



Print, Public Sphere, and Political Awakening: Women's Organizations and the Making of a Feminist Public Sphere in Bombay Presidency (1910–1942)

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Abstract

This article examines the intersection of print culture, associational life, and gendered political articulation in the Bombay Presidency from 1910 to 1942. Traditional historical narratives of late colonial India have frequently subsumed women's political participation under the broader rubric of anti-colonial nationalism, often framing women's entry into public life as a byproduct of nationalist mobilization. Conversely, subaltern and gender histories have highlighted women's agency but have left the specific structural mechanisms of their political articulation—namely, the discursive space of print—underexplored. Drawing on interdisciplinary methodologies from history, gender studies, media studies, and political theory, this study investigates how early twentieth-century women's organizations, such as the Bombay Presidency Women's Council (BPWC) and regional branches of the All-India Women's Conference (AIWC), strategically utilized burgeoning regional and English-language print networks. By analysing organizational reports, petitions, journals, and legislative debates, the article argues that these organizations constructed a robust, gendered “counter-public.” This feminist public sphere allowed Indian women to transcend their nineteenth-century roles as passive subjects of male-led social reform. Instead, they emerged as active political agents who critically reshaped the discourse of colonial citizenship. In doing so, they formulated an autonomous political vocabulary that challenged both the patriarchal paradigms of the nationalist script and the paternalistic frameworks of the British imperial state. Ultimately, the article demonstrates that the political awakening of women in western India was not merely an auxiliary to the nationalist movement, but a distinct, textually mediated process of claiming space within a highly contested colonial modernity.

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Keywords: Bombay Presidency, Feminist Counter-Public, Print Culture, Colonial Citizenship, Women's Organizations, Indian History.

Introduction:

In recent years sustainable development has emerged as an important strategic objective for organizations operating in global markets. Businesses are increasingly expected to balance economic performance with environmental protection and social responsibility. organizations that fail to address sustainability challenges risk losing stakeholder trust and long-term competitiveness. Human Resource Management plays a central role in promoting sustainability within organizations. Employees influence organizational culture, decision making, and operational practices. Through recruitment policies, training programs, performance management systems, and employee wellbeing initiatives, Human Resource Management can encourage employees to adopt responsible and sustainable behaviour.

The integration of sustainability into Human Resource Management has led to the development of sustainable Human Resource Management practices. These practices aim to promote long term organizational success while protecting social and environmental resources. Despite the growing importance of sustainable Human Resource Management, empirical research examining its impact on organizational sustainability remains limited. Therefore, the present study aims to analyze how sustainable Human Resource Management practices influence organizational sustainability in global organizations. The study addresses the following research questions.

1. How do sustainable Human Resource Management practices influence organizational sustainability.
2. Which Human Resource practices contribute most significantly to sustainability outcomes.
3. How do employees perceive sustainability oriented Human Resource policies in global organizations.

Review of Literature:

Sustainable Human Resource Management has gained increasing attention in management research as organizations seek to integrate sustainability into their operational strategies. Sustainable Human Resource Management refers to organizational policies and practices that support economic performance while promoting employee wellbeing and environmental responsibility. Recruitment and selection practices aligned with sustainability help organizations attract employees who share organizational values and ethical standards. Such practices contribute to organizational reputation and improve long term competitiveness. Training and development programs play a significant role in improving employee awareness of sustainability issues. Employees who participate in sustainability-

oriented training programs demonstrate higher levels of engagement in environmental initiatives and responsible behaviour.

Performance management systems that incorporate sustainability indicators encourage employees to align their individual performance with organizational sustainability goals. Reward systems linked with sustainability initiatives reinforce positive behaviour and organizational commitment. Employee wellbeing represents an important component of social sustainability. Organizations that promote employee health, work life balance, and inclusive work environments experience higher employee satisfaction and productivity. However existing research suggests that empirical studies examining the combined impact of these Human Resource practices on organizational sustainability are limited. The present study attempts to address this gap through an empirical investigation.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this research is based on the Resource Based View, Stakeholder Theory, and the Triple Bottom Line approach. The Resource Based View suggests that organizational success depends on the effective utilization of valuable and unique resources. Human capital represents a critical strategic resource for organizations. Sustainable Human Resource Management practices enhance employee capabilities and organizational knowledge, which contribute to long term competitive advantage. Stakeholder Theory emphasizes that organizations must consider the interests of multiple stakeholders including employees, customers, communities, and regulatory authorities. Human Resource policies that emphasize employee wellbeing, ethical conduct, and environmental responsibility enable organizations to meet stakeholder expectations and maintain organizational legitimacy. The Triple Bottom Line approach emphasizes the integration of economic, social, and environmental objectives. Sustainable organizations seek to achieve profitability while also contributing to social welfare and environmental protection. Human Resource Management can support this approach by encouraging responsible employee behaviour and integrating sustainability goals into organizational policies. These theoretical perspectives collectively support the argument that sustainable Human Resource Management practices contribute significantly to organizational sustainability.

Research Methodology:

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and quantitative research design to examine the relationship between Human Resource Management practices and organizational sustainability.

Sample and Participants

The sample consists of employees working in multinational organizations operating in both service and manufacturing sectors. Convenience sampling technique was used for data collection. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 180 valid responses were obtained.

Data Collection Instrument

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of three sections. The first section collected demographic information including gender, age, education level, designation, and work experience. The second section measured sustainable Human Resource Management practices including recruitment, training and development, performance management, and employee wellbeing. The third section measured organizational sustainability outcomes including economic sustainability, social sustainability, and environmental sustainability.

Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis.

Research Results

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Respondents

VARIABLE	CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE
GENDER	Male	60%
	Female	40%
AGE	25 to 30 years	32%
	31 to 40 years	38%
	41 to 50 years	20%
	Above 50 years	10%
EDUCATION	Graduate	28%
	Postgraduate	54%
	Doctorate	18%

Interpretation

The demographic results indicate that the respondents represent a diverse workforce with varied levels of education and professional experience.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of HRM Practices

HRM Practice	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Sustainable Recruitment	3.92	0.64
Training and Development	4.10	0.58
Performance Management	3.85	0.67
Employee Wellbeing	4.18	0.55

Interpretation

Employee wellbeing and training practices received the highest mean scores, indicating strong organizational emphasis on employee development and welfare.

Table 3

Correlation between HRM Practices and Organizational Sustainability

Variable	Correlation Value
Recruitment	0.61
Training and Development	0.74
Performance Management	0.66
Employee Wellbeing	0.71

Interpretation

The results reveal a positive relationship between Human Resource Management practices and organizational sustainability.

Table 4

Regression Analysis of HRM Practices and Sustainability

Variable	Beta Value	Significance
Recruitment	0.28	0.03
Training and Development	0.36	0.01
Performance Management	0.31	0.02
Employee Wellbeing	0.34	0.01

Interpretation

The regression analysis confirms that Human Resource Management practices significantly influence Organizational sustainability outcomes.

Discussion / Analysis

The results indicate that sustainable Human Resource Management practices play a crucial role in promoting organizational sustainability. Recruitment policies that emphasize ethical values and sustainability awareness help organizations attract employees who support sustainability goals.

Training and development programs focused on sustainability were found to have the strongest impact on sustainability outcomes. These programs enhance employee knowledge and encourage responsible behaviour. Employee wellbeing initiatives also demonstrate a significant impact on sustainability by improving employee satisfaction and engagement. Organizations that prioritize employee wellbeing are more likely to create positive organizational cultures that support sustainable development.

However, the study has certain limitations including reliance on cross sectional data and employee perceptions. Future research may examine sector specific sustainability practices or conduct comparative studies across countries.

Conclusion:

The study highlights the strategic importance of sustainable Human Resource Management practices in achieving organizational sustainability. The findings demonstrate that Human Resource policies related to recruitment, training, performance management, and employee wellbeing significantly influence sustainability outcomes. From a theoretical perspective the research contributes to the literature on sustainable Human Resource Management by providing empirical evidence linking Human Resource practices with sustainability performance. From a practical perspective the findings suggest that organizations should integrate sustainability principles into Human Resource strategies and organizational culture. Overall, the study emphasizes that Human Resource Management is a strategic partner in building responsible and sustainable organizations.

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