

National Seminar on Effect of Ecopreneurship on Environment Protection & Sustainable Development

Policies and Schemes Offered by Government in Support of Ecopreneurs

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Abstract

Introduction: Addressing environmental issues and promoting sustainable economic growth are key goals of ecopreneurship, which is a combination of entrepreneurship and ecological awareness. In the face of global challenges such as pollution, resource depletion, and climate change, ecopreneurs are emerging as engines of sustainability and innovation. The Indian government has acknowledged ecopreneurs' vital role in advancing green economic transformations and accomplishing the Sustainable Development Goals. This article examines the various programs and policies put in place by the Indian government to encourage and assist ecopreneurs.

Methodology: The article surveys the policy and scheme framework created by the Government of India for ecopreneurs, examining in turn the National Action Plan on Climate Change, the Start-Up India Initiative, the National Electricity Policy, the Energy Conservation Act and the Solid Waste Management Rules on the policy side, and the Make in India campaign, the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles scheme, the Green Skill Development Programme, the Atal Innovation

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Mission, the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme and the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises on the scheme side. For each instrument the study sets out its year of introduction, administering ministry, principal objectives, and the specific mechanisms through which it supports green enterprise, including funding and incentives, market development, policy support, innovation and research, and capacity building.

Results & Discussion: The National Action Plan on Climate Change, founded in 2008, has eight main missions centred on protecting ecosystems, sustainable agriculture, energy efficiency, renewable energy and water conservation. The Startup India Initiative of 2016 supports new businesses with a ₹10,000 crore Fund of Funds, a three-year tax holiday, self-certification for labour and environmental laws, and fast-track patent applications with an 80% fee rebate. The National Electricity Policy, introduced in 2005 and revised in 2021, and the Energy Conservation Act of 2001, amended in 2022, establish the Bureau of Energy Efficiency and introduce carbon credit trading. The Solid Waste Management Rules of 2016, amended in 2022, provide the Extended Producer Responsibility framework. Make in India has attracted over \$500 billion in FDI since 2014. FAME I allocated ₹895 crore for subsidies covering around 278,000 EVs, while FAME II carries a ₹10,000 crore budget with 2,877 charging stations and 7,000-plus electric buses approved. The Green Skill Development Programme offers courses of 80-600 hours, and the Atal Innovation Mission has operationalised 72 Atal Incubation Centres, incubating over 3,500 ecopreneurs and generating over 32,000 jobs. PMEGP offers subsidies of 15% to 35%.

Conclusion: Ecopreneurship serves as a powerful catalyst for sustainable economic growth while addressing critical environmental challenges. The Indian government has made significant strides in supporting ecopreneurs through various policies, financial initiatives and regulatory frameworks, and programs like the NAPCC, Start-Up India and green financing schemes play a crucial role in enabling innovation in waste management, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and green technologies. However, challenges such as bureaucratic hurdles, limited awareness and inadequate infrastructure continue to impede progress. By adopting global best practices, streamlining regulations and fostering stronger public-private collaborations, India can further enhance the effectiveness of its ecopreneurial ecosystem and position itself as a global leader in sustainable innovation.

Keywords: Ecopreneurship; Government Policies; NAPCC; Startup India; Make in India; FAME Scheme; Green Skill Development; Atal Innovation Mission; PMEGP; CGTMSE.

1. Introduction

With its rapidly growing population and industrialization, India is confronted with urgent environmental problems such as resource depletion, pollution, and climate change. By combining creative business concepts with sustainable practices, ecopreneurs provide answers to these problems. The Indian government has recognized their potential and implemented a number of programs and laws to support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and encourage green enterprises.

Ecopreneurship focuses not just on profitability, but also on making a beneficial environmental impact. This dual focus makes it an essential component in achieving a circular economy, reducing carbon footprints, and enhancing resource efficiency. The government's efforts to provide a supportive ecosystem for such entrepreneurs demonstrates its commitment to achieving environmental sustainability while promoting economic growth.

2. Policies Supporting Ecopreneurs

2.1 National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)

India has a comprehensive strategy to address climate change and advance sustainable development, which is outlined in the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC). Founded in 2008, it has eight main purposes that are centered on protecting ecosystems, sustainable agriculture, energy efficiency, renewable energy, and water conservation. These missions seek to improve climate resilience and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Role of NAPCC in Supporting Ecopreneurs:

- **Funding & Incentives** – Provides government subsidies, tax benefits, and green finance options to support startups in renewable energy, waste management, and sustainable agriculture.
- **Market Development** – Creates demand for clean energy, energy-efficient solutions, and eco-friendly products through government policies and public awareness programs.
- **Policy Support** – Implements favourable regulations like renewable energy targets and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), encouraging businesses to adopt sustainable practices.
- **Innovation & Research** – Funds R&D in green technology, promotes technology transfer, and offers incubation support for eco-startups.
- **Capacity Building** – Conducts training programs, skill development initiatives, and networking opportunities to equip entrepreneurs with knowledge and expertise.

By leveraging NAPCC's financial, policy, and research support, ecopreneurs can build scalable and sustainable businesses while contributing to India's climate goals.

2.2 Start-Up India Initiative

The Government of India launched the Startup India Initiative in 2016 as a flagship program with the goal of assisting businesses in order to promote entrepreneurship, economic growth, and job creation. It provides financial, regulatory, and infrastructural support to emerging businesses. For ecopreneurs looking to start and grow sustainable firms, the Startup India Initiative offers finance, mentorship, tax breaks, and regulatory simplicity. This program can help green businesses in sustainable agriculture, waste management, and renewable energy to promote climate-friendly innovation. The Startup India Initiative supports new businesses with financial aid, tax benefits, and easy loans, including a ₹10,000 crore Fund of Funds and a 3-year tax holiday. It simplifies

regulations by allowing self-certification for labor and environmental laws and offers fast-track patent applications with an 80% fee rebate. Startups get access to mentorship, networking, and incubation centers, along with opportunities to secure government tenders without prior experience. Additionally, free entrepreneurship courses, awards, and innovation programs like the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) help startups grow and scale efficiently. <https://www.startupindia.gov.in/>

2.3 National Electricity Policy

The National Electricity Policy (NEP) is introduced in 2005 and revised in 2021. Its aim is to promote energy efficiency, renewable energy adaption and sustainability in India's power sector. It supports ecopreneurs by creating opportunities in renewable energy, smart grids and energy efficient solutions. It benefits ecopreneurs by promoting renewable energy businesses in Solar, Wind and Hydro through subsidies and tax incentives, encouraging green innovations like smart grids and energy storage and supporting energy efficiency ventures in appliances and green buildings. It also facilitates financing for eco-startups through green bonds and venture capital while boosting rural electrification and creating vast opportunities for sustainable ecopreneurship.

2.4 Energy Conservation Act

The Energy Conservation Act (2001, amended 2022) outlines the legal framework and overall strategy for promoting energy efficiency and conservation across various sectors within a country. It establishes the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) to implement the initiatives. This Policy supports the ecopreneurs by promoting energy efficient businesses such as LED lighting, smart appliances and green buildings. It introduces carbon credit trading, allowing startups to monetize low carbon innovations while offering financial incentives like subsidies and tax benefits for energy saving projects.

The Act also encourages clean industrial technologies and waste heat recovery by helping businesses develop eco-friendly manufacturing solutions. With these market opportunities, it empowers ecopreneurs to build a sustainable and energy efficient future.

2.5 Solid Waste Management Rules

The Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2016 (amended in 2022) provides a regulatory framework for proper collection, segregation or separation, processing and disposal of waste in India. It creates opportunities for ecopreneurs by promoting waste recycling businesses, including plastic, e-waste and organic waste processing. They encourage composting and bioenergy ventures. The Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Framework provides demand for eco-friendly packaging and sustainable waste solutions, while green supply chain initiatives boost businesses which are focused on biodegradable alternatives and reusable materials. Additionally this policy also provides financial incentives and ample market opportunities for startups in waste management sector, fostering a greener economy.

3. Schemes Supporting Ecopreneurs

3.1 Make in India

On September 25th 2014, the Indian government started the Make in India campaign, which aims to make India a global center for manufacturing. The program's main goals are to increase domestic production, draw in foreign capital and to generate employment opportunities while using environmentally clean and sustainable manufacturing methods. The Make in India initiative has significantly boosted manufacturing, foreign investment and job creation in India. Since its launch, the country has received over \$500 billion in FDI, leading to growth in key sectors like automobiles, electronics, and defence. The program has also enhanced infrastructure

development through industrial corridors and smart cities. Additionally, it promotes sustainability by encouraging renewable energy adoption, clean technologies and waste management, creating new opportunities for ecopreneurs and green startups. Overall, Make in India strengthens the economy while supporting innovation and environmental responsibility.

3.2 Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles (FAME)

Scheme

Launched in 2015, the FAME India Scheme encourages the use of electric vehicles (EVs) and hybrid vehicles in India with the goal of promoting electric mobility and lowering reliance on fossil fuels. It is a component of the government's initiatives to promote sustainable transportation and lower carbon emissions. The FAME India Scheme is divided into two stages: In order to create demand, FAME I (2015-2019) allocated ₹895 crore to provide subsidies for around 278,000 EVs, including buses, two-wheelers, three-wheelers, and four-wheelers. With a ₹10,000 crore budget, FAME II (2019-present) increased support, focusing on major EV uptake, battery production, charging infrastructure (2,877 stations approved), and electric buses (7,000+ approved). These phases have propelled India into a key role in sustainable transportation by accelerating EV adoption, reducing carbon emissions, and strengthening domestic manufacturing, making the country a major player in the global green mobility transition. The FAME scheme is a key driver of India's EV revolution, supporting sustainable transport, reducing emissions, and encouraging green innovation.

3.3 Green Skill Development Programme (GSDP)

To provide technical knowledge and practical training in environmental and sustainable industries, the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change (MOEF&CC) developed the Green Skill Development Programme (GSDP). The program seeks to

equip young people with the skills required for careers in pollution control, waste management, biodiversity protection, and renewable energy. It provides both short-term and long-term (80-600 hours) courses in subjects like biodiversity conservation, waste management, and solar energy. By creating a workforce proficient in sustainable practices, the program supports green sectors and emphasizes practical training. It is a key initiative to bridge the skill gap in environmental sectors, creating employment opportunities while promoting sustainable development.

3.4 Atal Innovation Mission

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog is Government of India's flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country and was setup in 2016. AIM has adopted a comprehensive strategy to achieve this goal, ensuring that schools foster a creative, problem-solving mindset and that universities, research institutions, the commercial sector, and MSME sector all foster an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Dynamic dashboards and real-time MIS systems are currently used to monitor and manage all of AIM's initiatives in a methodical manner. AIM established Atal Incubation Centers, or AICs, as business incubators at universities, institutions and corporations to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation among the nation's young innovators. The mission of these Atal Incubation Centers is to support innovative, world-class businesses and energetic ecopreneurs who wish to create sustainable and scalable businesses. In India, AIM has effectively operationalized 72 AICs. These AIC support startups through a variety of means, including co-working spaces, lab facilities, funding support, mentorship, collaborations, networking, technical facilities, and resource-based support. These AICs incubate over 3500 ecopreneurs, which have generated over 32,000 jobs throughout the ecosystem. There are over a thousand startups with female

founders and leaders. Healthtech, Fintech, EdTech, Space and Drone Tech, AR/VR, Food Processing, and Tourism are just a few of the industries that AICs serves.

3.5 Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)

One government program that offers financial assistance and subsidies to entrepreneurs, especially those in the micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) sector, is the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP). Through encouraging eco-friendly technologies, sustainable manufacturing, and green enterprises, this program plays a vital part in promoting ecopreneurship. PMEGP assists ecopreneurs by funding for Green Startups by offering subsidized loans (with a government subsidy of 15%-35%) to companies that specialize in organic farming, waste management, renewable energy and sustainable goods. It also assists in environmentally conscious businesses like solar energy, biodegradable packaging, and organic food production. Additionally this approach lessens the environmental impact while fostering economic growth by helping to create jobs in sustainable industries. It also provides funding to companies that embrace clean technology and advance circular economy models as part of the initiative to support MSMEs with low carbon footprints.

3.6 Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro, Small Enterprises (CGTMSE)

The Ministry of MSME and SIDBI established the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE). Its goal is to enable micro and small businesses to obtain credit, by mitigating the risk for lenders, thereby enabling easier access to credit for small businesses. This scheme is administered by CGTMSE Trust, which is a joint venture between the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).

4. Conclusion

Ecopreneurship serves as a powerful catalyst for sustainable economic growth while addressing critical environmental challenges. The Indian government has made significant strides in supporting ecopreneurs through various policies, financial initiatives, and regulatory frameworks. Programs like the NAPCC, Start-Up India, and green financing schemes play a crucial role in enabling ecopreneurs to innovate in waste management, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and green technologies. However, challenges such as bureaucratic hurdles, limited awareness, and inadequate infrastructure continue to impede progress. By adopting global best practices, streamlining regulations and fostering stronger public-private collaborations, India can further enhance the effectiveness of its ecopreneurial ecosystem.

Ecopreneurs are not only business leaders but also environmental stewards, bridging the gap between economic progress and ecological responsibility. With continued policy support and strategic interventions, India can position itself as a global leader in sustainable innovation, paving the way for a greener and more resilient future.

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