



# Green Human Resource Management Practices in Nepalese Commercial Banks: A Qualitative Inquiry among Human Resource Managers

**Bal Ram Chapagain<sup>1</sup>**, **Sweetie Dangol<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Central Department of Management, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal

<sup>2</sup>LCCI Global Qualifications, Nepal

Article Info.	Abstract
<p><b>Corresponding Author</b>  <b>Bal Ram Chapagain</b></p> <p><b>Email</b>            balram.chapagain@cdm.tu.edu.np</p>	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Considering the growing concerns about green management practices, this study aims to uncover the various facets of green human resource management (GHRM) practices in Nepalese commercial banks.</p> <p><b>Research Methodology:</b> This study employs an exploratory qualitative research design. Snowball sampling method was adopted to identify the study participants and the data were collected through semi-structured interviews with eight human resource managers of Nepalese commercial banks. Braun and Clarke's six-step process of reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyze the data.</p>
<p><b>Article History</b>            Received: 10 February 2024            First Revised: 04 June 2024            Second Revised: 14 June 2024            Accepted: 23 June 2024</p>	<p><b>Findings:</b> The study identified four key thematic areas of GHRM practices: sustainable recruitment practices, promoting environmental awareness through training, enhancing environmental accountability in performance management, and recognition and reward for environmental contributions. While the need for comprehensive GHRM practices were frequently highlighted, sustainable recruitment practices and green training and development practices were found to be more practiced than green performance management and green reward practices.</p>
<p><b>Cite</b>            Chapagain, B. R., &amp; Dangol, S. (2024). Green human resource management practices in Nepalese commercial banks: A qualitative inquiry among human resource managers. <i>SAIM Journal of Social Science and Technology</i>, 1(1), 91–105. <a href="https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13580295">https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13580295</a></p>	<p><b>Implications:</b> The findings of this study provide valuable insights into comprehensive understanding of GHRM practices and indicates the rooms for improvement for the Nepalese banking sector managers. Also, the government and regulators can develop informational, fiscal-economic, and legal instruments based on the study's findings to secure needed support from Nepalese commercial banks.</p> <p><b>Originality/Value:</b> This study makes a significant contribution to the literature by exploring GHRM practices from the lens of institutional theory and by discussing how GHRM practices help in responding to institutional pressures, gain legitimacy among stakeholders, and reap strategic benefits.</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> green human resource management, GHRM practices, Institutional theory, Commercial banks, Nepal</p>

## Introduction

The global environmental issues have made it essential to integrate green management approaches into different organizational functions, including

human resource management. This integration, referred to as green human resource management (GHRM), entails embedding eco-friendly practices into human resource policies and practices to promote environmental sustainability (Gyensare



et al., 2024). GHRM encompasses a wide range of practices such as green recruitment, green training and development, green performance management, employee engagement in sustainability initiatives, and green rewards. This paradigm shift in management is not only a response to common global practices, regulatory pressures and stakeholder demands but also a strategic move to enhance organizational reputation, operational efficiency, and employee satisfaction (Tanveer et al., 2024).

Green management practices, including GHRM practices, has become increasingly popular among governments and the corporate sector mainly due to various climate change treaties and the United Nation's 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs). Nepal government has also endorsed United Nation's 17 SDGs and ratified various treaties relevant to climate change issues, including Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement (Fredriksson et al., 2024). Since the banking sector is one of the major business sectors in Nepal, it can play a significant role in advancing SDGs and help the nation achieve its cherished mission of transformation. In addition to increasing interests of the international organizations and the national governments on environmental issues, business organizations are generally worried about financial benefits alongside environmental issues (Banerjee, 2001). Hence, to protect the environment and increase productivity, businesses are focusing on building sustainable operations by making sure that resources and energy are used efficiently. Various organizational departments, such as HR, marketing, IT, and finance, work together to execute corporate environmental initiatives. Of these departments, the human resource management (HRM) department is the most significant contributor (Ahmad, 2015).

Since it is the people who make everything happen in organizations (Robbins & Coulter, 2021), human resource management functions can and should play an important role in achieving organizational effectiveness. A significant portion of the corporate workforce is concerned about the environment since modern workers are more

devoted to and satisfied with companies that actively support green practices, including green human resource management (González-Benito & González-Benito, 2006). GHRM practices can make employees more aware of environmental issues in day-to-day business practices, enhance the level of job satisfaction, and boost their morale (Mampra, 2013; Rana & Arya, 2024). Thus, the adoption of GHRM policies and practices can create a win-win situation between business and society (Chapagain & Aryal, 2022). Besides the global trend and strategic needs, GHRM has become an essential element of banking operations in Nepal in the wake of new regulatory provisions vis-à-vis corporate social responsibility. The mandatory CSR provision for Nepalese banking and financial institutions includes environmental actions, including 17 SDGs (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2023). Therefore, there have been institutional pressures from international organizations, regulators, and society for the adoption of environment-friendly business practices, including GHRM practices, in the context of Nepalese commercial banks. However, the extent to which Nepalese commercial banks have embraced GHRM practices and the challenges they face in this endeavor remain underexplored. Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices in Nepalese commercial banks are crucial for promoting environmental sustainability and social responsibility. A qualitative inquiry among human resource managers revealed that these practices are essential for enhancing the overall performance and reputation of the banks. Tamang and Mishra (2022) highlighted the trends and effects of GHRM on educational institutions' workplaces, emphasizing the importance of integrating green practices into HR strategies. Ghimire, Mishra, and Bhaumik (2022) further explored the connection between GHRM and the sustainability of corporate environments, underscoring the need for banks to adopt sustainable practices to maintain a competitive edge and contribute to a greener economy. These studies underscore the significance of GHRM in the banking sector, where adopting green practices can not only improve operational

efficiency but also enhance the banks' image and reputation among stakeholders.

This research paper aims to fill this gap by conducting an exploratory qualitative inquiry among human resource managers in Nepalese commercial banks to understand the current state of GHRM practices. By interacting directly with HR managers, the study seeks to uncover the perceptions, experiences, and insights of those at the forefront of implementing and managing GHRM initiatives. This study will provide a nuanced understanding of the factors driving the adoption of GHRM practices, the specific strategies employed, and the obstacles encountered in the process. By identifying the existing GHRM practices and the drivers as well as challenges of such practices, this study will contribute to the broader discourse on GHRM and its potential to drive organizational and environmental benefits. Additionally, the study findings can facilitate informed decision-making vis-à-vis corporate environmental responsibility for both banking sector managers and policymakers.

### **Research Objective**

The study aims to uncover the various facets of green human resource management (GHRM) practices in Nepalese commercial banks contributing to the understanding of GHRM practices in the Nepalese banking sector and to offer practical insights for enhancing environmental sustainability and social responsibility in the industry.

### **Review of Literature**

#### **Review of Theoretical Underpinnings**

Kramar (2014) defines GHRM as a collection of HRM policies and practices designed to promote favorable environmental results. Enhancing employee engagement and dedication to the environment is the goal of GHRM, which aims to improve an organization's environmental performance (Renwick et al., 2013). Therefore, the foundation of GHRM is the alignment of standard practices in human resource management with the environmental goals of the organization. The

development of GHRM encompasses the degree of enhancing social (such as work-life balance) and economic (such as maintaining profits) well-being in addition to raising awareness of environmental issues (such as decreased waste). According to Yusoff et al. (2015), GHRM activities align with the three pillars of sustainability: social justice, environmental conservation, and economic balance.

Several theoretical perspectives closely resemble the idea of green HRM. Some of them are institutional theory, stakeholder theory, social exchange theory, resource-based theory, social cognitive theory, and ability-motivation-opportunity (AMO) theory. This study mainly explores the green HRM practices in Nepalese commercial banks from the lens of institutional theory. Institutional theory posits that formal and informal institutions shape the behavior and interaction of organizations with society (Eitrem et al., 2024). The formal institutions may include government and regulators while the informal institutions include norms, values, and expectations of society. Institutional theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the adoption of Green HRM practices. By examining the coercive (e.g., regulatory guidelines), mimetic (e.g., common practices in the industry), and normative (e.g., values and expectations of society) pressures that drive organizations to integrate environmental considerations into their HR policies, we can better understand how and why these practices are embedded in HRM practices of companies (Zihan et al., 2024).

#### **Review of Relevant Research Studies**

A recent study conducted in the context of UAE found that green recruitment, green rewards, green performance management, green training and development, and green employee relations are the major pillars of GHRM practices, and implementing GHRM practices can have a significant impact on stakeholders' value creation (Patwa & Kee, 2024). Likewise, a study conducted among executives and managers in Pakistan

revealed that GHRM practices in their companies mainly include green job design, green recruitment practices, green training and development, green performance appraisal, green compensation management, green health and safety, and green labor relations (Shah, 2019). Likewise, Tang et al. (2018) identified green recruitment practices, green training, green performance management, green rewards, and green involvement as the main dimensions of GHRM practices.

A systematic literature review based on 74 studies conducted across ten different countries found that green HRM practices are integrated into several regular HRM functions, including recruitment and selection, training and development, job description and analysis, performance management, pay and reward system, employee involvement and empowerment, organizational culture management, health and safety, and work-life balance initiatives (Pham et al., 2020). Based on the expert opinion, Gupta (2018) found green training and development was found to be the most important GHRM practice followed by green employee involvement, green pay and reward system, and green recruitment and selection. Thus, despite some inconsistencies across studies, it appears that green training and development, green recruitment and selection, green performance management, and green compensations and rewards are the most important GHRM practices. However, despite several studies on GHRM practices, numerous questions remain unanswered about why companies adopt GHRM practices in the ways they do. The specific institutional factors and strategic motives driving organizations to implement GHRM practices are still not well explored.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Philosophy and Design**

This study employs interpretive ontology, constructivist epistemology, and exploratory qualitative research design to explore the green HRM practices in Nepalese commercial banks. As per the interpretivist ontology, therefore, this study

is based on the philosophical premise that social reality is shaped by values, norms, understandings, and perceptions held by individuals or society (Belbase, 2007). Epistemologically, it assumes that the findings are subjective and can be generalized only to the sample (Williamson, 2006). Thus, the interpretations of green HRM practices are based on how human resource managers of respective organizations perceive them.

The study applied exploratory qualitative research design. This research design was adopted for various reasons. First, GHRM is a relatively new phenomenon in the Nepalese context and hence key issues are yet to be explored. Second, the main objective of the study was to investigate participants' experiences on GHRM practices and motivations, rather than to test some established hypotheses. Scholars also suggest that exploratory qualitative research is suitable when the goal is to gain a deep understanding of complex or novel issues, generate new ideas, and lay the groundwork for future studies (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017).

### **Participant Recruitment and Sample**

The study population comprises HR managers of Nepalese commercial banks. Participants were selected purposively based on relevant knowledge and ability to provide insights into the GHRM practices in their organizations. The study employed a snowball sampling technique to interview eight participants based on predefined characteristics directly relevant to the research question. First of all, two human resource managers of Nepalese commercial banks, who meet the study's criteria, were selected from the personal contact of the research supervisor. After gathering data from the initial participants, these participants were asked to refer others who met the study criteria. The referred individuals were then invited to participate the study, and data were collected from them. Each new individual was also requested to refer additional participants until the desired sample size was achieved. Scholars suggest that snowball sampling is appropriate when the study population is interconnected in

nature and hard to reach due to individual status or bureaucratic obstacles (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). Thus, the choice of snowball sampling in this study is driven by the interconnected nature of HR

managers within the banking industry and possible difficulties in accessing them directly. Table 1 depicts the demographic profile of the interview participants of this study.

**Table 1**

*Demographic Profile of Study Participants*

Participants	Pseudonym	Gender	Age
1	NV	Male	35
2	CS	Male	40
3	HI	Male	33
4	SH	Female	30
5	NS	Male	36
6	LS	Female	38
7	PR	Male	36
8	BV	Male	50

**Note.** Authors' data file

Note that, Kuzel (1999) suggests that five to eight participants are sufficient for qualitative interviews if the population is homogeneous. Since the population comprises only the HR managers from a single industry sector (i.e., commercial banks), it is assumed to be highly homogeneous.

### Data Collection Instrument and Procedure

This study employed semi-structured interviews to collect managerial perspectives on GHRM practices in Nepalese commercial banks. The main reason behind choosing a semi-structured interview is that it is flexible (Patton, 2015; McGrath et al., 2019), helps researchers to deeply explore their experiences, and fosters nuanced discussions (Hanson et al., 2011; Jackson et al., 20011). The interviews allow participants to openly put their opinions in their own way without being constrained by encoded options (Converse, 1984). Therefore, this approach is particularly useful in comprehending complex or less-explored phenomena (Njie & Asimiran, 2014). Given the study's objective to delve into deeper perspectives on Green HRM practices through face-to-face interactions, the chosen qualitative approach aligns with this investigative goal (Creswell, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

To collect the data, eight participants were contacted personally and interviews were conducted in their respective offices. Probing questions were asked as needed to deeply explore the phenomenon under investigation. With the participants' permission, every interview was digitally recorded using a voice recorder. Additionally, notes of the key ideas were also taken down for cross-verification of the key ideas and to increase the validity of the data. Note that only one interview was scheduled per day during the entire interview stage and the data were transcribed on the same day of the interview. This technique was applied mainly because the success of interviews also contingent upon the interviewer's situational competence, which includes pre-preparation, ability to concentrate, and level of fatigue (Flick, 2006). The interviews took place from February 15 to March 17, 2024.

### Data Transcription and Analysis

Since the participants used both English and Nepali language at their convenience, the denaturalized technique was also used in data transcription as deemed appropriate. The denaturalized technique requires proper representation of ideas rather than word-by-word



translation (Oliver et al., 2005). Scholars also argue that the work of transcription must be done with responsibility but not necessarily with naturality (Bucholtz, 2000). The data were analyzed using a reflexive thematic analysis approach. This approach analyzes the data at the intersection of the dataset, theoretical foundations, and the analytical abilities of the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2019). In conducting the reflexive thematic analysis, this study adheres to the six-step process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013), as well as the additional recommendations provided by Byrne (2022) as follows. First, the transcripts were read multiple times, and rough notes were made. Next, initial codes were created by identifying the important data features relevant to the research questions, using ‘comments’ function in Microsoft Word. The coded data were then organized into initial themes and sub-themes. Fourth, the candidate themes were reviewed against the coded

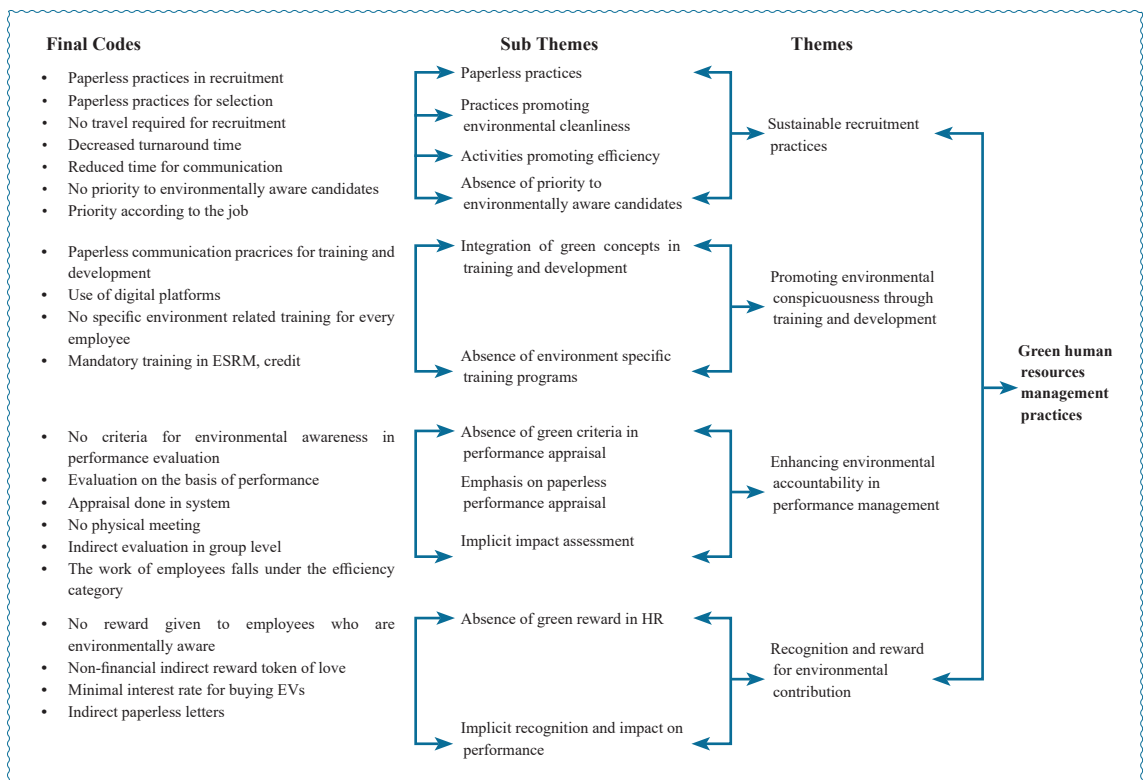
data and the entire dataset. Some themes were split, combined, or discarded as necessary during this step. Each theme and sub-theme was then given an informative name, and a figure was prepared that included the final codes, sub-themes, and main themes. Finally, in the sixth step, a detailed analysis of each theme and sub-theme was conducted using relevant extracts and the key findings were discussed.

### Results and Discussion

The thematic analysis of the qualitative data revealed GHRM in commercial banks of Nepal, summarizing four major themes: sustainable recruitment practices, promoting environmental consciousness through training and development, enhancing environmental accountability in performance management, and recognition and reward for environmental contributions as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Emergent Themes Regarding GHRM Practices in Nepalese Commercial Banks*



These themes are further discussed and supported with relevant quotes from participants in the subsequent sections.

### ***Sustainable Recruitment Practices***

The first theme is concerned with “sustainable recruitment practices”, i.e., various activities that encourage paperless recruitment processes, practices that promote environmental cleanliness and efficiency, and priority to the environmentally aware candidates. Under this, the participants highlighted mainly the use of online interviews, online exams, online vacancy posting, documents sent through emails, and admit cards sent online. For instance, one of the interview participants stated:

The contribution towards green hiring is like, we are using a digital platform. From putting vacancies on the website, we are more dependent on social media to announce vacancies where we can reach the target. Currently, they are present a lot on social media. They can be reached through there. Online Application. On it, there are no papers. It's paperless. I think that is somewhat contribution towards green hiring (P1).

Another participant highlighted the paperless exams and documentation submission process which he considered a new concept compared to the traditional practices where all the processes were paper-based and physical presence was necessary.

Now the exams, before there were also substitute questions, a lot of copies which used papers. Now we go online. That marking we needed to do it on paper before, those things were automated with the system or Excel. Those things we are doing to reduce the paper as much as possible. Documents as well, after the candidate submits it online until the final process finishes, we don't do it. Before what happened, everyone 100% needed to submit CVs and documents. We had so many documents piled up, that we are trying to reduce those things. Interview as well, we are doing a virtual interview (P5).

In the second sub-theme, participants talked about how green recruitment helps promote environmental cleanliness. They talked about the reduction of carbon footprints due to the use of automatic systems and digitalization.

Now they have made many systems automatic because of which people don't have to go to the bank. In the past what used to happen was people had to drop their application, CV, photo, everything to the bank. No matter where they are they had to be physically present. Now what that has done is they don't have to come to the bank because of which petrol or diesel use is reduced, pollution is reduced, and time is reduced (P4).

The reduction in travel time because of online exams was also highlighted by one of the interview participants. He said, “At one point in time we did an online exam as well. SO MUCH PAPER IS SAVED on it. SO MANY PEOPLE DON'T NEED TO TRAVEL for an online exam” (P1).

The third sub-theme is associated with “activities promoting efficiency”. The participants expressed how green human resource activities have helped them save time and fasten their work processes. This has also reduced the amount of manual work intervention needed at any point in time.

Let's say it makes it efficient. It has become easier to get all the information of recruits in one place. Nowadays maximum data is kept in the system. The same work before it would have taken 20 or 25 minutes then after the system was involved it takes only 3 or 4 minutes (P6).

Some participants also expressed how E-recruitment drastically reduced the turnaround time of the whole recruitment process. For instance one participant said that:

In the past, we used to collect applications from paper. Paper application used to take us a very long time and it was time-consuming; it was tedious for the applicants also and it took us, the turnaround time was around 8-9

months to complete one recruitment. Because of E-recruitment, it got a lot easier for us, we started the initiative and the turnaround time for the recruitment also went down to 2 months from 9 months. So, that was something good (P3).

The fourth sub-theme is: “absence of priority for environmentally aware candidates”. Participants mentioned that candidates who are environmentally aware do not receive any preference during the interview process. However, the priority is given only if the candidate's job requires them to be environmentally knowledgeable.

We don't PARTICULARLY ask how much they are environmentally aware. But in what position and designation they are going to be hired? What is our requirement? If we have called them for an environment and social expert or to screen the loan in that position then yes we have to look at that parameter. Otherwise, in the simple position we do not ask if they are environmentally aware or not (P4).

Another participant highlighted that: “We don't have that. Priority. That type of practice hasn't come yet. We are not that advanced” (P6).

### ***Promoting Environmental Consciousness through Training and Development***

The second theme that emerged from the data analysis is “promoting environmental consciousness through training and development”, which involves instilling green principles and practices to cultivate a sustainable mindset among employees.

The first sub-theme under this theme is “integration of green concepts in training and development”. Participants shared how they have been using sustainable practices such as using different portals, and systems for training purposes that contribute to green training while conducting training and development in their organizations. An interview participant (P6) stated:

Mostly in green training,... feedback forums are also digitalized. Invitation as well. Nowadays training platforms are also digital. Banks have their own as well. We have something called the OWL portal. There are trainings in it. Questionnaires are floated there and from there testing knowledge level becomes easier. There are various videos on there as well where people can go to the site and learn.

Participants also mentioned how traditional activities required distributing physical paper for communicating training-related information but today even certificates are distributed online to avoid the use of paper.

Before the training materials would be paper that was handed out. Nominations like to go to training, the internal circular, and the memo format handed out were paper. It used to be like a letter that said: "You were nominated for the training". They have currently been replaced and are in digital form now. Either training materials or even certificates are digital (P5).

The second sub-theme is labeled as “absence of environment-specific training programs”. Participants expressed how training and development related to the environment are not specifically given to every department however if the position requires it then those training are prioritized. For example, one participant said, “There is no in-house but there are external trainings. In external training, it's only department-specific people. For example, I haven't taken any green training. But the concerned department everyone would have taken it” (P1). A similar thing about providing training to employees from the concerned department was mentioned by another participant:

Generally, we don't provide everyone with environmental training. It's not possible as well. But for people who look over loans or any environment-related subject, we provide them training on a selection basis (P5).



### ***Enhancing Environmental Accountability in Performance Management***

The third theme emphasizes enhancing environmental accountability in performance management. Participants not only spoke on different practices used in the process of performance management that have a positive impact on the environment but also mentioned systems to measure and evaluate employees' contributions to environmental sustainability within the organization. Three sub-themes emerged under this theme.

The first sub-theme is “absence of green criteria in performance appraisal”. Participants stated that the organization usually measures day-to-day banking performance and there were no specific criteria to measure employee's green performance.

On appraisal, not as such. One is measurement criteria, which isn't there because if they have the work that is related to environment or social factor then that would come up while doing the credit appraisal. But we generally measure performance. But there isn't any KRA or KPI that is associated with environment or sustainability (P5).

Another participant expressed there are no specific criteria for environmental performance and performance appraisal was conducted mostly based on banking practices.

There is nothing just for the environment. The performance evaluation is done based on bank performance. How is the behavior toward customers? how are banking practices done? What is the attitude and work toward the bank? Quality of work, regularity, etc. in these they are measured. So, this is a new concept and in implementation, I don't think it has come in other organizations and not just ours (P8).

The second sub-theme under performance management is “emphasis on paperless performance appraisal”. Participants shared how they have recently started using technology to

boost paperless practices such as entering marks and communicating for performance appraisals.

We do it online. As soon as it is online, the paper resources. I think it's not very long. We have been using the past 2 years... I think it has only been 2 or 3 years. Before that, we were using paper. And it was a huge expense also, the huge paper was consumed. As I said now I am aware that paper is utilized and somehow it is not good for the environment. So I INSISTED on using the software. I convinced my management. Otherwise, the same thing is filled by an individual employee, after filling up it goes to their supervisor, and after that, it goes to the province level. Once there it is reprinted and filled again and after that, it comes to the Head Office. And it is printed again, filling, space utilization, all were too expensive also and hectic also. Now it has eased the process. From reporting, plus it has come down to paperless. Because of which green, let's say it has contributed towards the environment or green human resource practice (P2).

Another participant exhibited a similar thought on how they do not conduct the appraisal physically. She said: "While doing performance appraisals, yes, the green concept is used. It's the same we don't do physically. We have a system, inside that we do it. And it is paperless" (P4).

The third sub-theme is “implicit impact assessment”. The majority of participants highlighted that even if there are no direct criteria for employee green performance in the appraisal their green behavior implicitly impacts their group or branch performance, or falls under efficiency criteria.

But the major appraisal doesn't take place based on complete utilization because we are as we said performance-based company. You need to perform, you need to show but at the same time how do you manage your/what you call building premises. Paper or resources, how effectively do you utilize them? That is...ONE COMPONENT is considered in the

branch's evaluation. Overall when a branch comes, it impacts the employees. Like we are doing... some appraisal is done at the individual level, group level, and organization level. Right... So when we are talking of group level evaluation, on which the branch manager, operation in-charge. Some would keep their premises dirty, and misutilize the paper. On the same branch if someone utilized the paper effectively, used the resources in the right way. Like the effective use of resources and branch management. It's like that type of one indicator (P2).

Another participant mentioned the use of indirect criteria for addressing the green behavior of employees. She remarked, "Directly there aren't any green concepts. It will link indirectly. Like if someone wastes paper then some points in their overall appraisal might get deducted. The indirect things fall under efficiency criteria in appraisal" (P6).

### ***Recognition and Reward for Environmental Contributions***

The fourth theme, through its two sub-themes, highlights the importance of acknowledging and incentivizing environmentally friendly behaviors and initiatives individuals or teams make that actively contribute to environmental conservation efforts.

The first sub-theme is "absence of green rewards in HR". The participants shared that their organizations do not provide direct rewards for being environmentally aware or responsible. They also linked it with the priority of candidates who are environmentally aware during recruitment and green criteria in performance appraisal. For instance, one of the participants said, "I don't think there is a provision of green rewards for employees. But, for a client, there can be. I am not sure of it. In HR... it's not there" (P4).

The second sub-theme that became apparent under this theme is "implicit recognition and impact on performance". Participants shared that if they are environmentally aware, they

are rewarded indirectly through tokens of love, indirect recognition, etc. One interview participant, for example, highlighted that "There is nothing like a green reward. But there are provisions like employee of the month, or year. They are recognized with token-of-love" (P4).

Likewise, another participant expressed that there are no direct monetary rewards but they are somehow rewarded in the organization.

We don't have any record of green rewards. Whatever they do inside the bank they have very little room to show that they are environmentally friendly. The only way we can reward them is like, as I said earlier, the loan. We may give them a loan with 0% interest to buy an environment-friendly personal vehicle" (P3).

In a nutshell, the findings indicate that Nepalese commercial banks have started practicing various GHRM practices, particularly in the areas of recruitment practices, training and development, performance management activities, and to some extent reward systems.

### **Discussion**

The research aimed to explore GHRM practices of commercial banks in Nepal, utilizing reflexive thematic analysis. Interviews with eight participants revealed four main themes: sustainable recruitment practices, promoting environmental consciousness through training and development, enhancing environmental accountability in performance management, and recognition and reward for environmental contributions.

The analysis revealed a primary theme of sustainable recruitment practices. Nepalese commercial banks employ various paperless practices such as online exams, interviews, applications, documents sent online, and digital portals for vacancies and results, contributing to time-saving, efficiency, and reduced travel that resemble with existing literature on green recruitment practices. Green recruitment employs a paperless method to reduce potential ecological

impact (Ogbu et al., 2019). It also includes conducting interviews through digital means to lessen the environmental impact associated with travel (Mwita & Kinemo, 2018). However, it was observed that Nepalese commercial banks do not prioritize environmentally aware candidates unless their role is directly linked to the environment, which contrasts with literature advocating for green criteria in hiring processes. Green recruitment and selection practices are associated with the attraction and appointment of an environmentally accountable workforce that may assist in implementing green organizational strategies. This association leads to the accomplishment of success in corporate environmental objectives (Gim et al., 2022).

The second theme uncovered was promoting environmental consciousness through training and development. The main findings reveal that Nepali banks employ various methods to promote environmental sustainability during training programs, such as utilizing digital platforms for nominations, circulars, memos, training materials, and certificates. However, it was found that environmental training and development are not provided across all departments. Priority is given to only those positions necessitating such knowledge. Nevertheless, existing literature underscores the importance of developing specific training plans in environmental management, implementing green knowledge management initiatives, and providing educational materials online to reduce paper costs, all while engaging employees in solving environmental challenges (Gupta, 2018).

The third theme identified was enhancing environmental accountability in performance. The findings suggest a lack of specific criteria for evaluating environmental awareness in performance evaluations. However, the literature highlights green performance management as a system for assessing employee performance in environmental management activities (Jabbour & Renwick, 2020). Key features include the integration of green performance criteria, and the establishment of green goals for employees (Masri & Jaaron,

2017). While direct criteria for environmental performance are absent, it was observed that these aspects are implicitly evaluated through overall bank performance or efficiency criteria. Nepalese commercial banks are implementing various systems, such as online reporting, digital document storage, and paperless performance appraisal processes, to support green performance management practices. However, performance evaluations primarily focus on traditional metrics related to productivity and efficiency. Therefore, it does not adequately confirm the idea of a green performance management system. Likewise, the final theme identified was recognition and reward for environmental contributions. The findings indicate a lack of explicit rewards for environmentally aware employees. However, it was observed that rewards such as tokens of appreciation, employee of the month awards, and minimal-interest loans for electric vehicles are provided. This is congruent with the idea that reward practices should aim to recognize employees who contribute to the issues environmental performance (Renwick et al., 2013).

It is noteworthy to mention that GHRM practices in Nepalese commercial banks largely corroborate the tenets of institutional theory. These practices underscore how banks conform to regulatory expectations and normative pressures to ensure compliance and legitimacy. For instance, there are several legal and regulatory provisions, including the Environmental Protection Act, 2019; Environmental and Social Risk Management (ESRM) Guidelines for BFIs, 2018; Nepal Rastra Bank's directive on corporate social responsibility, etc. that require Nepalese banks to be environmentally sensitive in their operations (Chapagain, 2023). Scholars also argue that there are several institutional pressures, including sustainable development concerns and growing emphasis on ethical values that compel today's business organizations to be socially and environmentally responsible (Chapagain, 2018; Sebhatu & Enquist, 2022).

In a nutshell, coercive pressures (e.g., regulatory requirements), mimetic factors (e.g., learning from the success of early adopters), and

normative considerations (e.g., managerial values) collectively drive the incorporation of GHRM practices in Nepalese commercial banks. However, successful implementation requires overcoming resource constraints, enhancing expertise, and managing resistance to change. By understanding these dynamics through the lens of institutional theory, Nepalese commercial banks can better address GHRM challenges, thereby gaining legitimacy among stakeholders and meeting their organizational goals.

### Conclusion

The study explored the various facets of green human resource management (GHRM) practices in Nepalese commercial banks, revealing that sustainable recruitment and green training and development practices are the most commonly implemented. Although green performance management and green rewards were also evident, they were relatively less practiced compared to the other GHRM aspects. Despite the lack of comprehensive and explicit green management practices across all HRM functions, the participants acknowledged the need to promote such practices to respond to institutional pressures and reap strategic benefits.

Overall, these findings indicate that Nepalese commercial banks are open to the concept of GHRM practices and are implementing them to some extent. However, the results highlight the necessity for a more systematic and holistic integration of green human resource management practices within the banking sector. By aligning HR strategies with environmental goals, banks can attract eco-conscious talents, improve operational efficiency, obtain positive evaluations from various stakeholders, and better respond to regulatory requirements.

The implementation of GHRM practices not only boosts operational efficiency and compliance but also cultivates a green organizational culture that supports long-term strategic objectives. These practices can help banks reduce their carbon footprint, promote sustainable practices among employees, and contribute to the overall

environmental sustainability of the banking sector. The government and regulators can design informational, fiscal-economic, and legal instruments based on the findings of this study to gain support from Nepalese commercial banks in an endeavor to achieve sustainable development goals.

The adoption of GHRM practices in Nepalese commercial banks is still in its nascent stage, but the willingness to embrace these practices is evident. By fostering a green organizational culture, investing in green training and development, and aligning HR strategies with environmental goals, Nepalese commercial banks can position themselves as leaders in sustainable banking practices, ultimately contributing to the overall environmental and social well-being of the nation.

### Limitations and Future Research Direction

Despite its contributions to the existing body of knowledge, it has certain limitations that open up interesting avenues for future research. First, this study uses snowball sampling method which is not free from biases mainly because sampling units are not independent (Acharya et al., 2013). Future researchers may utilize probability sampling methods, such as simple random sampling, to enhance the validity of the study. Future research could also increase the sample size and encompass various industry sectors. Additionally, green management practices related to other functional areas could be investigated. Mixed-method studies might also be conducted, allowing for a synthesis of the findings.

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