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# Chapter 18

## The Green Road to Environmental Performance: A Study of Private Banking Sector in Colombo District, Sri Lanka



P. N. Sandaruwan, U. K. Thalgaspitiya, and W. N. Hettiarachchi

**Abstract** The challenging business setting requires the companies to adopt and pay a greater attention to the sustainability and environment concerns, in addition to their profit. Currently, many organizations are undertaking green practices to promote social responsibility among workers at the workplace. This study links “green HRM and environmental performance” to the Sri Lankan context. It aims to examine the influence of green HRM practices (green recruitment, green training and development and green employee involvement) on the performance of the employees in the selected private banks in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The data collected from 200 structured questionnaires from employees of the selected private banks comprised the sample for the study. Data was analysed by using SPSS (21.0). Descriptive analysis and regression analysis were carried out. The results indicate that green recruitment has a significant impact on environmental performance while green employee involvement has been eliminated from the model. This emphasizes that human resource is provoked to behave due to the sophisticated green HRM practices which are internally embedded into the personalized behaviour rather formal remits.

**Keywords** Green HRM practices · Environmental performance · Executive employees · Banking sector

### Introduction

Contemporary organizations across the world are under increasing pressure of implementing sustainable practices such as saving energy and recycling. Thus, companies in addition to their business concerns are forced to pay a greater attention on sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Increased concern on environmental issues has built the “go green” concept a focal point of organizations in recent years. Use of green policies could be beneficial to individuals, organizations, nature, and to the entire society (Opatha 2013).

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“Being green” is a comprehensive course of action where the ultimate aim of the organization is to reduce the cost, innovative usage of energy sources and least wastage of resources which could be recycled for another productive purpose. Subsequently, organizations are using numerous “green initiatives” as green management, green marketing, green supply chain and green human resource management (GHRM). Among these practices and studies on green concern, GHRM is gaining a significant interest (Renwick et al. 2013) from all the stakeholders. GHRM can be identified as the integration of green management in the field of HR (Dutta 2012; Margaretha and Saragih 2013). A few years back, green HRM was an entirely novel concept to Sri Lankans including professionals as well as academics (Opatha 2013). However, most HR managers undertake green programs to promote social responsibility among employees in their workplace. GHRM involves in promoting environmentalism through human resource management practices and policies of sustainable utilization of resources. The value of the employees and the company can be improved through greening activities (Deepika and Karapagam 2016). The use of GHRM practices helps to develop the brand image, gain public reputation as well as a better competitive advantage.

The two factors that significantly affect a successful GHRM concept are employee participation and involvement (Renwick 2008). As per Rashid, Wahid and Saad (2006), there is a strong positive effect on environmentally responsible attitudes and behaviours of workforce, even in their private lives of those who are directly involved in the environmental management systems. Hence, studying the implications of GHRM on environmental performance from the managerial perspective in the banking sector assumes significance.

## **Banking Sector in Sri Lanka**

The banking sector in Sri Lanka comprises of twenty-five commercial banks within the Colombo District (Central Bank 2018). They can be categorized into two domestic commercial banking institutions and the branches of foreign commercial banking institutions. Domestic commercial banking institutions are in private and public sectors. This study focused on selected domestic, private commercial banks within Colombo District, Sri Lanka.

The banks in the Colombo District were selected because the green initiatives have been introduced and implemented, as an initial phase in the district. Since the concept “green HRM” is still in its early phase, most of the studies are still at the theoretical stage (Jabbour 2011; Jackson et al. 2011), thus requiring studies in this direction. This paper seeks to address this gap and attempts to investigate the impact of GHRM practices on environmental performance of selected private banking institutions in Colombo District, Sri Lanka.

## Objectives

The objectives of the study are

1. To identify the impact of GHRM practices on environmental performance among executive employees in private banks
2. To identify the impact of green recruitment, green training and development and green employee involvement on environmental performance among executive employees in private banks.

## Literature Review

### *Green Management and Green HRM*

The management of corporate interaction and its influence on environment can be referred as green management (Lee and Ball 2003). Today it is beyond the statutory requirements and hence mandatory to comprise of conceptual tools such as product stewardship, pollution prevention and corporate social responsibility (Hart and Milstein 2003; Pullman et al. 2009). Lee (2009) has emphasized that firms are using green management practices as an environment management strategy in order to manage their environment and consequently proactive environmentally friendly management emerged. However, this is only possible with the active participation and involvement of employees (Renwick 2008). Thus, employees are critical for the successful implementation of the green management and GHRM. As per Brio et al. (2007) and Renwick (2008), it is essential and required to implement green management practices at the workplace as well as in private life on a daily basis HR activities which are environment friendly have been identified as GHRM practices that lead to higher employee engagement, effectiveness as well as lower cost and retention in turn (Deepika and Karpagam 2016). According to Renwick et al. (2013), GHRM can be expressed as the amalgamation of corporate environmental management into the human resource management. In addition, GHRM can be defined as “the policies, practices and systems that make employees of the organization green for the benefit of the individual, society, natural environment and the business” (Opatha and Arulrajah 2014). To create a green climate within the workplace, a range of programmes should take place. Waste reduction and energy saving in the organizations are some examples. These will enable opportunities to employees so that they can present their contribution for the environmental problem-solving procedure (Perron et al. 2006). Thus, all the functions carried out in the human resource department such as planning, recruiting, selecting, managing employees, training and development, performance appraisal and the employee relations can be converted into green (Renwick et al. 2013). Going with that same concept Jabbour (2011) has defined GHRM as the greening of human resource management functions such as job description and analysis, recruitment, selection, training, performance appraisal and rewards.

## **GHRM Practices**

An investigation of the role of human resource management within environmental management was initially suggested by Milliman and Clair in (1996). According to him, an institution requires to maintain an environmental vision as a guideline while acknowledging and training the employees according to the institution's philosophy and environment. Furthermore, an appropriate employee environmental performance appraisal system and reward programs paralleled with recognizing pro-environmental activities have been identified as environmental HRM practices.

### ***Green Recruitment***

To establish and sustain the concept of “green”, it is important that the organizations recognize the candidates who have interest towards eco-friendly issues and hire employees accordingly (Renwick et al. 2013). Most of the organizations are using advanced and modern technology for the recruitment process. Applicants use web portals to search and apply for job opportunities and that will help to reduce wastages generated from printing and sending resumes. The appropriate applicants who can demonstrate environmentally friendly values in the beginning imply that they may be more enthusiastic to engage in green operational practices (Mishra 2017). According to Jain (2016), green recruitment can shrink the recruitment cost and the time by around 80%

### ***Employee Involvement***

According to Ahmed (2015), green employee involvement can be defined as “involvement of workforce to assist an organization in fulfilling its mission and meeting its objectives by applying employees' own ideas, expert knowledge, efforts towards solving problems and making decisions”. Renwick et al. (2013) and Gupta and Gupta (2018), stated that green employee involvement can refer as rendering learning opportunities for employees on green strategies and encouraging them to avert the environmental pollution and other environmental issues. HRM should build programs for waste reduction through waste management, green information systems, environmental audits and green audit programmes (Opatha 2013). Green objectives, targets, goals and responsibilities should be applied for employees to achieve green results. Some employees may merely do what is expected from work while some employees go beyond and involve with more proactive green behaviours than what is required (Iqbal et al. 2017).

## ***Green Training and Development***

Introduction of concepts on training of environmental management and integration of instruction to build eco-values is termed as green training and development. As per Renwick et al. (2013), green training and development can be identified as a human-based action which motivates workforce to obtain skills and competencies in order to recognize the environmental issues and thus protect the environment. Training should be given in line with efficiency, safety, waste management, recycling and at the same time should establish the development of green personal skills of all employees (Renwick et al. 2013). Tang et al. (2018) have identified green training and development as training programs that focus on creating involvement of employees in an emotional manner. Green knowledge, attentiveness and skills in relation to environmental management and a course coordinator to help the participation of management students in green concepts and activities are needed. Green training and development practices grounded in environment-related awareness, knowledge, attitudes, intention and skills that can be utilized in the conduct of pro-environmental actions at the workplace (Zoogah 2011; Jabbour 2011).

On the other hand, training and development create individuals' sensitivity to their environment that facilitates them to undertake preventive actions (Del-Río et al. 2012). Given that readiness, criticism and acceptability of employees are fundamental to construct a green culture (Jackson et al. 2011). Conducting training and development programmes are vital although the attainment of desirable results cannot be achieved just by giving a simple training (Liebowitz 2010).

## ***Environmental Performance***

According to Russo and Fouts (1997), the culture of an organization when enriched with environmental concerns or performance can deliver environmental capabilities which rivals may find it difficult to copy thus facilitating a competitive edge. The degree of which an organization is committed to defending the natural surroundings will be demonstrated through environmental performance (Molina-Azorin et al. 2009). As per Lober (1996), environmental performance can be accessed through a number of indicators such as avoidance or prevention of pollution, reduction of wastage, low environmental releases and recycling activities. It can be amplified by the execution of environmental management systems such as ISO 14001 certification (Del-Brio et al. 2007). Jabbour et al. (2008) have concluded that the organization can observe the results in relation to their environmental performance when employees are inspired by proper HRM practices in the entire operation process.

## ***Green HRM Practices and Environmental Performance***

Scholars have pointed out the significance of each and every green initiative in the workplace with regard to environmental performance (e.g. Branzei et al. 2004; Daily et al. 2012). The literature on environmental performance explicitly addressed how an organization can apply appropriate HRM practices to inspire and encourage its workforce in order to achieve environmental sustainability objectives (Wagner 2012). Previous studies have found that focus on the execution of green practices facilitates employees to be greener by accepting and adopting appropriate actions during the work-related duties (Daily and Huang 2001). Companies will be benefited by adopting environmental practices into their operations. Saving money, finding new sources of business and avoiding troubles can be some operations. Empirical studies have investigated the extent to which green HRM motivates friendly environmental behaviours of frontline employees and that enables the firm to improve their environmental performance (Ramus and Steger 2000). Environment-friendly workforce facilitates to realize the environmental goals of the company, and ultimately, it will be a contribution towards environmental sustainability.

The International Journal of Environment and Sustainable Development (2012) special issue focused on the association of environmental management and human aspects in Brazilian organizations thus making the subject significant. Jackson et al. (2011) have clearly shown how organizations can influence the environment with environmental favourable employee initiatives in the jobs (Ramus and Steger 2000). Lober (1996) pointed out the dimension of environmental performance as the waste minimization, low environmental releases, and pollution prevention and recycling activities of an organization.

### ***Conceptualization***

Studies have explored GHRM on environmental performance. Jabbour et al. (2008), observed four different organizations (ISO 14001 standard certification) which used appropriate GHRM practices and had the most stimulated employees for environmental performance. Thus, it can be hypothesized as

H1: There is a positive impact of green HRM practices on environmental performance among executive employees in selected private banks.

According to Opatha et al. (2015), there are two options which can be used to create environmental-oriented workforce. The First option is the proactive, cost-effective approach focusing on green recruitment. As per the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2007), the benefits of becoming green employees are improving employer branding, company image which eventually attracts potential employees who have intention on environmental orientation.

Hence, it can be hypothesized that:

H2: There is a positive impact of green recruitment practices on environmental performance among executive employees in selected private banks.

The second option is to educate the existing workforce by providing necessary awareness and training and development for environmental protection (Opatha et al. 2015). Renwick (2008) and Renwick et al. (2013) have stated that the green training programmes have a direct impact on environment by focusing on environmental management aspects of waste management, energy-saving, safety and recycling.

Thus, the next hypothesis was developed as follows:

H3: There is a positive impact of green training and development practices on environmental performance among executive employees in selected private banks.

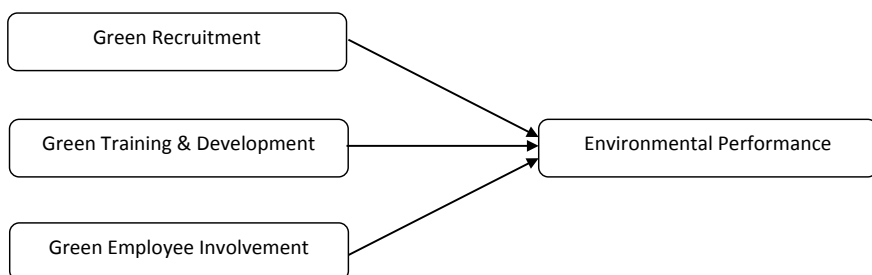
Green employee involvement can be defined as contributions of workforce to assist a company to accomplish its goals and objectives by exerting and implementing employees' own ideas, proficiency, knowledge and efforts needed for problem-solving and decision-making (Ahmed 2015). The feasibility of achieving greater green management practices will be enhanced through employee involvement in green initiatives. The support and the involvement of the individuals and trade union for environmental management initiatives reflect the feasibility of achieving environmental performance of a company (Opatha 2013). Thus, these studies have proved the association between employee involvement and environmental performance.

Based on this, it can be hypothesized thus:

H4: There is a positive impact of green employee involvement practices on environmental performance among executive employees in selected private banks.

## Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was developed based on the theoretical support. The framework is presented in Fig. 18.1.



**Fig. 18.1** Conceptual framework *Source* Authors



**Measurement Items**

As can be seen from the table (Table 18.1), the construct of recruitment, training and development and green employee involvement in the green HRM variable along with the environmental performance have been drawn from various theoretical frameworks.

**Methods**

A deductive approach was employed with minimal interference to finalize the instrument for primary data collection. All the male and female executive employees were selected from the private banks in the Colombo District from the population of the study. Convenience sampling was followed to select the respondents from the sampled banks. A five-point Likert scale was used to collect the primary data. A pilot study with 35 responses was conducted, and the instrument was finalized. The population for the study was 492 employees of selected private banks in Colombo District. Based on the Krejcie and Morgan Table (1970), 217 samples were identified. 220 questionnaires were distributed, and 204 were returned with a response rate

**Table 18.1** Operationalization of the constructs

Variable	Construct	Scale item	Sources of constructs operationalization
Green human resource management	Recruitment	Recruitment messages	Opatha et al. (2015) Opatha (2013)
		Job advertisements	
		Recruitment policy	
	Training and development	Environmental training	Opatha et al. (2015)
		Training needs analyses	
		Environmental education	
	Green employee involvement	Individual involvement	Ahmed (2015)
		management involvement	
		Union involvement	
Environmental performance			Paille et al. (2013)

Source Authors

92%. The response rate was considered appropriate for further analysis (Gall et al. 1996). 200 usable questionnaires, were used after checking the quality of responses. The statistical analysis of the data was done with SPSS (21.0 version) statistical responses were analysed by using descriptive statistics, and regression analysis was done to test the hypothesis.

## Results

### *Demographic Profile of the Sample*

The profile of the respondents is summarized in Table 18.2. A majority of them were male (52.5%) and were middle age between 36 and 45 years in terms of age (38%)

**Table 18.2** Summary of demographic profile

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	104	52
	Female	96	48
Age	Below 25 years	4	2
	25–35 years	67	33.5
	36–45 years	76	38
	46–55 years	40	20
	Above 55 years	13	6.5
Marital status	Married	112	56
	Unmarried	88	44
Education level	GCE advanced level	5	2.5
	Diploma/other professional qualification	95	47.5
	Degree	86	43
	Masters/Postgraduate	14	7
Working experience	Less than 1 year	–	–
	1–2 years	6	3
	3–5 years	57	28.5
	6–10 years	102	51
	Over 10 years	35	17.5
Income level	Below LKR 50,000	6	3
	Between LKR 50,000–75,000	54	27
	Between LKR 75,001–100,000	105	52.5
	Above LKR 100,000	35	17.5

Source Authors

and unmarried (56.5%). In terms of education, they were equally distributed between professionally qualified diploma holders (47.5%) and graduates (43%). More than half of the total respondents had 6–10 years of work experience in the banking industry and had an income of Rs. 75,000–100,000 (52.5%)

**Reliability and Validity of the Instrument**

The inter-item consistency reliability was observed through Cronbach’s alpha, the results of which are given in Table 18.3. As can be seen through the table, Cronbach’s alpha value for each of the constructs is in the recommends threshold value.

Since “all the indicators have been taken from the literature, content validity is satisfied which indicates that the scale items have adequately covered the entire domain of the construct measured. Convergent validity is the extent to which the scale items correlate positively with the other measurements within the same construct (Malhotra and Dash 2011). As depicted in Table 18.4, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO) value of three GHRM practices and the dependent variable were greater than 0.5; Sig values of Bartlett’s test of Sphericity were less than 0.05; average variance extracted (AVE) values were greater than the standard of 0.5; and composite reliability (CR) values were greater than 0.7. Therefore, convergent validity of all GHRM practices and the dependent variable was significantly satisfied”.

**Table 18.3** Reliability analysis result

Instrument	Cronbach’s alpha
Green recruitment practices	0.825
Green training and development	0.737
Green employee involvement	0.707
Environmental performance	0.825

Source Authors

**Table 18.4** Summary of convergent validity results

Construct	KMO > 0.5	Bartlett’s test of Sphericity		AVE > 0.5	CR > 0.7
		X <sup>2</sup>	Sig < 0.05		
Green recruitment practices	0.772	191.938	0.000	0.928	0.951
Green training and development	0.842	757.692	0.000	0.791	0.870
Green employee involvement	0.821	191.938	0.000	0.73123	0.855
Environmental performance	0.783	315.004	0.000	0.533	0.732

Source Authors

**Table 18.5** Frequency distribution analysis

Statistics		Green employee involvement	Green training and development	Green recruitment	Environmental performance
N	Valid	200	200	200	200
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.7025	3.6988	3.3225	3.3844
Std. error of mean		0.03016	0.02854	0.04344	0.03325
Median		3.6667	3.5000	3.0000	3.2481
Mode		4.00	3.45	3.00	3.03
Std. deviation		0.58266	0.79606	0.87885	0.47017
Skewness		-1.299	-1.522	-1.197	0.221
Std. error of skewness		0.398	0.398	0.398	1.382
Kurtosis		1.686	1.912	1.354	0.172
Std. error of kurtosis		0.778	0.778	0.778	1.456

Source Authors

### *Frequency Distribution Analysis*

Frequency distribution analysis has been carried out individually for the three GHRM practices and environmental performance. Results of frequency distribution analysis are presented in Table 18.5. Each of the four mean values was greater than 3, and thus, it can be illustrated that three GHRM practices and environmental performance of private banking institutions as “Good”. According to the mean values, green employee involvement has recorded the highest mean value among three GHRM practices. The skewness and kurtosis of all the distributions were between +2 and -2, which indicated that the data recorded are approximately normally distributed.

### *Hypothesis Testing*

#### **Impact of Overall GHRM Practices on Environmental Performance**

Simple regression analysis was conducted in order to identify the impact of all three GHRM practices on environmental performance. As depicted in Table 18.6a, since the  $P$  value was less than 0.05 ( $P < 0.05$ ), the model was statistically significant. 74.3% (Table 18.6b) of the total variance of environmental performance was explained by the three GHRM practices together (green recruitment, green training and development and green employee involvement) through the beta value

**Table 18.6** (a) Regression analysis: impact of overall GHRM practices on environmental performance (ANOVA). (b) Regression Analysis: impact of overall GHRM practices on environmental performance (Model Summary). (c) Regression analysis impact of overall GHRM practices on environmental performance (coefficients)

(a)

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	32.685	1	32.685	572.342	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	11.307	198	0.057		
Total	43.992	199			

(b)

R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate	Durbin–Watson
0.862 <sup>a</sup>	0.743	0.742	0.23897	1.035

(c)

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.230	0.152		5.511	0.032
Green HRM	0.808	0.042	0.862	23.924	.000

Source Authors

of 0.808. Accordingly, H1 can be accepted by emphasizing the positive impact on GHRM practices on environmental performance. Further, Pearson correlation *R* value 0.743 suggests that there is a strong positive relationship between GHRM practices and environmental performance.

### Impact of GHRM Practices on Environmental Performance

Multiple regression analysis has been conducted to discover the impact of each GHRM practice on environmental performance. As shown in Table 18.7a, *P* value was less than 0.05 ( $P < 0.05$ ) which strongly suggested the significance of the model fit. Among the three independent variables, green employee involvement has been removed from model since it recorded a *P* value greater than 0.05 while other two were accepted ( $P < 0.05$ ) (Table 18.7c). The green recruitment and green training and development were statistically significant at 0.000 level, and the green recruitment practices have received higher coefficient value (0.565) than green training and development (0.225) (Table 18.7d).

*R* square value was 0.818 that depicted that 81.8% of the total variance of environmental performance was explained by green recruitment and green training and development (Table 18.7b). Since the two GHRM practices have received positive coefficient values (Table 18.7d), the following linear equation is arrived at

**Table 18.7** (a) Regression Analysis: impact of GHRM practices on environmental performance (ANOVA). (b) Regression Analysis: impact of GHRM practices on environmental performance (model summary). (c) Regression Analysis: impact of GHRM practices on environmental performance (excluded variables). (d) Regression analysis impact of GHRM practices on environmental performance (coefficients)

(a)

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	35.445	1	35.445	821.171	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	8.547	198	0.043		
	Total	43.992	199			
2	Regression	35.965	2	17.982	441.340	0.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Residual	8.027	197	0.041		
	Total	43.992	199			

(b)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate
1	0.898 <sup>a</sup>	0.806	0.805	0.20776
2	0.904 <sup>b</sup>	0.818	0.816	0.20185

(c)

Model		Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial correlation	Collinearity statistics tolerance
1	Training and development	0.193 <sup>b</sup>	3.571	0.000	0.247	0.317
	Green employee involvement	0.084 <sup>b</sup>	2.522	0.012	0.177	0.864
2	Green employee involvement	0.055 <sup>c</sup>	1.607	0.110	0.114	0.793

(d)

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. error	Beta		
2	(Constant)	0.676	0.143		4.727	0.000
	Green recruitment	0.565	0.041	0.738	13.648	0.000
	Training and development	0.225	0.063	0.193	3.571	0.000

Source Authors

$$Y = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

$$Y = 0.676 + 0.565 X_1 + 0.225 X_2$$

- Y Environmental performance  
 X<sub>1</sub> Green recruitment  
 X<sub>2</sub> Green training and development

## Discussion

The findings demonstrate that companies are able to improve environmental performance by adopting GHRM practices. Therefore, a firm with strong GHRM practices aligning with HR functions and activities in their organizational environmental strategies will generate superior environmental performance. This is the line with the existing scholarly work (Branzei et al. 2004; Daily et al. 2012; Jabbour et al. 2008).

This study established that GHRM practices may facilitate both environmentally friendly recruitment practices and environment-oriented training and development practices that can persuade workers to engage in corporate behaviours, which are critical in realizing greater environmental performance of a company. (Opatha et al. 2015; Renwick et al. 2013). Opatha (2013) has mentioned green recruitment as a cost-effective proactive method to enhance environmental performance and provide the awareness about environmental protection, learning and education, training and development as the second method to enhance environmental performance. This finding of the study justifies the applicability of this concept in the private banking industry in Sri Lanka. However, Opatha (2013) has suggested that the support and the involvement of the individuals and trade union for environmental management are significant to achieve environmental performance of a company. The findings of this study are in contrast, thus rejecting the green employee involvement from the model. It further emphasized that although employee active engagement has been identified as a crucial aspect in environmental performance, it was not found significant in the current study.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper demonstrates that green HRM practices could facilitate both the environmentally friendly recruitment practices and environment-oriented training and development practices. This could persuade employees to engage in corporate behaviours which could be essential in achieving greater environmental performance at the workplace. Employee engagement, however, was not found to have influenced environmental performance. Further, this study indicated that adopting green HRM practices at the strategic level is essential towards the achievement of environmental performance. The influence and engagement of each and every employee from

top management to the bottom line appears to be a prerequisite for environmental sustainability.

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