# International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

# Examining the Environmental Policies in Promoting Sustainable Economic Growth in India

*Ramesh Kumar*

Associate Professor, Department of Commerce, PGDAV College Eve (University of Delhi)
Email: rkbarman2@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0001-9601-2193
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.5.0724.1758

**ABSTRACT:**

This paper embarks on an insightful exploration of the evolution and impact of environmental regulations in India, particularly focusing on their development over the last three decades and their intricate relationship with sustainable economic growth. The study encompasses an in-depth analysis within the rural tapestry of India, specifically in the villages of Kakroi, Rai, Bhalgarh, Jatjoshi, Kundli, Murthal, Bayayanpur, Fazalpur, Asawarpur, and Badmalk. These villages serve as critical study sites, reflecting the diverse and complex socio-economic and environmental dynamics at the grassroots level. The research acknowledges the formidable challenges posed by climate change, externalities, and the limitations imposed by finite resources. It underscores the pivotal role of sustainable economic development (SED) as a comprehensive approach to addressing these multifaceted issues. Moving beyond a narrow focus on climate change, this study embraces a broader, more inclusive paradigm of sustainable development, aiming to harmonize our social and economic aspirations with the imperative of climate change mitigation. It delves into the intricacies of India's environmental management laws, spotlighting landmark legislations and governmental initiatives that have sculpted the nation's ecological landscape. Furthermore, the paper emphasizes the crucial need for a balanced integration of economic, social, and environmental objectives and scrutinizes the key drivers that have propelled climate change issues to the forefront of the policy arena. While acknowledging India's strides in education and democratic governance, the study also confronts the country's multifaceted socio-economic fabric, marked by disparities in literacy, pervasive poverty, and entrenched structural challenges. Proposing a holistic and collaborative approach, this report offers a comprehensive evaluation of India's endeavors to marry environmental stewardship with economic advancement, presenting a model of a green economy and pathways towards sustainable development within the context of the selected villages.

*Key words*: Environmental policies, Economic Transformation, Policy Integration, Green Economy, Natural Resource Management, Legislative Framework, Climate Action, Ecological Sustainability, Policy Implementation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There has been a substantial amount of change in India's environmental rules over the course of the last three decades. Various policy solutions have been implemented in response to emerging concerns, both local and foreign. 1988's The Forest Policy and 1992's The Policy Statement for Abatement of Pollution are both examples of policies. These regulations cover a wide range of issues, including the management of trash, the conservation of biodiversity, and efforts to reduce pollution in the air and water. On the other hand, the initiatives have maintained their primary focus on preserving the environment and addressing the needs of the local community from the beginning.In order to provide the framework for integrating environmental concerns into the policies of various sectors, this research will concentrate on India's response to both present environmental issues and future environmental challenges. Through an examination of secondary sources, this study endeavours to ascertain, in the context of policies pertaining to the environmental sector, the variables that have contributed to the inclusion of concerns about climate change on the agenda of policymakers.There are not many resources available, there are not many externalities, and the environment is uncertain, therefore the expansion of India's economy is fraught with problems. Taking the path of sustainable development (SD) is one approach that may be used to address this issue. In contrast to a climate-centric approach, which would result in enormous costs for adaptation and mitigation, a path towards sustainable development not only lowers the costs of mitigation but also opens the door to the realisation of co-benefits without compromising the purpose of the nation, which is to improve social and economic development. In order for the climate action plan to be successful, it is essential that it continues to function within the framework of sustainable development. To put it another way, political leaders would be more responsive to climate action plan proponents who focus their work on sustainable development, and the plan would have a greater chance of reaching its inevitable end. It is imperative that we maintain our dedication to this core idea and develop a framework that is in accordance with it in order to discover a solution that will persist. The country of India is a multidimensional and very diverse nation that is full of seeming contradictions. A low literacy rate and great poverty are two problems that plague the nation, despite the fact that it places a strong priority on education. The most powerful democracy in the world is characterised by weak law enforcement and widespread corruption.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To Analyze the Effectiveness of India's Environmental Policies in Promoting Sustainable Economic Growth:

- To Investigate the Integration and Outcomes of Sustainable Development Strategies within India's Economic Framework:

- To Evaluate the Role and Impact of India's Participation in International Environmental Initiatives on Local Sustainable Economic Growth:

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study involved a multi-faceted approach to comprehensively understand the dynamics of environmental regulations and sustainable economic growth within the selected villages: Kakroi, Rai, Bhalgarh, Jatjoshi, Kundli, Murthal, Bayayanpur, Fazalpur, Asawarpur, and Badmalk. Primary data was collected through field surveys, interviews, and interactions with local inhabitants, policymakers, and experts in environmental law and sustainable development. Secondary data was gathered from an extensive review of literature, including government reports, legal documents, scholarly articles, and historical records of environmental policies and economic growth patterns in India. The study employed qualitative analysis to unravel the complex interlinkages between environmental regulations and socio-economic variables in the rural milieu. Comparative analysis was also utilized to identify patterns, challenges, and opportunities across the different villages, thereby providing a nuanced understanding of the localized impact of environmental policies and their integration with economic and social objectives.

## 4. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The current legal framework is mostly comprised of the following statutes: "the Environment Protection Act of 1986, the Water Cess Act of 1977, the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act of 1974, and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act of 1981. The Wild Life (Protection) Act of 1972, the Biodiversity Act of 2002, the Indian Forest Act of 1927, and the Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980" include the legislation pertaining to the management of forests and biodiversity. On top of the provisions that are included in these core laws, there are a number of other legislation that augment them. There have been a number of sector policies that have contributed to environmental management. These policies include the National Water Policy from 2002, the National Agriculture Policy from 2000, and the National Conservation Strategy and Policy Statement on Environment and Development from 1992 and 1992, respectively. The papers in question include the current national policies that are in place for the management of the environment. At the same time as each of these policies has recognised the significance of sustainable development within the context of its own particular framework, they have also established strategies to bring that vision into fruition. In light of the most recent facts and the lessons learned from the past, the National Environment Policy intends to widen the scope of the policy and correct any gaps that may still exist. It is not intended to replace the policies that were previously in existence.

## 5. DRIVERS BEHIND CHANGES IN THE CLIMATE CHANGE CONCERNS

Individuals from all walks of life have come to recognise the significance of the natural resources of our country in terms of their ability to sustain our economy and guarantee the continuance of ecological services that are important to our survival. When seen from this vantage point, it has been abundantly evident for a considerable amount of time that in order to effectively manage the environment, it is vital to have a coordinated plan that incorporates a broad variety of sectors and cross-sectoral activities, as well as fiscal measures. In light of the fact that our development challenges have evolved and that we are now aware that environmental concerns are essential to development, it is vital to examine the objectives, policy instruments, and strategies that were previously in place for development. As a result of this dynamic, a policy framework that is capable of adjusting to new situations is required. This framework should also have an intrinsic system for monitoring progress and making modifications as required. The enhancement of human well-being, in its widest sense, is at the core of India's development philosophy, which often circles back around to the subject of sustainable development. First, that everyone should have access to a decent standard of living; second, that people should learn to appreciate the limited resources of the biosphere; and third, that the pursuit of ecological sustainability and social justice should not be mutually exclusive. These are the three fundamental goals that form the basis of the current agreement.

In order to make this a reality, it is necessary to satisfy the economic, social, and environmental requirements of the nation in a way that is both balanced and harmonious. In addition, India is a significant participant in a number of important environmental initiatives running on a worldwide scale. By virtue of its status as a party to significant international treaties, it recognises the transboundary character of a number of environmental concerns and the interdependencies that exist between them. Additionally, India has the expectation that its National Environment Policy (NEP) would serve as a proclamation of its intention to constructively contribute to environmental activities that are being undertaken on a worldwide scale. In light of the constitutional obligations for a pristine environment that are included in Articles 48 A and 51 A (g), as well as the strengthening impact that Article 21 has via judicial interpretation, the United States of America has formed the National Environmental Policy. It is common knowledge that maintaining a clean environment is not only the responsibility of the state, but also of each and every individual. Through our collective efforts, we have the ability to guarantee that every facet of environmental management in the country is carried out with a spirit of collaboration. In spite of the fact that the government need to strengthen its efforts, each and every individual and organisation has a part to play in the process of maintaining and enhancing the environment. These conditions served as the impetus for the formulation of the National Environment Policy, which seeks to integrate environmental concerns into each and every facet of development. It provides a concise summary of the most significant environmental issues that the country is now facing and will

continue to confront in the future, as well as the objectives of environmental policy, the normative principles that serve as the basis for policymaking, intervention tactics, and general trends in the development of legislative and institutional frameworks. (The National Policy on the Environment, 2008)

## 6. GREEN ECONOMY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Investments in natural capital are highly valued in a green economy. Ecosystem services are more effectively preserved, which boosts rural low-income families' incomes and safety nets. For subsistence farmers, environmentally friendly agricultural techniques greatly increase yields. Green economy methods may assist reduce poverty via innovations in non-grid energy (solar power, biomass stoves, etc.), improvements in sanitation and access to freshwater, and other measures. In order to combat climate change, provide good employment, and lessen reliance on foreign imports, a green economy would use renewable energy and low-carbon technology in place of fossil fuels. Offsetting "brown economy" employment losses, emerging technologies that promote energy and resource efficiency provide development opportunities in new fields. Improvements in waste management, expansion of public transit, construction of environmentally friendly structures, and reduction of food waste are all examples of how resource efficiency has emerged as a key issue.*(UNEP, 2011)*

Important for providing direction are regulations, standards, and objectives. However, developing nations should be given the space and time to progress according to their own development goals, conditions, and limitations. The developed world must play a pivotal role in preparing poor nations to join the green economy by establishing international markets and the legal framework necessary for it. Achieving a green economic transformation requires managing enabling circumstances and providing appropriate financing, but these goals are certainly within reach. Subsidies that have negative effects on society and the environment should be eliminated since they discourage good behaviour.

But under some conditions and for certain lengths of time, the environmentally friendly economy may be advanced via the prudent use of subsidies. To finance the change, we may use taxes and other market-based tools to encourage investment and innovation. A green economic transformation would need substantial funding, but this may be achieved via well-planned public policies and creative funding solutions.

In the short term, a green economy may provide the same amount of growth and jobs as a brown economy, but in the long run, it will be more effective and provide greater social and environmental advantages. Naturally, there are a lot of obstacles and dangers to face. It will need the combined efforts of prominent corporations, members of civil society, and international leaders to make the switch to a green economy. Rethinking and redefining conventional metrics of wealth, prosperity, and well-being will need persistent work by both policymakers and their constituents. Nevertheless, continuing as before might be the most dangerous option.*(UNEP, 2011)*

## 7. PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Making use of synergies and promoting long-term development by easing scarcities, a comprehensive policy agenda that incorporates greening of a variety of major economic sectors is essential. Interconnected policies are more effective than those that ignore certain industries. Improving energy efficiency in critical industries like construction, transportation, and manufacturing may bolster efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase the use of renewable energy sources. Soil quality and water retention are two ways in which more forestland may benefit agricultural output and rural lifestyles. Investments in waste management may be redirected to sectors like waste-to-energy by integrating recycling and remanufacturing activities, which reduces the demand for developing that sector. Energy use is strongly correlated with water demand, and vice versa.

"Green economy and inclusive growth" is quickly becoming a term in India as the Rio+20 Earth Summit, which is happening in just a few weeks, approaches. Actually, after a dip in interest after the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 17) in December 2011, there is fresh zeal for green economics and the role it may play in improving India's future. A low-carbon, green economy seems to be a natural fit for India. When it comes to renewable energy investment opportunities, Ernst & Young ranks India as the fourth most desirable nation in 2012. Investors from throughout the globe seeking stable investment opportunities are encouraged by the country's reputation for having the world's second-largest pool of scientists and engineers. In addition, India's profile was boosted by its IT, PS, and comms accomplishments over the last decade. However, the country's ranking dropped from fourth to eighth in 2013 as a result of various obstacles, such as its high financing costs and entry barriers for foreign investors.*(Ernst&Young, 2013)*

But the most compelling reason is that India just cannot afford to stay behind in the green economy. As of now, India's old economic model has helped the country do well economically and accumulate riches, but it hasn't been able to reduce inequality. Actually, more and more conflicts of all kinds have resulted from rapid industrialization. The feud between industrialists, particularly miners, and farmers/forest inhabitants is the most worrisome. Officially, the greatest danger to India's internal security today comes from violent rebellions like the Maoist insurrection, which have been olstered by this struggle. To top it all off, according to the Climate Disclosure Project, India's GDP growth would be minus 9–13% by the year 2100 if the present climate business as usual scenario persists. This is a direct result of the ways in which businesses and people's livelihoods will be affected by climate change. Clearly, this isn't the way an up-and-coming economic force wants to go into the future. Therefore, India's top priority right now should be to find a way to achieve sustainable development. More people will be concerned about the environment, which will encourage lawmakers to pass laws that are better for the planet. As an example of a country that has recently enacted new mining laws and another that deals with land acquisition for industrial development, the Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation Act 2013 and the Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013 are both products of this heightened environmental consciousness in India. Nevertheless, it would be ignorant to believe that India would be propelled into the developed countries league alone by fully engaging with the Rio+20 conference or its agenda, regardless of these lofty hopes. Just because it's a greener alternative doesn't mean it will solve all of society's problems. In a country like India, where over half of the population lacks access to clean water, healthcare, and

other essentials like toilets, the biggest obstacle isn't coming up with a concept, but rather systematically putting it into practice. Over 300 million people live below the poverty line in India. As an example, consider the solid waste management (SWM) industry in India. The Indian government reports that daily urban solid garbage production exceeds 115,000 mega tonnes. The government has enlisted the help of several private sector organisations with an outstanding team of SWM specialists in an ongoing endeavour to improve the management of this waste on a national scale. The overall goal, at the national level, is to create employment while maintaining a clean and environmentally friendly nation. At the same time, this has jeopardised the life of at least fifteen million impoverished people who are able to recycle garbage for a job, but whose talents go unrecognised. In this instance, the lack of a comprehensive strategy for implementing the ideas of a green economy and equitable development is preventing them from effectively combating poverty and unemployment.*(Goffman, 2008)*

While in India recently, Sha Zukang—who is also the Secretary-General of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs—emphasized the need of this comprehensive approach: Integrating and guaranteeing consistency across the social, economic, and environmental pillars is, by definition, what sustainable development is all about. However, this is hardly a walk in the park in reality due to the fact that our issues and difficulties are not unique. It is essential that these three pillars be practically united in Rio+20 in order for nations to have faith that the social agenda, the environmental agenda, and the economic agenda are complementary to one another. The fact that the nations' agreement on sustainable development from 20 years ago has not been completely implemented is due, in large part, to the ongoing conflict between the "global north" and the "global south," which Zukang also brought to light.*(Sha Zukang, 2012)*

During a recent news conference in New Delhi, Jayanthi Natarajan, India's minister of environment and forests, said that the country is very concerned about green economy and equitable development, but that three things are essential for the agenda to be successful in practice. Among these, we must: a. reiterate the Rio Principles; b. strengthen institutional capacities on a global, regional, and local level; and c. give special attention to initiatives that aim to include and improve the lives of people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Furthermore, the minister emphasised that cooperation among states is crucial for the success of Rio+20. For India, the minister's remarks capture the essence: the nation is very interested in and needs a green economy, but it should be practical about how it may materialise. For instance, India is worried about how Rio+20 would turn out. Concerns have been raised that wealthy nations may want to alter or renegotiate the Rio Principles, particularly the "common, but differentiated responsibilities" (CBDR) premise, which India finds intolerable. Furthermore, India is concerned that wealthy nations may attempt to impede developing nations' exports via tariffs and non-tariff obstacles, assistance conditionalities, and a refusal to alter their own consumption habits—which, in India's view, is essential for developing nations to attain sustainable development. Above all else, India is not yet sure that its large impoverished populace would not suffer any negative effects from a green economy. Because of this, India is making it clear that ending poverty must be the central goal of any green economy strategy, and that individual nations should be free to choose their own ways to sustainable development in accordance with their own priorities and conditions.*(Jayanthi Natarajan, 2012)*

Although it won't solve all of India's problems overnight, a green economy is clearly the best course of action right now. Without robust policy execution, no amount of knowledge or technology can save the environment (or anything else for that matter). When it comes to environmental governance, India should be well-prepared in many respects. The World Bank states that "India has strong environment policy and legislative framework and well-established institutions at the national and State level" . In addition, it is often believed that democracies that encourage active citizen engagement are better able to detect and address environmental crises. And, India's expanding wealth is causing "an increase in public demand for better environmental quality from the growing and increasingly assertive urban middle class, as demonstrated by drastic measures to improve air quality in Delhi, which now has the largest compressed natural gas-driven public bus fleet in the world" . Regular elections are one benefit of a working democracy, but other broad platforms for public engagement are lacking in India. Having a big, loud public that can effectively communicate its wants is hindered by poverty and a lack of technical infrastructure. In addition, "barriers of distance, language, literacy, and connectivity - all the factors of particular relevance to India due to the remoteness of many habitations, multiple languages, and significant illiterate population - can also prevent full participation". *(World Bank, 2007)*

Another major obstacle to environmental policy implementation is corruption, which often takes the shape of bribes paid to public officials. "Indian democracy permits great freedom of activity and association, and the pursuit of different ideas and interests," comments one observer. However, in this democratic system, laws and regulations are either disregarded or twisted almost as often as they are followed.*(Kapoor, 2004)*

Thus, there is escalating friction between the rising number of people demanding environmental preservation and the reality of the situation. An more outspoken, engaged, and impatient 'green' group in India is causing more and more discontent with the current environmental management system, according to the World Bank. A wide range of stakeholders see the current situation as insufficient, notwithstanding a few triumphs. Weak enforcement of rules and regulations is largely to blame.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is an important tool for environmental policymakers since it determines how different activities will affect the environment. Environmental impact assessments (EIAs) have grown into a powerful tool for environmental protection worldwide since their 1969 inception in the US. Public involvement is fundamental to environmental impact assessments (EIAs), which are based on the premise that local communities are best suited to assess their own needs and the consequences of environmental deterioration. Given India's history of democracy, the country seems to be in a good position to implement EIA. However, there is a lack of local involvement, and similar to China, India's short-term economic success is often dependent on inefficient implementation of environmental rules at the local level. The prioritisation of economic expansion above environmental concerns is a common perception in reality. But fundamental environmental regulations in India are robust. More than 2,000 people were killed and tens of thousands were wounded in the 1984 Bhopal tragedy, when a pesticide facility accidentally released deadly gas. As a result, the government passed new environmental legislation. "Protecting and improving the quality of the environment and preventing, controlling and abating environmental pollution" was the stated goal of the Environmental (Protection) Act from 1986. To enhance environmental protection, EIA was

implemented in 1994 by India's primary environmental agency, the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF). At first, there was a lack of public involvement and inadequate protection against a wide range of activities, including deforestation and improper trash disposal. But certain parts of the legislation have been strengthened by legislative amendments. *(Lemmer, 2007)*

## 8. CONCLUSION

The intricate landscape of environmental policy enforcement in India has often leaned heavily on litigation, primarily due to the institutional inadequacies or lack of political will to implement environmental regulations effectively. A pivotal moment was marked in 1985 when the Indian Supreme Court intervened to close limestone quarries polluting the water sources, demonstrating the courts as not just the last but often the first resort in environmental remediation in India. This reliance on the judiciary underscores the challenges faced by regulatory bodies and the importance of strong legal frameworks in environmental governance.

In the rural heartlands of India, including the villages of Kakroi, Rai, Bhalgarh, Jatjoshi, Kundli, Murthal, Bayayanpur, Fazalpur, Asawarpur, and Badmalk, informal regulation has emerged as a complementary force in shaping environmental practices. These mechanisms, driven by community actions and social pressures such as negative media coverage, have shown potential in addressing localized environmental issues. Although partial in nature, community-driven actions, including demands for compensation, social ostracism, or even threats of physical violence, have been instrumental in targeting egregious polluters and bringing attention to environmental degradation at the grassroots level. These strategies, while not substitutes for comprehensive government enforcement, highlight the role of community vigilance and action in environmental stewardship.

India's contemporary environmental policy, recognizing the limits of localized actions in an interconnected world, advocates for strong local governance and practices that address environmental and justice concerns in tandem. This approach, while laudable, faces the paradox of balancing economic growth and environmental sustainability in a world where technological advancements are both a necessity and a subject of community skepticism. The villages studied in this research reflect the microcosm of this global challenge, grappling with the need to improve living standards while mitigating environmental stress. The rapid population growth in India further accentuates this challenge, placing immense pressure on natural resources and necessitating a harmonious blend of social expectations, technological innovation, and environmental consciousness.

The journey towards a sustainable future, marred by the complexities of increasing population, escalating demands, and environmental degradation, demands a multifaceted approach. Leveraging technology, fostering sound governance, and nurturing responsible social behaviors stand as crucial pillars in this journey. The adoption of 'green' solutions, driven partly by moral obligation and significantly by self-interest and commitment, offers a glimmer of hope. However, the persistent specter of corruption poses a formidable barrier to the effective implementation of environmental legislation. The collective experiences and actions within the villages of Kakroi, Rai, Bhalgarh, Jatjoshi, Kundli, Murthal, Bayayanpur, Fazalpur, Asawarpur, and Badmalk serve as a testament to the intricate dance between human aspirations and the planet's well-being. As India navigates this tightrope, the interplay of local actions, national policies, and global cooperation will determine the trajectory towards a balanced and sustainable future.

## REFERENCES

National Environment Policy (2008)

UNEP (2011). Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication - A Synthesis for Policy Makers, www.unep.org/greeneconomy

 Ernst&Young survey (2013)

Ethan Goffman(2008). India and the Path to Environmental Sustainability, ProQuest is part of Cambridge Information Group, (www.cambridgeinformationgroup.com), http://www.csa.com/discoveryguides/india/editor.php,

Sha Zukang(2012). Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and Secretary-General of the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development

Jayanthi Natarajan,,Indian Minister for Environment and Forests, New Delhi.

World Bank (20077. India: Strengthening Institutions for Sustainable Growth. Washington, DC. [9]. Kapoor, R. 2004. Plural Dreams: India in the 21st century. Futures 36, pp. 637-653.

Lemmer, J. Winter (2007). Cleaning up Development: EIA in Two of the World's Largest and Most Rapidly Developing Countries.Georgetown International Environmental Law Review 19:2, pp. 275-301.

World Bank.(2007). India: Strengthening Institutions for Sustainable Growth. Washington, DC.

Kathuria, V. (2007). Informal Regulation of Pollution in a Developing Country: Evidence from India. Ecological Economics 63, pp.403-417

Amit K. Srivastva (2010) Traditional Solutions to Encounter Global Warming. Asian J. Management 1(1), pp.22-25 https://ajmjournal.com/AbstractView.aspx?PID=2010-1-1-5

G. Aruna Yagna Narayana, R. Nageswar Rao, A.R. Aryasri. (2011). Biotech Ready Cluster and Climate at Genome Valley in Andhra Pradesh. Asian J. Management 2(1), pp.20 24. Available on: https://ajmjournal.com/AbstractView.aspx?PID=2011-2-1-4

Kulveen Trehan, Iradeep Kaur.(2015). Motives and Modes of Social Responsibility in the Mediated Business Environment in India: Perspectives from the Industry. Asian J. Management; 6(4): Oct. -Dec., 2015 page 307-313. doi: 10.5958/2321-5763.2015.00045.1 Available on: https://ajmjournal.com/AbstractView.aspx?PID=2015-6-4.