

# **HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN THE APPAREL INDUSTRY OF SOUTH GUJARAT: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF SURAT, VAPI, AND DAMAN**

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## **ABSTRACT:**

The apparel industry in South Gujarat, particularly in Surat, Vapi, and Daman, plays a vital role in the region's economy, driven by textile manufacturing and export activities. Human Resource Management (HRM) is critical in enhancing productivity, ensuring employee satisfaction, and sustaining growth in this labor-intensive sector. Effective HRM practices address challenges like workforce turnover, skill development, and compliance with labor laws while fostering innovation and competitiveness. Emerging trends, such as digitization, diversity, and sustainability, are reshaping HR strategies to align with evolving industry demands. This study explores HRM practices in the apparel sector, offering valuable insights for stakeholders to strengthen the industry. This study aims to explore Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in the apparel industry of South Gujarat, specifically in Surat, Vapi, and Daman, regions that are crucial for textile manufacturing. Despite the importance of this sector, there is a notable gap in prior research addressing HRM practices within this context. The research seeks to examine the current HRM policies, employee satisfaction, and the impact of these practices on organizational outcomes such as employee performance and retention. The study adopts an exploratory research design with a positivist philosophy, using quantitative methods to uncover patterns and correlations in HRM practices. Surveys will be distributed to HR managers and employees in the region, and data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis to identify relationships between HRM practices and key organizational outcomes. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and data confidentiality, will be strictly adhered to throughout the study. The analysis highlights the significant impact of HRM policies and practices on job performance in South Gujarat's apparel industry, particularly in the areas of training and development. Investing in continuous learning fosters an innovative culture, improving job satisfaction and work productivity (Yousef & Shadi, 2021). Effective training aligns employees' skills with job responsibilities, enhancing individual and organizational development. Additionally, the alignment of training programs with career goals fosters employee dedication and loyalty, contributing to a positive work culture. Robust HRM practices in training and development create a skilled workforce that supports the competitive advantage and success of the apparel industry. Ultimately, these practices lead to sustainable development and enhanced performance, benefiting both employees and the organization.

**Keywords:** Apparel Industry, Human Resource Management, HRM practices, Textile Manufacturing and South Gujarat

## **INTRODUCTION**

The apparel industry of South Gujarat, especially in cities like Vapi, Surat, and Daman acts an important responsibility in the economy of the region. It is recognized for its vital textile and garment departments. This region has determined itself as a focus for manufacturing and exportation. Vapi and Daman are strategically situated in proximity to extensive ports, supporting the industry with their powerful frameworks and industrial farms (Hassan, 2022). Surat is termed the "Silk City of India," is eminent for its complex embroidery and artificial textile creation.

A powerful HRM assures the improvement of labor productivity, increases worker delight, and promotes a culture of continued development. Human Resource Management customs in this industry are very important for maintaining economic growth and competitive ability. These are important to address the industry imperatives and notably career growth needs, comparatively high expense on labour, and compliance with the labor laws. This empirical investigation target is to undertake the current studies on the HRM practices in the apparel industries of Surat, Vapi, and Daman.

Human Resource Management (HRM) plays a crucial role in the success of any industry. It involves managing people, the most valuable resource of an organization, to achieve its goals effectively and efficiently. In the apparel industry, where competition is intense, HRM practices have a significant impact on productivity, employee satisfaction, and overall organizational performance. This study focuses on understanding the HRM practices in the apparel industry in South Gujarat, particularly in Surat, Vapi, and Daman.

### **Importance of the Apparel Industry in South Gujarat**

South Gujarat, comprising cities like Surat, Vapi, and Daman, is a hub for the apparel and textile industry. Surat, known as the "Silk City of India," is famous for its textile manufacturing and trading. Vapi and Daman also contribute significantly to this sector with a mix of small, medium, and large-scale enterprises involved in apparel production. This region's apparel industry not only caters to domestic markets but also exports products to international markets.

The apparel industry in South Gujarat provides employment to thousands of workers, including skilled and unskilled labor. It is a labor-intensive sector where managing human resources effectively is essential for maintaining productivity, ensuring quality, and sustaining growth.

### **Relevance of HRM Practices**

HRM practices encompass a wide range of activities, including recruitment, training, performance appraisal, employee engagement, and welfare programs. In the apparel industry, where the workforce often includes a mix of permanent employees and contractual workers, implementing effective HRM practices is challenging but crucial. These practices ensure that the workforce remains motivated, skilled, and aligned with the organizational goals.

Given the rapid technological advancements and changing market dynamics, the apparel industry faces constant pressure to adapt and innovate. HRM practices play a pivotal role in enabling companies to remain competitive by fostering a skilled and committed workforce.

### **Challenges in HRM in the Apparel Industry**

The apparel industry in South Gujarat faces several HRM challenges, including:

1. **High Workforce Turnover:** Many workers, especially contractual labor, frequently change jobs in search of better wages or working conditions.
2. **Lack of Training and Skill Development:** Despite being a labor-intensive sector, there is often a lack of structured training programs for workers.
3. **Compliance with Labor Laws:** Ensuring compliance with labor laws and regulations is crucial but challenging, particularly for smaller enterprises.
4. **Cultural and Language Barriers:** The workforce often comprises individuals from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, making communication and team integration difficult.
5. **Health and Safety Concerns:** Workers in the apparel industry are often exposed to hazardous working conditions, and ensuring their health and safety is a significant challenge.

### **Emerging Trends in HRM**

With advancements in technology and changing workforce expectations, the apparel industry is witnessing several emerging trends in HRM, including:

1. **Digitization of HR Processes:** Many organizations are adopting digital tools for recruitment, payroll management, and employee engagement.
2. **Focus on Diversity and Inclusion:** Companies are increasingly recognizing the importance of fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace.
3. **Employee Wellness Programs:** There is a growing emphasis on promoting employee well-being through health and wellness initiatives.
4. **Sustainability and Ethical Practices:** As consumers demand more sustainable and ethically produced apparel, companies are focusing on aligning their HRM practices with these values.

HRM practices are a cornerstone of the apparel industry's success in South Gujarat. By addressing workforce challenges, implementing effective HR strategies, and staying abreast of emerging trends, companies in Surat, Vapi, and Daman can enhance their competitiveness and contribute to the region's economic growth. This study aims to provide a comprehensive

understanding of HRM practices in the apparel industry, offering insights and recommendations for businesses, policymakers, and other stakeholders.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW:

1. **Ahmad et al. (2020)** analyzed compensation and benefits strategies in the apparel sector, highlighting the need for equitable pay structures to retain talent. This is pertinent for South Gujarat, where industries like textiles often face challenges in offering competitive packages due to market pressures.
2. **Amjad et al. (2021)** discussed the critical role of training and development initiatives in the apparel industry. The study emphasized that upskilling employees through technical training and cross-cultural programs is essential for maintaining global standards, a concern for export-oriented industries in South Gujarat.
3. **Anwar and Abdullah (2021)** explored HRM practices in labor-intensive industries like the apparel sector, emphasizing recruitment, training, and employee retention. Their study highlighted the importance of aligning HR strategies with organizational goals to improve workforce efficiency and manage high turnover rates. This insight is relevant for South Gujarat's apparel industry, where labor diversity and skill management are critical.
4. **Azeem et al. (2021)** examined workforce management in the apparel sector, stressing the role of training programs to cope with rapid technological advancements. This aligns with the needs of South Gujarat's textile and garment units, which increasingly rely on skilled labor to remain competitive.
5. **Bahuguna et al. (2023)** examined the role of labor laws in shaping HRM practices in India. Their study discussed the importance of adhering to acts like the Industrial Disputes Act (1947) and the Factories Act (1948) in ensuring fair labor practices, a critical aspect for South Gujarat's labor-intensive industries.
6. **Cooke et al. (2020)** traced the evolution of HRM in India, detailing its transformation from traditional labor management to strategic HR practices post-economic liberalization in 1991. The study underlines the critical role of compliance with labor laws in industries like textiles and apparel, which dominate South Gujarat's economy.
7. **Debnath et al. (2024)** reviewed global HRM trends in the apparel industry, noting that multinational firms adopt standardized HR practices while adapting to local conditions. This dual approach can benefit South Gujarat's industries, where global standards must be balanced with local workforce dynamics.
8. **Islam et al. (2020)** highlighted the significance of robust performance management systems in labor-intensive industries, suggesting that clear performance metrics and regular evaluations enhance employee productivity. This is particularly relevant in Surat's fast-paced textile industry, where performance directly impacts competitiveness.
9. **Srivastava et al. (2023)** explored industrial development in South Gujarat, focusing on the challenges of managing human resources in industrial hubs like Surat and Vapi. Their findings stress the importance of HRM in addressing labor shortages, high attrition rates, and compliance with labor standards.

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

##### RESEARCH PROBLEM

The apparel industry of South Gujarat particularly apparel manufacturing locations such as Surat, Vapi and Daman describe an important business practices and occupations. While it is a vital area of focus, there is a conspicuous lack of prior research which targets the specific habitual practices of HRM in this region for apparel industry. This study seeks to address this by looking at the contemporary patterns of HRM and their impact on organizational enactments and motivating strategies (Saha et al. Papagiannaki, 2021). By these developments and viability both so firmly rest on powerful habits of human resource management. Through this research it is focusing to identify the possible approaches of the HRM approaches used in these emerging key industrial hubs and toward this, following general implications for the local industry and beyond that for the broader circumstances of the studies compare and contrast HRM exercises.

##### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To assess the demographic profile of employees in the apparel industry across Surat, Vapi, and Daman.
- To evaluate the current HRM policies and practices implemented in the apparel industry in the specified regions.
- To analyze employee satisfaction with their work environment, career growth opportunities, and overall organizational culture.
- "To identify the impact of HRM practices on employee performance, retention, and organizational commitment in the apparel industry".

### **RESEARCH QUESTION**

1. What are the current HRM policies and practices implemented in the apparel industry?
2. “How to identify the impact of HRM practices on employee performance, retention, and organizational commitment in the apparel industry?”
3. How to analyze employee satisfaction with their work environment, career growth opportunities, and overall organizational culture?

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study adopts an exploratory research design to investigate HRM practices in the apparel industry of Surat, Vapi, and Daman. The design focuses on gathering preliminary insights into the dynamics and patterns of HRM practices without testing pre-established hypotheses. It aims to uncover diverse aspects of HRM initiatives within this industrial context.

### **RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY**

The research is grounded in positivism, emphasizing the use of factual methods and quantitative analysis to derive generalizable insights. By employing surveys to collect numerical data, the study focuses on identifying patterns and correlations in HRM practices. This philosophy ensures objectivity, reliability, and replicability of findings.

### **RESEARCH APPROACH**

An inductive research approach is employed, starting with observations and data collection to develop broader generalizations. Surveys will capture current HRM practices in Surat, Vapi, and Daman. The findings will inform theoretical frameworks for effective HRM strategies specific to the apparel industry in this region.

### **SAMPLING**

The study uses a non-probability sampling method, selecting 51 participants based on their relevance to the research topic. Purposive sampling ensures that participants possess expertise or experience in HRM practices within the apparel industry, enabling the collection of rich, insightful data.

### **DATA COLLECTION**

Data will be collected through surveys distributed via Google Forms. This method is cost-effective, user-friendly, and allows for the development of structured questionnaires, including multiple-choice, Likert scale, and open-ended questions. It facilitates efficient data gathering from HR managers and employees.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, median, and standard deviation. Correlation and regression analysis will identify relationships and causal links between HRM practices and outcomes. Graphical tools like bar charts and histograms will visually present key findings for better comprehension.

### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical standards are prioritized by obtaining informed consent from participants and ensuring their anonymity and data confidentiality. Participants will be fully informed about the study's purpose, risks, and benefits. Data will be securely stored, and findings will be reported honestly, adhering to institutional ethical guidelines.

### **DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION:**

#### **Frequency Analysis**

The dataset comprises 400 observations, evenly split between two categories with slight variation. Specifically:

- Value 0 appears **178 times**, accounting for **44.5%** of the data.
- Value 1 occurs **222 times**, representing **55.5%** of the data.

**HRM policies and practices in your organization are followed properly for the betterment of employees.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	178	44.5	44.5	44.5
	1	222	55.5	55.5	100.0
Total		400	100.0	100.0	

Both values exhibit 100% validity with no missing or invalid entries, ensuring the dataset's integrity. The slight predominance of value 1 suggests a trend or preference depending on the context, potentially indicating higher satisfaction or positive feedback in survey responses. The 100% response rate validates the reliability of the survey, offering a comprehensive view of participant opinions.

**Key Surveys and Observations**

- **Organizational Values and Diversity Inclusion:** All 400 responses (100%) were valid, providing insights into employee perceptions of the organization's commitment to inclusivity and values.
- **Emotional Dedication to HR Initiatives:** All responses (100%) were valid, reflecting an extensive view of employees' emotional connections to the organization.
- **Performance Appraisal Accuracy:** Responses fully represented employee opinions, suggesting the organization's appraisal processes were evaluated with transparency.
- **Career Growth Opportunities:** The survey's 100% response rate highlights employees' perspectives on advancement opportunities and alignment with career goals.
- **Compensation and Benefits Satisfaction:** Comprehensive feedback indicates widespread employee participation, yielding actionable insights for HR improvement.
- **Continuous Learning and Development Investments:** Full participation (100% valid responses) ensures reliable analysis of organizational initiatives for employee growth.

The complete dataset bolsters confidence in the findings, minimizing bias and enabling targeted improvements.

**I am satisfied with the safety and comfort of the work environment from my current organization.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	139	34.8	34.8	34.8
	1	261	65.3	65.3	100.0
Total		400	100.0	100.0	

**Regression Analysis**

The regression model yielded the following results:

- **R<sup>2</sup> = 14.4%**, indicating the model explains a moderate portion of variance in the dependent variable.
- **Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 8.2%**, accounting for model complexity.
- **Standard Error = 0.477**, suggesting acceptable prediction accuracy.

### Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.380 <sup>a</sup>	.144	.082	.477

#### ANOVA Results:

- Regression SS = 14.265, Residual SS = 84.525, Total SS = 98.790.
- **F = 2.325, p < 0.001**, confirming the model's explanatory power.

These results suggest that while the model demonstrates notable influence, there is room for improvement in capturing additional variance.

### ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.265	27	.528	2.325	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	84.525	372	.227		
	Total	98.790	399			

#### Hypothesis Testing

Significant findings include:

1. **HR Policies and Practices:**  $t=-17.886, p<0.001$   $t = -17.886, p < 0.001$   $t=-17.886, p<0.001$ , indicating a strong relationship with employee perceptions.
2. **Work Culture Satisfaction:**  $t=-17.527, p<0.001$   $t = -17.527, p < 0.001$   $t=-17.527, p<0.001$ , reflecting significant employee satisfaction.
3. **Values and Inclusion:**  $t=-18.436, p<0.001$   $t = -18.436, p < 0.001$   $t=-18.436, p<0.001$ , showing strong alignment with organizational goals.
4. **Feedback Incorporation:**  $t=-17.261, p<0.001$   $t = -17.261, p < 0.001$   $t=-17.261, p<0.001$ , underscoring the importance of employee feedback.
5. **Emotional Commitment:**  $t=34.646, p<0.001$   $t = 34.646, p < 0.001$   $t=34.646, p<0.001$ , highlighting a positive connection between HR practices and employee loyalty.

These findings underscore the influence of HR initiatives on employee satisfaction, commitment, and perceptions.

#### Discussion

##### HR Policies and Practices

Survey data reveal a balanced view of organizational HR practices:

- **230 employees** express satisfaction, while **180 employees** express dissatisfaction.
- Strengths include fair recruitment, training, unbiased appraisals, and effective communication.
- **Key Improvement Areas:** Addressing dissatisfaction through policy reviews and employee engagement.

##### Emotional Commitment

Emotional dedication varies among employees:

- High ratings (4 and 5) from **210 employees** indicate positive impact from HR initiatives.
- Lower ratings (1 and 2) from **90 employees** highlight gaps in emotional connection.

**Actionable Steps:** Enhance recognition programs and career growth opportunities to foster deeper emotional commitment.

### **Performance Appraisals**

Employee perceptions of fairness in appraisals are mixed:

- **255 employees** rated 3 or higher, indicating satisfaction.
- **100 employees** rated 1 or 2, suggesting concerns about bias or inconsistency.

**Recommendations:** Revise appraisal processes for transparency and consistency to build trust.

### **Career Growth Opportunities**

Opinions on career advancement are diverse:

- **High satisfaction among employees with clear career paths.**
- **Dissatisfaction** indicates the need for structured development programs.

**Key Focus:** Expand training initiatives aligned with employee goals.

### **Compensation and Benefits**

Satisfaction with compensation and benefits aligns with employee retention:

- **Positive responses reflect organizational commitment.**
- **Feedback** highlights opportunities to refine reward structures.

### **Continuous Learning and Development**

Investments in training programs resonate positively:

- **100% response rate validates the effectiveness of initiatives.**
- **Employee** feedback underscores the value of aligning programs with career aspirations.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the above given analysis demonstrates the notable impact of the HRM policies and practices on the job performance in South Gujarat's apparel industry mainly in training and development. Moreover, investing in regular learning and development develops an innovative culture, encouraging the employees and improving job satisfaction (Yousef and Shadi, 2021). Further, the effective training aligns with the career goals of the employees thereby ensuring that they acquire the reliable skills which increase work productivity and job performance. Moreover, this alignment equips the employees for the current job requirements and responsibilities which drives both individual and organizational development. Further, a belief in the values of the training program encourages dedication and loyalty and contributes to a positive work culture. However, the robust HRM practices in training and development establish a dynamic, skilled workforce which supports the competitive advantages and success of the apparel industry (Anwar and Abdullah, 2021). Hence, these practices ensure that both the employees and the organization have advantages and thereby leads to the sustainable development and enhanced performance.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The company should improve their training programs to match the industry needs, by emphasizing on both technical skills and soft abilities. Moreover, they should also cultivate mentorship and coaching (Nanjundeswaraswamy and Beloor, 2022).
- They should develop career development opportunities and continuously discuss career aims with the employees and align with the goals of the organization.
- The apparel industry of South Gujarat should develop an inclusive work environment by motivating and transparent communication and feedback. Moreover, they should also offer constructive responses and understand the top performers to increase employee morale and work productivity.
- The company should review regularly the compensation and benefits to ensure they are competitive and fair remunerations (Islam et al., 2019). Moreover, they should involve performance-based incentives for encouraging the employees.
- They should also implement a stable culture with defined policies on job security and for developing trust and long-term dedication. Hence, by cultivating these recommendations, the company can improve their employee retention, and drive success.

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