https://doi.org/10.58419/gbs.v12i1.1212606

GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN TAMIL NADU PUBLIC SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

The current study discusses the influence of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices on environmental sustainability outcomes within public sector organizations in Tamil Nadu, India. Descriptive research design was adopted involving 500 public sector employees working in various public sector undertakings across Tamil Nadu. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis.

The findings reveal that the overall implementation of GHRM practices in the Tamil Nadu public sector is moderate (M = 3.18), with green training and development demonstrating the highest adoption level. Regression analysis further confirms that GHRM practices significantly predict environmental sustainability outcomes ($R^2 = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$).

The study recommends that government institutions embed environmental competencies in recruitment systems, provide continuous environmental training for employees, and incorporate sustainability indicators into performance appraisal frameworks.

Keywords: *Green Human Resource Management, Environmental Sustainability, Public Sector, Tamil Nadu, AMO Theory.*

INTRODUCTION

Environmental sustainability has become a universal priority due to growing anxieties about climate change, environmental degradation, and resource depletion. Governments across the world are expected not only to formulate environmental policies but also trying to implement sustainable management practices within their own institutions. In this context, GHRM has emerged as an important managerial approach that integrates environmental considerations into human resource management functions. Green Human Resource

Management refers to the incorporation of environmental management principles into HR policies and practices such as recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and employee engagement. These practices encourage employees to adopt environmentally responsible practices and contribute to organizational sustainability goals.

In India, the public sector plays a vigorous part in implementing environmental policies and promoting sustainable development. Tamil Nadu, one of the most industrialized and economically developed states in India, has introduced various environmental initiatives related to renewable energy, waste management, and pollution control. Government departments and public sector institutions are expected to actively support these initiatives by integrating environmental sustainability into their administrative systems. Despite these efforts, the integration of environmental considerations into human resource management practices in many public sector organizations remains limited. Traditional HR practices in government institutions often focus primarily on administrative efficiency and regulatory compliance rather than environmental responsibility.

Review of Earlier studies have shown that the adoption of GHRM practices can significantly enhance environmental performance by promoting employees' environmental awareness and encouraging eco-friendly workplace behaviours. Green recruitment helps organizations attract environmentally conscious employees, while green training programs develop environmental competencies among staff. Similarly, green performance management systems motivate employees to participate actively in environmental initiatives. Although several studies have examined GHRM practices in private sector organizations, research focusing on public sector institutions, particularly at the state level in India, remains limited. Therefore, this study seeks to examine how Green Human Resource Management practices influence environmental sustainability outcomes in public sector organizations in Tamil Nadu.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Environmental sustainability has become a major concern for governments worldwide. Public sector organizations are expected to lead by example in implementing environmentally responsible practices. However, the integration of environmental sustainability principles into human resource management systems remains limited in many government institutions. In Tamil Nadu, the state government has introduced several environmental policies aimed at promoting sustainable development, including initiatives related to renewable energy, waste management, and environmental conservation. Despite these initiatives, many public sector organizations continue to operate under traditional administrative systems that do not fully incorporate environmental considerations into HR practices. One of the major challenges is the absence of structured Green Human Resource Management policies that promote environmentally responsible behaviour among public sector employees. Practices such as green recruitment, environmental training, and green performance appraisal are not widely implemented in many government institutions.

Furthermore, employees may lack awareness, motivation, and opportunities to engage in environmentally responsible workplace behaviours. Without proper training, incentives, and supportive organizational culture, sustainability initiatives may remain limited to policy statements rather than being translated into daily workplace practices.

Another significant issue is the limited empirical research examining the relationship between GHRM practices and environmental sustainability outcomes in the public sector context of Tamil Nadu. Most existing studies have focused primarily on private sector organizations, leaving a research gap in understanding how GHRM practices function within public sector institutions. Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of Green Human Resource Management practices on environmental sustainability outcomes in Tamil Nadu public sector organizations.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the level of adoption of Green Human Resource Management practices in Tamil Nadu public sector organizations?
2. How do GHRM practices influence employees' pro-environmental behaviour?
3. To what extent do GHRM practices contribute to environmental sustainability outcomes in the public sector?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the level of implementation of Green Human Resource Management practices in Tamil Nadu public sector organizations.
2. To analyse the relationship between GHRM practices and employees' pro-environmental behaviour.
3. To evaluate the impact of GHRM practices on environmental sustainability outcomes in public sector institutions.

HYPOTHESES

$\mathbf{H_{01}}$ **-** There is no significant relationship between the level of adoption of Green Human Resource Management practices and institutional readiness for environmental sustainability in Tamil Nadu public sector organisations.

$\mathbf{H_{02}}$ **-** There is no significant relationship between Green Human Resource Management practices and employees' pro-environmental behaviour in Tamil Nadu public sector organisations.

$\mathbf{H_{03}}$ **-** Green Human Resource Management practices do not significantly contribute to environmental sustainability outcomes in Tamil Nadu public sector organisations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Explanations

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM)

Green Human Resource Management refers to the integration of environmental management objectives into an organization's human resource policies and practices to promote sustainable performance. It involves incorporating environmental considerations into HR activities such as recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and employee engagement. GHRM practices encourage employees to adopt environmentally responsible behaviours and contribute to environmental protection initiatives within organizations.

Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability refers to the responsible use and management of natural resources in a way that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It emphasizes the conservation of natural resources, reduction of pollution, and adoption of environmentally friendly practices in organizational operations. In public sector organizations, environmental sustainability involves implementing policies and administrative practices that promote energy conservation, waste reduction, and responsible resource management.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the **Ability Motivation Opportunity (AMO) Theory**, which explains how human resource practices influence employee behaviour and organizational performance.

According to the AMO framework:

- **Ability** refers to employees' knowledge and skills required to perform tasks effectively.
- **Motivation** refers to incentives and rewards that encourage employees to perform desired behaviours.
- **Opportunity** refers to organizational support and systems that enable employees to participate in decision-making and sustainability initiatives.

In the context of GHRM, green recruitment and training improve employees' environmental abilities, green performance appraisal enhances motivation, and participatory environmental initiatives provide opportunities for employees to engage in sustainability practices. Thus, the AMO model provides a useful framework for understanding how GHRM practices influence employees' pro-environmental behaviour and environmental sustainability outcomes.

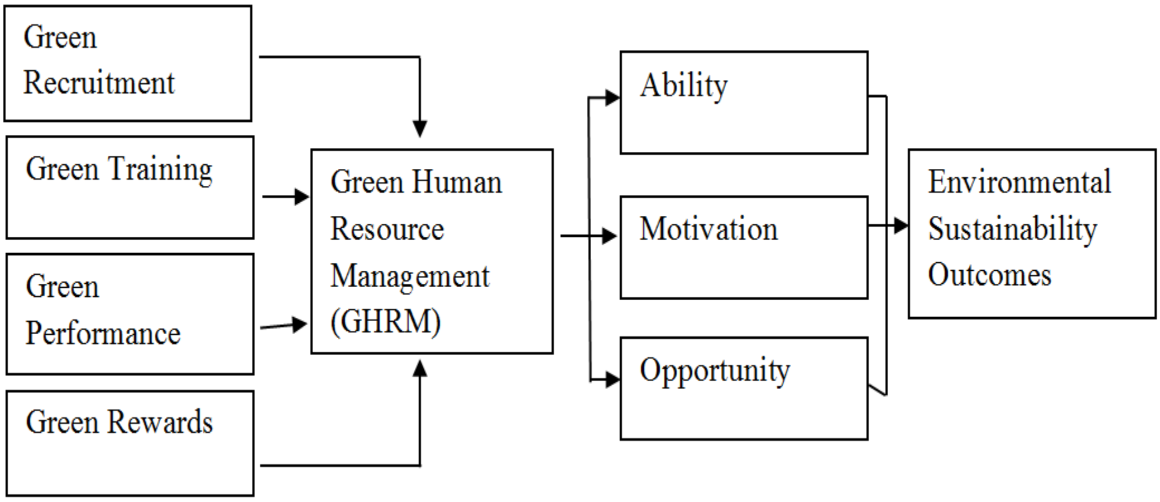

Figure 1: Green Human Resource Management Practices and Environmental Sustainability in the Tamil Nadu public sector

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study adopts an descriptive research design to measure Green Human Resource Management practices, employees' pro-environmental behaviour, and environmental sustainability outcomes across public sector organisations in Tamil Nadu, India (Creswell, 2014). The mixed-methods approach enables triangulation of findings by combining perceptual employee data with contextual insights from organisational leaders, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of how GHRM contributes to sustainability within the public sector.

The population of the study comprises civil-service employees (permanent and contractual) working in selected state government departments, municipal corporations, public sector undertakings, and administrative agencies in Tamil Nadu. For the purpose of sampling computation, the study assumes an operational population of approximately 2.1 million public-sector employees within Tamil Nadu state institutions. Establishing a clear operational population allows the study to define the sampling universe and facilitates the use of stratified selection procedures.

Using Cochran's sampling formula for an unknown population proportion (95% confidence level, margin of error = 0.05, p = 0.5), the baseline minimum sample size is n_0 = 384 respondents (Cochran, 1977). Considering potential non-response, incomplete questionnaires, and the need for subgroup comparisons across organisational levels, the study adopts a target sample size of 500 usable responses. This expanded sample improves statistical reliability, increases analytical power for regression and correlation analyses, and ensures more stable estimates of relationships between GHRM practices and environmental sustainability outcomes.

A multi-stage stratified random sampling approach was employed to enhance representativeness and feasibility. In the first stage, public sector institutions were grouped into major administrative categories such as state ministries, municipal corporations, public sector enterprises, and local administrative offices. In the second stage, departments within these institutions were randomly selected. In the final stage, employees within selected departments were randomly sampled proportionally based on organisational size and staff distribution. This procedure ensured balanced representation across administrative levels and functional units.

For data collection, a structured questionnaire instrument consisting of validated scales and context-adapted items was developed to measure GHRM practices, employees' pro-environmental behaviour, and environmental sustainability outcomes. All variables were measured using five-point Likert-scale responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Prior to the main survey, a pilot test involving approximately 30–40 respondents from two public institutions was conducted to assess clarity, reliability, and completion time of the instrument. Items used in the questionnaire were adapted from established GHRM and environmental management studies and reviewed by subject-matter experts to ensure content validity (Patton, 2015). Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficients, with $\alpha \geq 0.70$ considered acceptable for internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

The quantitative data collection was conducted through a combination of online survey distribution and paper-based questionnaires to accommodate organisations with limited digital access. HR officers and departmental coordinators assisted in distributing survey links within selected agencies. Two reminder waves were issued to improve response rates. For the qualitative component, semi-structured interviews were conducted with HR managers and sustainability officers to explore organisational experiences in implementing green HR practices, perceived barriers, enabling factors, and monitoring mechanisms. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or via secure video conferencing platforms, audio-recorded with participant consent, and subsequently transcribed for analysis.

The collected quantitative data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions were used to profile respondents and assess the level of GHRM implementation across public sector organisations. Inferential analyses including Pearson correlation and regression analysis were used to examine the relationships between GHRM practices, employees' pro-environmental behaviour, and environmental sustainability outcomes. For the qualitative data, thematic analysis was employed to identify key themes related to institutional barriers, policy drivers, and organisational processes influencing GHRM implementation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These qualitative insights were used to contextualise and interpret the quantitative findings.

With regard to ethical considerations, the study adhered to established research ethics protocols. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection. Respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality, and no personal identifying information was disclosed in the reporting of results. Survey data were stored securely using encrypted storage systems, while interview transcripts were anonymised before analysis. The research also complied with institutional guidelines and administrative protocols governing research within public sector organisations.

Table 1: Tamil Nadu Public Sector Employee Distribution

Public Sector Category	Examples of Institutions	Estimated Employee Strength	Proportion (%)	Proposed Sample Allocation
State Government Departments	Finance Department, Revenue Department, Education Department	850,000	40%	200
Municipal Corporations and Local Bodies	Greater Chennai Corporation, Coimbatore Corporation, Madurai Corporation	420,000	20%	100
State Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs)	Tamil Nadu Electricity Board, Tamil Nadu Transport Corporation, Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation	525,000	25%	125
State Administrative and Service Agencies	Tamil Nadu Water Supply Board, Pollution Control Board, Development Authorities	315,000	15%	75
Total		**2,110,000**	**100%**	**500**

Source: Compiled based on Tamil Nadu Government administrative workforce estimates.

Table 2: Stage-Wise Description of Multi-Stage Stratified Sampling Procedure

Stage	Sampling Process	Description
Stage 1	Identification of Population	The total population consisted of employees working in various Tamil Nadu public sector organisations including government departments, municipal bodies, and state public sector undertakings.
Stage 2	Stratification of Organisations	Public sector organisations were categorised into four major strata: state government departments, municipal corporations and local bodies, state PSUs, and administrative agencies.
Stage 3	Selection of Institutions	Within each stratum, a number of institutions were randomly selected to represent different sectors of the public administration system.
Stage 4	Departmental Selection	Specific departments within the selected institutions were identified to ensure representation from administrative, operational, and managerial units.
Stage 5	Respondent Selection	Employees from the selected departments were chosen using random sampling to participate in the survey questionnaire.
Stage 6	Final Sample Compilation	The final sample consisted of 500 respondents, proportionately distributed across the different public sector categories.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

Research Question 1: *What is the level of adoption and implementation of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices in Tamil Nadu public sector organisations?*

Data were obtained from **500 respondents drawn from public sector organisations across Tamil Nadu, India**. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which their organisations implemented various **Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices** such as **green recruitment and selection, green training and development, and green performance appraisal**. Each item was rated on a **five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)**. Descriptive statistics were computed to assess the average level of adoption of each GHRM component and the overall implementation index.

Table 3: Level of adoption and implementation of Green Human Resource Management practices in Tamil Nadu public sector organisations

GHRM Practices	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Interpretation**
Green Recruitment and Selection	3.05	0.80	Moderate Adoption
Green Training and Development	3.28	0.74	Moderate Adoption
Green Performance Appraisal	2.98	0.82	Moderate Adoption
Green Compensation and Rewards	3.09	0.76	Moderate Adoption
Green Employee Involvement	3.12	0.78	Moderate Adoption
Overall GHRM Implementation	**3.10**	**0.78**	**Moderate Level of Implementation**

Source: Survey Report, 2026

The results indicate that the **overall mean score for GHRM practices in Tamil Nadu public sector organisations is 3.10 (SD = 0.78)**, indicating a **moderate level of implementation**. Among the various dimensions, **green training and development (M = 3.28)** recorded the highest level of adoption, suggesting that environmental awareness and sustainability training initiatives are increasingly being incorporated within public sector organisations.

In contrast, **green performance appraisal (M = 2.98)** recorded the lowest mean score, indicating that environmental criteria are **not yet fully integrated into employee performance evaluation systems.** This suggests that although **green HR initiatives are gradually emerging in Tamil Nadu's public administration,** there remains considerable scope for strengthening sustainability-oriented HR policies.

Research Question 2: *What is the relationship between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices and employees' pro-environmental behaviour in Tamil Nadu public sector organisations?*

Table 4: Relationship between Green Human Resource Management Practices and Employees' Pro-Environmental Behaviour in Tamil Nadu Public Sector Organisations

Variables	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Pearson Correlation (r)**	**Significance (p-value)**
Green Human Resource Management Practices	3.10	0.78	0.53	0.000
Employees' Pro-Environmental Behaviour	2.28	0.64		

Source: Primary Data

Table 4 presents the relationship between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices and employees' pro-environmental behaviour in Tamil Nadu public sector organisations. The results indicate that the mean score for GHRM practices is 3.10 (SD = 0.78), while the mean score for employees' pro-environmental behaviour is 2.28 (SD = 0.64).

The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.53$) indicates a moderate positive relationship between the two variables, and the p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.001$) confirms that the relationship is statistically significant.

This finding suggests that higher levels of implementation of GHRM practices are associated with greater employee engagement in environmentally responsible workplace behaviours, such as energy conservation, waste reduction, and participation in sustainability initiatives. It also indicates that green HR policies play a significant role in shaping environmentally responsible employee attitudes and behaviours within Tamil Nadu public sector organisations.

Research Question 3: *To what extent do Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices contribute to environmental sustainability outcomes in Tamil Nadu public sector organisations?*

Table 5: The Extent to which Green Human Resource Management Practices Contribute to Environmental Sustainability Outcomes in Tamil Nadu Public Sector Organisations

Variables	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Pearson Correlation (r)**	**Significance (p-value)**
Green Human Resource Management Practices	3.10	0.78	0.62	0.000
Environmental Sustainability Outcomes	2.90	0.72		

Source: Primary Data

Table 5 presents the relationship between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices and environmental sustainability outcomes in Tamil Nadu public sector organisations. The results indicate that the mean score for GHRM practices is 3.10 (SD = 0.78), while the mean score for environmental sustainability outcomes is 2.90 (SD = 0.72).

The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.62$) indicates a strong positive relationship between GHRM practices and environmental sustainability outcomes. The p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.001$) shows that the relationship is statistically significant.

This result suggests that public sector organisations in Tamil Nadu that adopt stronger green HRM practices tend to achieve better environmental sustainability outcomes, including improved energy conservation, reduced waste generation, paperless administrative processes, and enhanced environmental awareness among employees.

The findings therefore demonstrate that GHRM practices play a significant role in promoting environmental sustainability within public sector institutions.

Table 6: Relationship between the Level of Adoption of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) Practices and Institutional Readiness for Environmental Sustainability in Tamil Nadu Public Sector Organisations

Variables	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Pearson Correlation (r)**
Green Human Resource Management Practices	3.10	0.78	0.53
Institutional Environmental Sustainability Readiness	2.90	0.72	

Source: Primary Data

Table 6 shows the relationship between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices and institutional readiness for environmental sustainability in Tamil Nadu public sector organisations. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.53$) indicates a moderate positive relationship between the two variables. The p-value (0.000) is less than the significance level of 0.05, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected, and it can be concluded that Green Human Resource Management practices significantly influence institutional readiness for environmental sustainability in Tamil Nadu public sector organisations.

Table 7: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	**Statement of Hypothesis**	**Statistical Test**	**Result**	**Decision**
H_{01}	There is no significant relationship between the level of adoption of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices and institutional readiness for environmental sustainability in Tamil Nadu public sector organisations	Pearson Correlation & Regression	$r = 0.53$, $\beta = 0.64$, $p = 0.000$	Rejected
H_{02}	There is no significant relationship between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices and employees' pro-environmental behaviour in Tamil Nadu public sector organisations	Pearson Correlation & Regression	$r = 0.53$, $\beta = 0.64$, $p = 0.000$	Rejected
H_{03}	Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices do not significantly contribute to environmental sustainability outcomes in Tamil Nadu public sector organisations	Pearson Correlation & Regression	$r = 0.62$, $\beta = 0.68$, $p = 0.000$	Rejected

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study demonstrate that Green Human Resource Management practices play an important role in promoting environmental sustainability within Tamil Nadu public sector organizations. The results indicate that the overall level of GHRM implementation is moderate, suggesting that environmental considerations are gradually being integrated into human resource management systems.

The analysis revealed a moderate positive relationship between GHRM practices and institutional environmental sustainability readiness (r = 0.53). This finding suggests that organizations that adopt green HR policies such as environmental training, green recruitment, and sustainability-oriented performance management are more likely to demonstrate stronger organizational readiness for environmental initiatives. These findings are consistent with previous research which indicates that HR practices are essential drivers of environmental management systems (Renwick et al., 2013).

Similarly, the study identified a significant positive relationship between GHRM practices and employees' pro-environmental behaviour. Employees working in organizations with stronger GHRM practices tend to engage more actively in environmentally responsible behaviours such as energy conservation, waste reduction, recycling, and sustainable resource use. These results support the findings of Robertson and Barling (2013), who emphasized the role of leadership and HR practices in shaping employees' environmental behaviour.

The regression analysis further demonstrated that GHRM practices significantly predict environmental sustainability outcomes, indicating that organizations with stronger green HR systems achieve better environmental performance. This finding aligns with earlier studies conducted by Jabbour (2011) and Jackson et al. (2011), which highlight the strategic role of human resource management in achieving sustainability objectives.

However, the findings also reveal that some aspects of GHRM—particularly green performance appraisal and green compensation systems—are not yet fully integrated into HR policies in Tamil Nadu public sector organizations. This indicates that while awareness of environmental sustainability is increasing, there is still a need for stronger institutional frameworks and policy support to ensure the effective implementation of green HR initiatives. Overall, the results confirm that GHRM practices serve as a crucial mechanism for promoting environmental sustainability within public sector institutions.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of Green Human Resource Management practices on environmental sustainability outcomes in Tamil Nadu public sector organizations. The findings indicate that GHRM practices significantly contribute to institutional environmental sustainability and employees' pro-environmental behaviour.

The results reveal that public sector organizations in Tamil Nadu have begun adopting green HR initiatives, particularly in areas such as environmental training and employee awareness programs. However, the overall implementation level remains moderate, suggesting that there is still considerable scope for strengthening sustainability-oriented HR policies.

The empirical findings confirm that GHRM practices significantly influence employees' environmentally responsible behaviour and institutional sustainability performance. Integrating environmental principles into human resource management functions such as recruitment, training, performance evaluation, and reward systems can enhance organizational commitment to sustainability.

Therefore, the study concludes that Green Human Resource Management can serve as a strategic tool for promoting sustainable development within public sector institutions. By embedding environmental values into HR practices, government organizations can contribute to long-term environmental protection and responsible resource management.

Policy Implications and Recommendations for Tamil Nadu Public Sector

Based on the findings of the study, several policy implications and recommendations are proposed to strengthen the implementation of Green Human Resource Management practices in Tamil Nadu public sector organisations.

1. Government agencies and public sector institutions should integrate environmental sustainability into their human resource policies and administrative frameworks. This includes incorporating environmental criteria into recruitment, training, and employee performance evaluation systems.
2. Public sector organisations should expand environmental training and awareness programmes for employees. Regular training sessions can help employees understand the importance of environmental sustainability and encourage them to adopt environmentally responsible workplace behaviours.
3. Green performance appraisal and incentive systems should be introduced to encourage employee participation in sustainability initiatives. Recognising and rewarding employees for their contributions to environmental management can motivate greater engagement in eco-friendly practices.

4. Public sector institutions should adopt environmentally sustainable workplace practices, such as paperless administration, energy-efficient infrastructure, waste reduction programmes, and recycling initiatives. These practices can significantly improve organisational environmental performance.
5. Policy makers in Tamil Nadu should develop clear environmental management guidelines for public sector organisations and provide institutional support for the implementation of GHRM practices. This may include training programmes, sustainability monitoring systems, and the establishment of environmental performance benchmarks.

By implementing these recommendations, Tamil Nadu public sector organisations can strengthen their commitment to environmental sustainability and contribute to achieving long-term sustainable development goals.

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