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Green Human Resource Management Practices in the RMG Sector of Bangladesh: A Path to Sustainability

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Abstract- **Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector is a cornerstone of the national economy yet faces increasing demands to operate sustainably. This study explores how Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices including recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and workplace initiatives, are being applied in the sector and their influence on environmental sustainability. A quantitative survey of 48 employees from five garment factories was conducted with responses analyzed using SPSS. The Findings reveal a moderate positive relationship between GHRM practices and sustainability outcomes, although most individual practices lacked strong statistical significance. Limited awareness, budget constraints, and inadequate policy incentives emerged as key barriers. Despite these challenges, employees generally recognized the value of green practices for both environmental performance and corporate reputation. The research underscores the need for integrating GHRM into routine operations, enhancing employee training, and embedding environmental criteria in performance evaluations to strengthen the sector's path toward sustainable growth.**

Keywords: Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), Sustainability, GHRM Practices, Bangladesh.

I.INTRODUCTION

In today's world, environmental protection becomes more important. Businesses around the world are now required to operate ethically and decrease their negative environmental impact [6],[9]. One method they might accomplish this is to practice Green Human Resource Management (GHRM). This includes incorporating eco-friendly and sustainable practices into various HR tasks such as hiring, training, reviewing, and rewarding staff [11],[6].

In Bangladesh, the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector is an important element of the economy. It generates more than 80% of the country's export income and employs around 5 million people, the majority of whom are women (BGMEA, 2024; World Bank, 2022). But this sector also has major environmental consequences. Many factories consume a lot of energy and water, generate a lot of chemical waste, and don't adopt sustainable labor practices [11],[9] This jeopardizes both the environment and worker safety [8].

As international buyers and organizations are now focusing on sustainability, Bangladeshi garment factories need to make changes [1].[2] Green HRM is a significant step in that direction. It can help factories become more environmentally conscious while also boosting their image and employee satisfaction (Jabbour & de Sousa Jabbour, 2016).

So, the purpose of this study is to explore how Green HRM practices are applied in Bangladesh's RMG sector and their impact on environmental sustainability. Also, the study covers only four variables-green recruitment and selection, green training and development, green performance appraisal, and green workplace initiatives. It is based on data from a limited number of factories and may not reflect the entire industry. Time and resource constraints also limited the sample size and the study mainly relies on the selected variables without covering other possible factors that could influence sustainability.

1.1: Objectives

The objectives of this study are threefold. First, it aims to examine the current status of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices in Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment (RMG) factories. Second, it seeks to assess the perceptions of HR managers regarding the value and necessity of GHRM practices within the RMG sector. Finally, the study intends to identify and analyze the key factors that influence both the successful implementation and the limitations of GHRM practices in Bangladesh's RMG industry.

Literature Review

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has become an important part of making organizations last by adding environmental concerns to standard HR tasks including hiring, training, evaluating performance, and rewarding employees. GHRM not only helps the environment, but it also makes employees more motivated and improves the culture of the firm [5]. The theoretical foundations of GHRM are frequently based on the Ability -Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) theory and the Resource-Based View (RBV), which elucidate how HR systems can enhance employee skills and promote environmentally friendly behavior for competitive advantage [15].

GHRM and Organizational Sustainability

Studies indicate that GHRM can substantially impact environmental and organizational performance by promoting eco-friendly employee behaviors. For instance, [3] discovered that the adoption of green recruiting, training, and performance appraisal resulted in enhanced environmental results within Bangladeshi enterprises, facilitated by sustainability-oriented behaviors. Their research shows that employees who are taught about environmental issues and given green

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incentives are more likely to act in ways that are good for the environment, which helps the firm stay sustainable.

GHRM in Bangladesh's RMG Sector: Current Status and Challenges

Even though people all over the world are paying attention to sustainable practices, Bangladesh's RMG industry has been hesitant to implement GHRM concepts. The terrible collapse of Rana Plaza in 2013 led to a number of regulations aimed at making workplaces safer. However, many factories still didn't care much about environmental sustainability [5]

[3] found that there are many reasons why GHRM techniques aren't being used in the RMG sector. These include not having enough money, HR professionals not knowing about them, the government not giving enough incentives, and factories not having strategic environmental goals. [17] also said that many RMG manufacturers put reaching production goals ahead of investing in green initiatives because they see GHRM as an extra expenditure instead of
a way to generate value.

Big factories that make things for export and are typically closely watched by international purchasers have started using fundamental GHRM practices, like eco-friendly training modules and green job descriptions. Nonetheless, these actions are mostly motivated by compliance and do not fit strategically with the sustainability objectives of the firm [14]

Key Dimensions of GHRM Practices and Their Relevance to RMG Sector

Green Recruitment and Selection: Green recruitment involves attracting candidates who possess environmental awareness and are committed to sustainable practices [12] In the RMG sector, integrating environmental responsibilities into job roles can help build a workforce aligned with sustainability objectives. However, due to a lack of structured green recruitment frameworks, most factories in Bangladesh focus on hiring based on productivity metrics rather than environmental values [9]

Green Training and Development: Green training enhances employee competencies in areas like waste management, energy conservation, and eco-friendly production techniques [3], [10] observed that while some RMG factories provide environmental training to satisfy buyer requirements, these programs often lack depth and are treated as a one-time compliance measure.

Green Performance Appraisal: Evaluating employees based on environmental performance
fosters accountability and reinforces green behavior [10]. However, in Bangladesh's RMG sector, performance appraisals remain heavily focused on quantitative production targets, with minimal emphasis on environmental contributions [2].

Green Workplace Initiatives: Green workplace initiatives are changes to the way a business runs and the way its buildings are set up that are meant to make the workplace more environmentally friendly. This includes using energy-efficient lighting, technology that save water, methods for recycling garbage, and encouraging paperless documentation [2]

Although global studies highlight the advantages of Green HRM, there is a scarcity of research examining its practical implementation in Bangladesh's RMG industry. Most extant literature addresses its conceptual significance but fails to provide a comprehensive study of implementation issues within the socio-economic context of Bangladesh (Rupa et al., 2023). Furthermore, the perspectives of HR managers regarding the value of GHRM have not been thoroughly investigated, despite their crucial role in its implementation. This study seeks to address these deficiencies by evaluating existing GHRM practices and pinpointing factors that affect their implementation within Bangladesh's RMG sector.

1.3: Conceptual Framework:

IndependentVariable
Dependent Variable

Fig 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Independent Variable	Source
Green recruitment and selection	(Ahmad et al.,2021); (Islam,2020)
Green training and development	(Rahman et al.,2021); (Renwick et al.,2023)
Green performance appraisal	(Kim & Kim, 2020); (Haque & Hossain, 2022)
Green workplace initiatives	(Renwick et al.,2023)

II. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative and descriptive approach to examine how Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices influence organizational environmental sustainability in Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale, distributed digitally to employees from five garment factories in Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj, and Savar. The population included 55 employees working in managerial and operational roles who were directly or indirectly involved in HR, training, operations, sustainability, or environmental compliance. Based on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table, a sample of 48 respondents was selected using convenience sampling which allowed easy access to participants. The study focuses on organizational environmental sustainability as the dependent variable, while the independent variables include green recruitment and selection, green training

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and development, green performance appraisal, and green workplace initiatives. Along with the survey responses (primary data), relevant secondary sources such as academic journals, industry reports, BGMEA and ILO publications, sustainability reports, and government and NGO documents were reviewed. The collected data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics 25, including Demographic statistics, Multiple linear regression and Cross Tabulation to understand how GHRM practices contribute to sustainability outcomes in the RMG sector

III. HYPOTHESIS

H1	H0: Green Recruitment & Selection has no significant impact on Organizational Environmental Sustainability in the RMG sector of Bangladesh. HA: Green Recruitment & Selection has a significant positive impact on Organizational Environmental Sustainability in the RMG sector of Bangladesh.
H2	H0: Green Training & Development has no significant impact on Organizational Environmental Sustainability in the RMG sector of Bangladesh. HA: Green Training & Development has a significant positive impact on Organizational Environmental Sustainability in the RMG sector of Bangladesh.
H3	H0: Green Performance Appraisal has no significant impact on Organizational Environmental Sustainability in the RMG sector of Bangladesh. HA: Green Performance Appraisal has a significant positive impact on Organizational Environmental Sustainability in the RMG sector of Bangladesh.
H4	H0: Green Workplace Initiatives have no significant impact on Organizational Environmental Sustainability in the RMG sector of Bangladesh. HA: Green Workplace Initiatives have a significant positive impact on Organizational Environmental Sustainability in the RMG sector of Bangladesh

IV.RESULTS

i.Demographic Statistics:

Table 1

Demographic variables

Variables	Values	N	%	Mean	Range	Standard Deviation
Gender	Male	22	45.8%			
	Female	26	54.2%			
Years of Experience in RMG Sector				2	3	1
Department	Human Resource Management	14	29.2%			
	Production	4	8.3%			
	Compliance	5	10.4%			
	General Administration	4	8.3%			
	Others	21	43.8%			

The demographic profile of respondents reveals that a slightly higher proportion of participants were female (54.2%) compared to male (45.8%) which is consistent with the gender composition of the Bangladeshi RMG sector, where women form the majority of the workforce. The average length of experience among respondents was approximately two years which indicate that many employees are relatively early in their professional careers. Departmental representation shows that 29.2% of respondents were from Human Resource Management, followed by Compliance (10.4%), Production (8.3%), and General Administration (8.3%), while 43.8% were classified under Others. This diverse departmental distribution ensures that the perspectives captured are not limited to HR professionals, thereby allowing for a more comprehensive assessment of GHRM practices across operational functions.

ii. Multiple Linear Regression

Table 2

Model Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.607[a]	.369	.240	.783

a. Predictors: (Constant), Waste is divided into recyclable, reusable, and hazardous categories, The factory uses energy-efficient lighting and equipment where possible, Candidates with prior knowledge or experience in eco-friendly practices are given preference in hiring, Training programs encourage employees to suggest eco-friendly improvements in work processes , Environmental responsibilities are clearly stated in job descriptions, Employees receive training on waste management, energy conservation, and eco-friendly production techniques, Employees are rewarded or recognized for sustainable practices, Employee performance appraisals include evaluation of environmental contributions

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The model shows an R value of 0.607, indicating a moderate positive relationship between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices and Organizational Environmental Sustainability. The R^2 value of 0.369 means that about 36.9% of the variation in Organizational Environmental Sustainability can be explained by these practices. The adjusted R^2 of 0.240 indicates that other external factors also influence sustainability performance.

Table 3

ANOVA Results

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	13.990	8	1.749	2.850	.014[b]
	Residual	23.927	39	.614		
	Total	37.917	47			

a. Dependent Variable: Implementing Green HRM practices improves our organization's environmental sustainability

b. Predictors: (Constant), Waste is divided into recyclable, reusable, and hazardous categories, The factory uses energy-efficient lighting and equipment where possible, Candidates with prior knowledge or experience in eco-friendly practices are given preference in hiring, Training programs encourage employees to suggest eco-friendly improvements in work processes , Environmental responsibilities are clearly stated in job descriptions, Employees receive training on waste management, energy conservation, and eco-friendly production techniques, Employees are rewarded or recognized for sustainable practices, Employee performance appraisals include evaluation of environmental contributions

The ANOVA results (F = 2.850, p = 0.014) indicate that the regression model is significant at the 5% level. This means that GHRM practices together have a meaningful influence on Organizational Environmental Sustainability.

Table 4

Coefficients of Multiple Regression

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.772	1.016		1.744	.089
	Environmental responsibilities are clearly stated in job descriptions	.070	.194	.058	.361	.720
	Candidates with prior knowledge or experience in eco-friendly practices are given preference in hiring	-.178	.156	-.196	-1.141	.261
	Employees receive training on waste management, energy conservation, and eco-friendly production techniques	-.114	.183	-.126	-.622	.538
	Training programs encourage employees to suggest eco-friendly improvements in work processes	.344	.185	.344	1.863	.070
	Employee performance appraisals include evaluation of environmental contributions	-.074	.208	-.074	-.357	.723
	Employees are rewarded or recognized for sustainable practices	.120	.185	.131	.650	.519
	The factory uses energy-efficient lighting and equipment where possible	.133	.179	.118	.747	.460
	Waste is divided into recyclable, reusable, and hazardous categories	.310	.165	.356	1.877	.068

a. Dependent Variable: Implementing Green HRM practices improves our organization's environmental sustainability

The results show that the overall model is significant; however, individual predictors vary in their effects on Organizational Environmental Sustainability.

H1: Green Recruitment & Selection - Both "Preference for candidates with eco-friendly experience" (B = –0.178, p = 0.261) and "Environmental responsibilities stated in job descriptions" (B = 0.070, p = 0.720) have p-values greater than 0.05 which is indicating no statistically significant effect. So, we accept the null hypothesis (H_0) and reject the alternative hypothesis (H_1) for both variables.

H2: Green Training & Development - "Training on waste, energy, and eco-friendly production" (B = –0.114,

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p = 0.538) is not statistically significant (p > 0.05). In contrast, "Training encouraging eco-friendly suggestions" (B = 0.344, p = 0.070) is not significant at the 5% level but is close to significance at the 10% level. So, we accept H_0 for both at 5% level but partial support for H_1 at 10% level for the second variable.

H3: Green Performance Appraisal - "Environmental contributions in appraisals" (B = –0.074, p = 0.723) and "Recognition for sustainable practices" (B = 0.120, p = 0.519) have p-values greater than 0.05 which means they are not statistically significant. So, we accept the null hypothesis (H_0) and reject the alternative hypothesis (H_1) for both variables.

H4: Green Workplace Initiatives – Energy-efficient lighting and equipment" (B = 0.133, p = 0.460) shows no significant effect (p > 0.05), so H_0 is accepted and H_1 is rejected and "Waste separation into recyclable, reusable, hazardous categories" (B = 0.310, p = 0.068) is not significant at the 5% level, so H_0 is accepted at 5%, but it approaches significance at the 10% level, giving partial support to H_1.

iii. Cross Tabulation

Table 5

Years of Experience * Environmental Contributions in Performance Appraisal

Years of Experience in RMG Sector * Employee performance appraisals include evaluation of environmental contributions Crosstabulation

Count

		Employee performance appraisals include evaluation of environmental contributions				
		Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Years of Experience in RMG Sector	Less than 1 year	1	3	12	5	21
	1–3 years	0	3	5	5	13
	4–6 years	3	2	4	2	11
	More than 6 years	0	0	1	2	3
Total		4	8	22	14	48

The cross-tabulation indicates that employees with less than 3 years of experience show higher agreement that environmental contributions are included in performance appraisals. Employees with longer service show less agreement, which may reflect reduced engagement over time. So, this result implies that newer employees are likely more open to green performance appraisals, possibly because they've recently been exposed to sustainability policies.

Table 6

Department * Candidates with prior knowledge or experience in eco-friendly practices are given preference in hiring Crosstabulation

Count

		Candidates with prior knowledge or experience in eco-friendly practices are given preference in hiring						
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	
Department	Human Resource Management	0	1	1	6	6	14	
	Production	0	0	1	2	1	4	
	Compliance	0	0	1	1	3	5	
	General Administration	0	0	1	0	3	4	
	Others	2	0	4	12	3	21	
Total		2	1	8	21	16	48	

Department * Preference for Eco-Friendly Hiring

The results reveal that HR staff have the highest agreement on giving preference to eco-friendly candidates. Other departments and especially Production show more mixed responses with some neutral or low agreement levels. This disparity may indicate a policy practice gap where HR recognize the importance of green recruitment but operational departments may not prioritize it during actual hiring decisions.

Table 7

Gender * Perceived Impact of GHRM on Environmental Sustainability

Gender * Implementing Green HRM practices improves our organization's environmental sustainability Crosstabulation

Count

		Implementing Green HRM practices improves our organization's environmental sustainability					
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Gender	Male	0	2	1	8	11	22
	Female	1	0	1	12	12	26
Total		1	2	2	20	23	48

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The results reveal that both male and female employees mostly agree or strongly agree that GHRM practices improve Organizational Environmental Sustainability but female employees showing slightly higher strong agreement. This result reflects a broadly positive perception across genders and supporting the potential for organization-wide acceptance of GHRM initiatives.

V. DISCUSSION

This study set out to understand how Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices affect environmental sustainability in the Bangladeshi RMG sector. The results show a moderate positive relationship between GHRM practices and sustainability outcomes. In other words, when factories apply green practices in HR areas like recruitment, training, appraisals, or workplace initiatives, their sustainability performance improves but the effect is still not very strong. This means that the RMG sector has started to move in the right direction, but there is still a long way to go.

Looking more closely at the results, most individual practices did not have a significant effect on sustainability. For example, green recruitment such as hiring people with eco-friendly knowledge or adding environmental duties to job descriptions did not show a meaningful impact. This is not surprising because, as earlier studies point out (Islam, 2020), most RMG factories still prioritize productivity and cost over environmental values when hiring.

Green training gave a mixed picture. General training on waste and energy management did not make a difference, but when employees were encouraged to suggest their own eco-friendly ideas, the results were close to significant. This tells us that people respond better when they feel included and listened to, rather than when training is just about following instructions.

Green performance appraisal also turned out weak. Factories are still more focused on meeting production targets than rewarding sustainable behavior. However, the data showed that newer employees those with less than three years of experience were more likely to say that environmental performance is considered in appraisals. This could mean that younger or newer workers are more open to sustainability, possibly because they are more recently exposed to these ideas.

Green workplace initiatives, like using energy-efficient lighting or separating waste, showed partial influence. Waste separation was especially close to being significant, which suggests that practical and visible actions may be easier for employees to notice and support compared to policies that feel distant or symbolic.

The demographic analysis added some extra insights. Female employees showed slightly stronger belief in the positive impact of GHRM, which might reflect their greater concern for long-term well-being and workplace improvements. Differences were also seen between departments. HR staff strongly supported eco-friendly recruitment, but production staff were less convinced. This gap shows that while HR may see the value of green hiring, it does not always translate into real decisions on the ground.

Overall, these findings suggest that GHRM in the RMG sector is still in an early stage. Factories have started to adopt certain green practices, often because of buyer pressure, but they are not yet embedded as part of daily operations. Limited budgets, lack of awareness, and weak government incentives continue to slow down progress. At the same time, the moderate overall relationship shows that if these practices are applied more consistently and strategically, they could make a real difference.

For the future, the sector needs to go beyond treating GHRM as a compliance activity and instead see it as an opportunity for growth. Proper training programs, fair appraisals that reward environmental contributions, and stronger support from both government and international buyers can help make sustainability a natural part of RMG operations. If these steps are taken, GHRM could become a key tool not only for protecting the environment but also for building the reputation and competitiveness of Bangladesh's garment industry in the global market.

VI.CONCLUSIONS

This research explored how Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is being used in Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector and how it could help the industry work in a more environmentally friendly way. From what we found, some factories have started taking small steps, like including environmental duties in job descriptions, giving basic eco-friendly training, and trying to manage waste better. But in most cases, these actions are done mainly to meet buyer requirements, not because of a strong long-term plan for sustainability. The survey results show that GHRM can have a positive impact on environmental sustainability, but right now the effect is still small. A lack of awareness, limited budgets, and not enough government support are some of the reasons why it isn't more common. Even so, many managers and employees agree that green practices are important and could make both the work environment and the company's image better. For the future, the RMG sector needs to make GHRM a normal part of everyday operations instead of treating it like an extra task. That means offering proper training for workers, making environmental responsibility part of performance evaluations, and building a culture where sustainability is valued. If factories, the government, and global buyers work together, GHRM can become a key way to protect the environment while helping the industry grow in a responsible way. In addition, future study can expand this work by including a larger and more diverse sample across different regions and factory sizes, which would strengthen the generalizability of findings. Qualitative research through interviews with HR managers, policymakers, and buyers could provide deeper insights

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into motivations and barriers. Moreover, investigating the role of digital tools, automation, and green technologies can shed light on how innovation supports GHRM. Finally, longitudinal studies would be valuable to track how GHRM practices evolve over time and whether they bring sustained improvements in environmental and organizational performance.

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