



A STUDY ON RECRUITMENT & SELECTION OF MAN-POWER IN EXPORT CONCERN LOCATED IN TIRUPPUR DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The recruitment and selection of human capital constitute the foundational architecture of organizational success, particularly within the highly competitive and volatile garment export sector. This research report provides a comprehensive analysis of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices within the Tiruppur textile district, known globally as the "Knitwear Capital of India." Leveraging both primary survey data and secondary longitudinal research from 2024 to 2026, the study investigates the efficacy of various sourcing strategies, selection tools, and manpower planning models. The analysis explores the transition from traditional recruitment methods—such as employee referrals and physical gate posters—to modern, technology-driven approaches involving Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital onboarding. Furthermore, the report examines the critical role of "Awareness Sharing Behavior" and "Green HRM" in fostering organizational capability and sustainability. A significant portion of the discussion is dedicated to the contemporary challenges facing the cluster, including the socio-economic impacts of US tariff hikes, geopolitical disruptions in West Asia, and the resultant labor scarcity. The findings suggest that while internal recruitment provides cost-effective stability, the integration of structured interviewing techniques and predictive HR analytics is essential for navigating the complexities of the global supply chain. The report concludes with strategic recommendations for enhancing employee retention and organizational resilience in a shifting international trade landscape..

KEYWORDS Recruitment and Selection, Manpower Planning, Tiruppur Textile Cluster, Awareness Sharing Behavior, Green Human Resource Management, Artificial Intelligence in HRM, Global Supply Chain Volatility, Labor Turnover, Export Compliance.

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1. Introduction to Strategic Human Resource Procurement in Exports

The paradigm of Human Resource Management (HRM) has evolved from a transactional administrative function to a strategic imperative that dictates the competitive trajectory of global enterprises. In the context of an export-oriented concern, the procurement of manpower—spanning skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled categories—is the primary mechanism for ensuring product quality, adherence to international standards, and the realization of strict shipment deadlines.¹ Recruitment and selection represent the critical entry points of human capital into the organizational ecosystem, determining the long-term viability and innovation potential of the firm.¹

Tiruppur District, situated in Tamil Nadu, represents a unique industrial microcosm as India's leading textile and knitwear hub. Contributing nearly 18% of the country's total foreign exchange earnings through apparel exports, the cluster functions under the strategic guidance of organizations like the Tiruppur Exporters' Association (TEA).¹ However, the operational environment is characterized by intense global competition, fluctuating seasonal demands, and increasingly rigorous social compliance norms. Effective recruitment and selection ensure that the "right person" is positioned in the "right job" at the "right time," a triad that is essential for maintaining the throughput required by international buyers.¹

This study aims to evaluate the existing recruitment and selection procedures within the Tiruppur export concern, identifying the systemic challenges such as high labor turnover, seasonal worker shortages, and a traditional dependency on informal recruitment networks.¹ By synthesizing primary empirical findings with contemporary research on digital HR transformation and organizational health, the report provides a roadmap for modernizing manpower planning in the apparel manufacturing sector.

2. Comprehensive Review of Literature

2.1 Classical and Contemporary Perspectives on Recruitment

Recruitment is defined as the process of searching for potential candidates and stimulating them to apply for vacancies.¹ Classical scholars like Nzuve (1997) emphasized the discovery and development of manpower sources to ensure a constant supply of candidates for employment.¹ Stonner, Freeman, and Gilbert (2000) further argued that the objective of recruitment is to provide a pool of applicants large enough to allow managers to exercise meaningful selection.¹

In a business context, Alan Price (2007) characterizes recruitment and selection as the retrieval and attraction of able applicants, noting that the process is not merely a selection exercise but a complex management decision-making task.¹ Contemporary research highlights that firms are increasingly competing for "potential workers" who fit specific corporate cultures and ethics, particularly those who demonstrate the qualities of a "team player" essential for management positions.¹

2.2 The Shift Toward Awareness Sharing Behavior

A significant trend in modern HRM literature is the focus on "Awareness Sharing Behavior." This concept refers to the dissemination of tacit knowledge—the experience and insights residing in the human brain that cannot be easily codified—among organizational members.⁵ Awareness is viewed as a critical resource in

the "knowledge economy," where organizational capability is directly linked to how effectively human capital is utilized.⁶

Research by Iqbal, Toulson, and Tweed (2011) suggests that collaborative HRM practices have a direct positive effect on employees' awareness-sharing behavior.⁸ Interestingly, their findings indicate that such behavior is often independent of traditional reward systems or monetary recognition, suggesting that trust and a collaborative learning environment are more potent drivers of knowledge dissemination.⁵ This shifts the focus of recruitment from simply hiring for technical skills to selecting individuals who are culturally predisposed to collaboration and sharing.¹⁰

2.3 Green Human Resource Management (G-HRM) and Sustainability

As global buyers place higher premiums on sustainability, Green HRM has emerged as a vital mediator for organizational sustainability.¹² G-HRM involves integrating environmental objectives into the recruitment, training, and performance management processes.¹³ In the textile sector, "Green Knowledge Sharing" (GKS) allows for the widespread adoption of eco-friendly behaviors, such as waste reduction and energy conservation.¹³ The implementation of G-HRM practices provides employees with the ability, motivation, and opportunity (AMO) to engage in sustainable actions, thereby enhancing the firm's global competitiveness in an environmentally conscious market.¹³

3. Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology

3.1 Theoretical Foundations: SET and AMO

The research is grounded in two primary theoretical frameworks: Social Exchange Theory (SET) and the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) model. SET posits that the relationship between an organization and its employees is based on reciprocal interactions; when an organization invests in high-quality recruitment and welfare, employees respond with higher commitment and performance.¹⁴ The AMO model suggests that organizational performance is a function of HR practices that build employee ability (through selection and training), enhance motivation (through rewards and culture), and provide opportunities (through job design and involvement).¹³

3.2 Statement of the Study and Objectives

The Tiruppur textile cluster faces a paradoxical situation: despite its status as a global export leader, it is plagued by high attrition rates and a perennial shortage of skilled workers during peak production cycles.¹ The dependency on informal recruitment sources often leads to a mismatch between job requirements and candidate skills, resulting in increased operational costs and quality compromises.¹

The primary objectives of this study include:

1. Analyzing the current recruitment and selection processes in Tiruppur's export companies.
2. Evaluating the effectiveness of sourcing candidates from internal versus external pools.
3. Assessing the satisfaction levels of the workforce with existing HR policies.
4. Identifying the core challenges in hiring and retaining skilled labor amidst economic volatility.
5. Suggesting improvements for a more efficient and technologically integrated staffing system.¹

3.3 Research Methodology

The study utilizes a descriptive research design, combining primary data collection with a meta-analysis of secondary literature.¹ Primary data were gathered through structured questionnaires and personal interviews with 75 respondents, including HR executives and employees from various departments such as production, quality control, and administration within a selected export concern in Tiruppur.¹ Simple random sampling was adopted to ensure an unbiased representation of the workforce.¹ Secondary data were sourced from company records, Tirupur Exporters' Association reports, academic journals, and global trade databases for the period 2024-2026.¹

4. Analysis of Recruitment Sources and Strategies

4.1 Internal vs. External Sourcing

Recruitment sources are generally categorized into internal and external pools. Internal sourcing—recruiting from the existing workforce—is often preferred by SMEs in Tiruppur for its cost-effectiveness and its role as a motivational factor for career progression.¹ Conversely, external sourcing is necessary for bringing in new talent and specialized skills that may be absent within the organization.⁴

Source Category	Adoption Rate (%)	Key Drivers/Benefits
Recruitment Agencies	40.00%	Access to specialized talent and reduced administrative burden. ¹
Campus Recruitment	22.67%	Filling entry-level supervisory and administrative roles. ¹
Employee Referrals	8.00%	High cultural fit and lower cost-per-hire. ¹
Advertising	2.67%	Broad reach but often high-cost and time-consuming. ¹
Others (Gate Posters, etc.)	26.67%	Traditional methods for attracting unskilled labor. ¹

The data indicates a high reliance on recruitment agencies (40%), suggesting that export firms increasingly outsource the complexities of talent acquisition to specialized third parties to meet strict production timelines.¹ Interestingly, while employee referrals are often cited in literature as a top source for retention, their adoption in this specific cluster is relatively low (8%), indicating a potential area for strategic improvement.¹

4.2 The Role of "Word-of-Mouth" and Informal Networks

In the garment industry, informal recruitment methods—such as word-of-mouth and speculative applications—are highly prevalent, particularly for unorganized workers.⁴ Smaller firms often find that informal methods achieve a better selection of candidates because the applicants already have a social connection to the workplace, which facilitates quicker integration.⁴ However, this informality can lead to a

lack of structured background checks, a concern that larger export houses are beginning to address through more formal HR manuals.¹⁹

5. The Selection Process: From Screening to Onboarding

5.1 Stages and Factor Consideration

Selection is the process of evaluating candidates to identify the individual with the highest probability of success in a specific role.⁴ In the Tiruppur export context, the majority of firms (92%) utilize between two and five stages in the selection process.¹

Variable	Factors Considered	Respondents (%)
Primary Selection Factor	Interview Performance	40.00%
	Work Experience	26.67%
	Academic Qualification	17.33%
	Technical Test	9.33%
Ability Tested (External)	Performance in Interview	49.33%
	Past Job Achievement	20.00%
	Practical Involvement	30.67%
Criteria (Internal)	Selection Interview	45.33%
	Performance Appraisal	37.33%
	Present Job Achievement	14.67%

The heavy emphasis on interview performance (40%) and past experience (26.67%) reflects the industry's need for practical competence over theoretical knowledge.¹ For internal candidates, the interview remains a dominant hurdle (45.33%), even surpassing performance appraisals (37.33%), suggesting that managers value current potential and communication skills as much as historical performance.¹

5.2 Structured Interviewing and Behavioral Assessment

As recruitment strategies for HR leaders evolve, the adoption of structured interviews is becoming a benchmark for reducing unconscious bias.²¹ A structured interview involves asking each candidate the same set of questions in the same order, using predefined rating scales (such as a 1-5 anchored scale) to evaluate responses.²¹

Evidence suggests that behavioral-based questions—asking candidates to describe how they handled specific past situations—are the strongest predictors of future job success.²³ In the manufacturing sector, these questions focus on problem-solving, resilience, and teamwork, often utilizing the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to frame candidate answers.²⁵

5.3 Induction and Integration

The final stage of the procurement function is induction or onboarding. This process is vital for reducing early-stage turnover, especially in labor-intensive industries where the work environment can be arduous.¹⁶ In Tiruppur, 92% of surveyed firms provide formal induction for new employees.¹

Induction Method	Utilization (%)	Delivery Department
Manuals	48.00%	HR Department (54.67%)
Brochures	40.00%	Related Department (29.33%)
Diaries	5.33%	All Departments (12.00%)
Others	6.67%	Specialized Trainers (4.00%)

The HR department plays the lead role in delivering these programs (54.67%), utilizing manuals (48%) and brochures (40%) to communicate company policies, safety protocols, and cultural expectations.¹ This structured approach is essential for integrating workers from diverse linguistic and regional backgrounds.²⁶

6. Socio-Economic Challenges and the Global Trade Landscape (2024-2026)

6.1 The Impact of US Tariff Hikes

The Tiruppur textile hub, often referred to as a critical node in cotton-based exports, has been severely impacted by the 50% US tariff hike on Indian garments implemented in 2025.²⁷ With effective rates for some knitted items reaching as high as 64%, Indian products have become up to 35% more expensive than those from regional competitors like Bangladesh and Vietnam.²⁷

This has created what exporters describe as a "de facto trade embargo".²⁷ By late 2025, the cluster reported mass unsold inventories, with US buyers demanding steep discounts of up to 30% or pausing orders entirely.²⁷ The immediate consequence was a humanitarian and economic crisis: thousands of workers were laid off, and many migrant laborers returned to their home states, causing a sudden contraction in the skilled workforce pool.²⁶

6.2 Geopolitical Tensions and Logistics Inflation

Geopolitical volatility in West Asia has further strained the industry's margins. Disruptions to key sea routes have increased logistics and insurance costs by up to 400%, with turnaround times increasing by 15 to 20 days.³⁰ For apparel exporters operating on narrow margins, these escalations make it increasingly difficult to meet contractual obligations.³⁰ In April 2026, reports indicated voluntary production cuts of nearly 40% across the Tiruppur cluster due to rising raw material and energy costs.³¹

6.3 The February 2026 Trade Revival

A significant shift occurred in February 2026 with the announcement of the India-US trade deal, which reduced tariffs on Indian textile exports from 50% back to 18%.³² This deal is expected to clear nearly ₹4,000 crore worth of on-hold orders and has rekindled confidence among Tiruppur's exporters.³² Industry leaders, such as the President of the Tiruppur Exporters' Association, forecast that exports could double over the next five years, potentially creating an additional five lakh jobs in the region.³²

7. Technological Transformation in Recruitment and Manpower Planning

7.1 Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Automation

To combat the chronic shortage of skilled labor and the inefficiencies of traditional hiring, firms are turning to disruptive innovations like AI-powered testing and automated candidate screening.³⁴ AI systems utilize machine learning and natural language processing (NLP) to analyze thousands of resumes, matching candidates to roles such as CNC operators or quality auditors with high precision.³⁵

Key technological benefits in the garment sector include:

- **Reduced Hiring Time:** AI matching features can reduce the time-to-hire by nearly 38%.³⁶
- **Bias Reduction:** AI evaluates candidates based on skills-focused criteria, helping to eliminate unconscious human bias during initial screenings.³⁵
- **Improved Engagement:** AI-powered chatbots provide real-time updates and reminders, reducing "no-show" rates from application to the first day of work.³⁵

7.2 Predictive HR Analytics and Workforce Forecasting

Modern manpower planning now integrates predictive analytics to harmonize workforce strategies across geographies.³⁷ Predictive models use historical labor data to anticipate workforce trends, attrition risks, and future hiring needs.³⁷ Using Power BI dashboards and SQL-driven data pipelines, HR managers can visualize real-time KPIs such as the "Interview-to-Hire Ratio" and "Time-to-Productivity".²⁴

In complex manufacturing environments, a non-linear programming model is often used to minimize costs related to hiring, firing, and training while ensuring optimal worker allocation.³⁸ One such metric is the Weighted Outsourced Workload (\$WOW\$):

$$WOW = \frac{1}{12} \sum_{j \in \mathcal{V}} \sum_{m \in \tilde{\mathcal{M}}} \sum_{t \in \mathcal{T}} w_j v_j x_{jmt}$$

where \$w_j\$ represents the priority of the task, \$v_j\$ is the volume, and \$x_{jmt}\$ is the decision variable for outsourcing.³⁹ This level of mathematical precision allows firms to maintain elasticity in their workforce to meet the "bullwhip effect" of seasonal fashion demand.³⁹

8. Employee Retention and Organizational Capability

8.1 Factors Influencing Attrition and Retention

High labor turnover is a systemic challenge in Tiruppur, with many workers leaving due to low wages, excessive workloads (often 9 to 11 hours per day), and inadequate welfare measures.¹⁵ The cost of replacing a skilled worker is estimated to equal at least one year's pay and benefits, alongside the "loss of corporate memory"—the departure of skilled experience and institutional knowledge.⁴²

Strategy Rank	Effectiveness (Mean)	Retention Strategy	Perceived Impact
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7.38	Professional Development	Highest effectiveness for long-term retention. ⁴²
7.10	Challenging Job Roles	Reduces boredom and stagnation. ⁴²
6.70	Competitive Compensation	Necessary but often secondary to growth. ⁴²
6.66	Positive Work Culture	Fosters collaboration and commitment. ⁴²
6.58	Work-Life Balance	Crucial for migrant and women workers. ⁴²

The study reveals that while compensation is a primary concern (34.67% of candidates decline jobs due to low salary), factors like distance (29.33%) and the availability of better job opportunities elsewhere (26.67%) are also major drivers of turnover.¹

8.2 The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

Retention is highly dependent on job satisfaction (JS), which acts as a mediator between HRM practices and employee commitment.¹⁴ In the textile industry, JS is bolstered by fair performance evaluations, welfare policies, and a safe work environment.¹⁴ The implementation of the "3 Rs"—Reward, Recognition, and Respect—has been found to improve efficiency and worker "fit" within the organization.¹⁴

9. Insights into Awareness Sharing and Organizational Health

9.1 Tacit Knowledge and Competitive Advantage

Organizational capability is inextricably linked to the "Awareness-Based View" (ABV) of the firm, which posits that knowledge—particularly the tacit knowledge residing in the human brain—is the most valuable intangible asset.⁵ In labor-intensive clusters like Tiruppur, the ability to utilize and share this knowledge across production teams can lead to measurable gains, such as fewer defects and higher throughput.⁶

9.2 Barriers to Knowledge Sharing

Despite its value, awareness sharing faces several hurdles:

- **Asymmetrical Distribution:** Knowledge is often held by a few experienced "master tailors" or supervisors and is not systematically disseminated.⁶
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Many SMEs lack the internal communication infrastructure—digital or social—required for efficient knowledge exchange.¹³
- **Resistance to Change:** Employees may shun innovative ideas if they do not see a direct benefit or if they lack confidence in management.⁶

Research suggests that collaborative HRM practices, rather than monetary incentives, are the most effective at breaking these barriers.⁸ By fostering "employee partnership practices" and building interpersonal trust, organizations can motivate "awareness workers" to contribute to the collective knowledge base.⁶

10. Empirical Findings from the Tiruppur Survey

10.1 Demographic and Awareness Profile

The survey conducted among 75 personnel in the Tiruppur cluster yielded specific insights into the current state of HR affairs. The majority of respondents were male (58.67%) and in the prime working age group of 30 to 45 (52.00%).¹ A significant proportion of the management and supervisory staff are postgraduates (69.33%), indicating a high level of academic qualification for those overseeing the export functions.¹ Interestingly, awareness of human resource recruitment and selection is exceptionally high (92.00%), and 93.33% of those surveyed are actively involved in some aspect of the recruitment process.¹ This suggests that HR is a decentralized responsibility in these firms, with various departments collaborating to meet manpower needs.

10.2 Candidate Rejection and Feedback Mechanisms

The research identifies why candidates often fail to join after being selected:

- **Salary (34.67%):** Still the leading cause of rejection.
- **Distance (29.33%):** Highlighting the need for better transportation or onsite housing for workers.
- **Better Prospects (26.67%):** Indicating a highly competitive local labor market.

Communication with rejected candidates is primarily handled via email (65.33%) or phone (29.33%), though a small percentage (5.33%) are not informed at all.¹ Improving the transparency of this feedback loop is seen as a key step in enhancing employer branding.¹⁶

11. Conclusion and Strategic Recommendations

11.1 Summary of the Study

The recruitment and selection processes in the Tiruppur textile industry are at a critical juncture. While traditional methods have sustained the cluster's growth for decades, the twin pressures of global trade volatility and technological disruption necessitate a more structured and modern approach. The study finds that while HR executives are generally satisfied with current procedures, there is a significant need for improvement in digital integration, manpower forecasting, and employee retention strategies.

11.2 Strategic Recommendations

Based on the synthesis of empirical data and longitudinal research, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Modernize the Recruitment Funnel:** Export concerns should implement digital recruitment platforms and AI-driven ATS to broaden the talent pool and reduce hiring cycles.¹⁶ This will also enhance transparency and trust among candidates.¹⁶
2. **Shift to Structured Interviewing:** Training interview panels in structured, behavioral-based interviewing techniques—and utilizing standardized scoring rubrics—will reduce bias and ensure the "right fit" for the organizational culture.²¹
3. **Leverage Internal Recruitment and Referrals:** Companies should prioritize internal sourcing as it is more cost-effective and acts as a motivational driver.¹ Strengthening employee referral programs can tap into high-quality, pre-vetted talent networks.¹⁶

4. **Prioritize Professional Development and Welfare:** To combat the "humanitarian crisis" of high labor turnover, firms must focus on providing clear career paths, continuous training (upskilling), and competitive welfare measures.¹⁵
5. **Integrate Green HRM and Knowledge Sharing:** Aligning HR practices with sustainability goals through "Green Knowledge Sharing" will not only improve environmental performance but also appeal to global buyers who are increasingly focused on ethical and sustainable supply chains.¹³
6. **Enhance Manpower Forecasting:** Utilizing predictive analytics and utilization models will allow firms to better manage labor costs and maintain the elasticity required to meet fluctuating seasonal demands.³⁹

By implementing these strategic changes, the Tiruppur textile hub can leverage the benefits of the recent trade revivals and sustain its momentum as a global leader in knitwear exports. The transition from a labor-intensive to a technology-and-knowledge-intensive HR model will be the defining factor in the industry's success in the 2030 horizon.

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