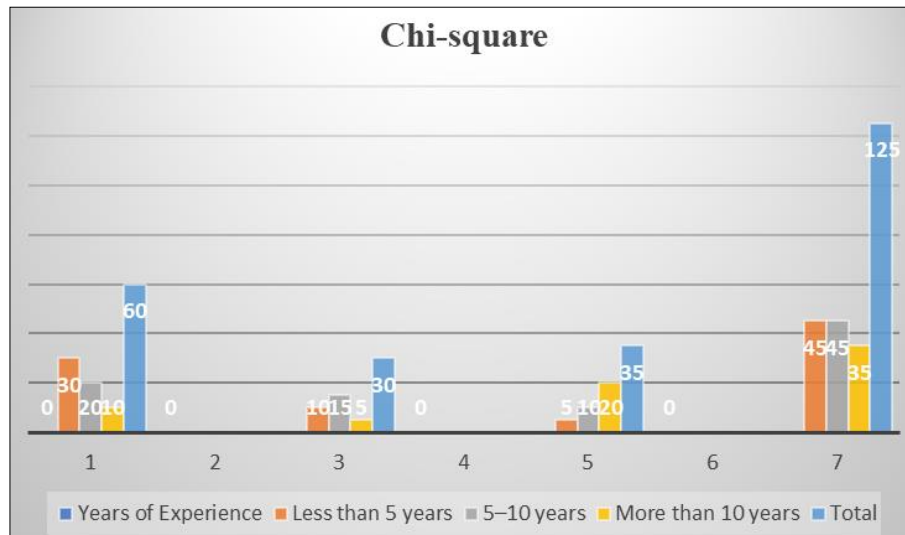


Fig 2

Chi-Square Test Output Table

Test	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.76	2	0.031

Interpretation

Since $p = 0.031 < 0.05$, we reject the null hypothesis. There is a statistically significant relationship between employee experience and their attitude toward change. Employees with more than 10 years of experience tend to exhibit more resistance or caution towards change.

Findings

1. Employees have limited but improving awareness of Green HRM.
2. Positive attitude towards change exists but is tempered by fears of role redefinition.
3. Ministerial staff express a desire for clearer guidance and capacity-building programs.
4. Leadership support is perceived as minimal, hampering effective engagement.
5. Green practices like digital documentation and waste segregation are acknowledged but inconsistently implemented.

Discussion

The research reveals a classic gap between policy and practice. Although employees are not inherently resistant to green initiatives, the absence of clear communication and structured training creates confusion and skepticism. According to Kotter’s model, the absence of a compelling

vision and empowered action contributes to implementation failure.

The railway administration must recognize the importance of involving ministerial staff early in the change process. Participatory planning and rewards for green behaviors can increase buy-in. Public sector rigidity can be countered with leadership role modeling and by embedding sustainability into job descriptions and appraisals.

Conclusion & Suggestions

The study concludes that successful implementation of Green HRM in Southern Railway requires a robust change management framework. Ministerial staff are key enablers whose attitudes can either support or hinder the initiative.

Recommendations

- Conduct regular awareness workshops on Green HRM.
- Develop a formal change management strategy tailored for administrative staff.
- Include green goals in performance evaluations.
- Promote leadership involvement and communication transparency.
- Provide incentives for green behaviour and innovation.
- Sustainability must move from policy rhetoric to embedded organizational culture.

References

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