Green Politics in India: Pros, Prospects and Its Impact on Masses to Give a Sustainable Life

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Abstract

Green politics in India has emerged as a significant force in environmental governance, advocating for sustainable development, ecological balance, and climate resilience. This research examines the role of green political movements, policies, and parties in shaping India's environmental agenda. It explores the advantages of green politics, such as policy reforms, grassroots activism, and eco-friendly governance, alongside its limitations, including political inertia and economic constraints. The study highlights prospects for the future, emphasizing policy innovation, technological integration, and public participation. Furthermore, it assesses the impact of green politics on society, particularly in terms of livelihood, health, and environmental sustainability. The findings underscore the necessity of integrating green political strategies within mainstream governance to ensure a sustainable future for India.

Keywords: Green Politics, Sustainability, Environmental Governance, India, Climate Policy, Public Participation

1. Introduction

Green politics in India has become increasingly significant in the face of climate change, environmental degradation, and pressing sustainability challenges. Rooted in the principles of ecological sustainability, grassroots democracy, and social justice, green politics seeks to integrate environmental concerns into governance while balancing economic growth. With rapid industrialization, urbanization, and a growing population, India faces severe environmental crises, including air and water pollution, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and resource depletion. These challenges necessitate an inclusive and participatory political approach that prioritizes sustainability without hindering economic development. The emergence of green political ideologies in India can be traced back to grassroots movements like the Chipko Movement (1973) and Narmada Bachao Andolan (1985), which brought environmental issues to the forefront of national discourse. These movements played a crucial role in raising public awareness and advocating for policy changes that prioritize ecological well-being. Over time, the Indian government responded by institutionalizing green politics through legislative and judicial mechanisms such as the Environment Protection Act (1986), the National Green Tribunal (2010), and the National Action Plan on Climate Change (2008). These initiatives aimed to regulate environmental exploitation, promote sustainable practices, and mitigate climate change impacts through policy-driven interventions. Despite these efforts, green politics in India faces numerous challenges, including weak law enforcement, corporate lobbying, and socio-economic disparities that often push environmental concerns to the background. Industrialization and economic expansion frequently clash with conservation efforts, leading to policy compromises that favor short-term economic gains over long-term sustainability. The lack of dedicated green political representation in mainstream governance further exacerbates this issue, as environmental policies often remain secondary to economic and developmental priorities. Moreover, corporate influence and greenwashing tactics dilute the impact of genuine sustainability efforts, allowing businesses to project an environmentally friendly image while continuing exploitative practices. However, recent developments indicate a shift towards a more environmentally conscious governance model. India's commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2070 under the COP26 agreement, the push for renewable energy expansion through programs like the National Hydrogen Mission and PM-KUSUM, and the implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for plastic waste management highlight the evolving role of green politics in national policymaking. Additionally, the Supreme Court and National Green Tribunal (NGT) have played proactive roles in environmental litigation, ensuring compliance with environmental regulations and holding industries accountable for violations. Green politics also impacts public participation

and awareness, as seen in the rise of climate action campaigns, youth-led environmental activism, and decentralized sustainability initiatives. The integration of green urban planning strategies, such as the Smart Cities Mission and sustainable waste management programs, further underscores the importance of ecological consciousness in shaping modern governance. However, for green politics to be truly transformative, it must overcome institutional bottlenecks, enforce stricter environmental laws, and strengthen the role of civil society in policymaking.

2. Conceptual Framework and Theoretical Underpinnings

Green politics in India is fundamentally shaped by environmental political theory, which emphasizes ecological democracy, sustainability, and participatory governance. This political thought draws from eco-socialism, deep ecology, and sustainable development frameworks, all of which advocate for a balance between economic progress and environmental conservation. Eco-socialism critiques capitalism as a primary driver of environmental degradation and social inequality, proposing social ownership of natural resources and sustainable economic models that prioritize environmental welfare over profit motives. Deep ecology, on the other hand, promotes the intrinsic value of all living organisms, arguing for a fundamental shift in human consciousness that respects and preserves nature beyond utilitarian purposes. Sustainable development, another key pillar, integrates economic growth, social equity, and environmental responsibility, ensuring that current developmental needs do not compromise future generations' well-being.

In the Indian context, green politics manifests through legislative measures, environmental activism, and the rise of green political entities. Laws such as the Environment Protection Act (1986) and institutions like the National Green Tribunal (NGT) play a crucial role in shaping India's environmental governance. Grassroots movements such as the Chipko Movement (1973) and Narmada Bachao Andolan (1985) have historically influenced policy decisions, highlighting issues of deforestation, displacement, and ecological degradation. More recently, climate action campaigns and youth-led movements have pushed for stronger policies on climate change mitigation, plastic waste management, and renewable energy adoption. Additionally, political entities like the Indian Green Party and regional environmental movements advocate for policy shifts toward sustainability, although their influence in mainstream politics remains limited.

Despite these efforts, challenges persist, including weak enforcement of laws, corporate influence, and the marginalization of environmental concerns in political discourse. While India has made significant strides in integrating green politics into governance, the effectiveness of these policies depends on strict enforcement, public participation, and a committed shift towards long-term ecological sustainability. As climate change and environmental crises intensify, the role of green political ideologies in shaping governance, influencing policy decisions, and mobilizing public engagement becomes increasingly critical.

- ☐ Eco-socialism Overview
- ☐ Deep Ecology Theory
- ☐ Sustainable Development in India
- ☐ National Green Tribunal (NGT)

3. Literature Reviews

"Global Warming in an Unequal World: A Case of Environmental Colonialism" (1991) by Anil Agarwal and Sunita Narain In their seminal work, they present a critical analysis of global climate change discourse, arguing that the current framework disproportionately penalizes developing nations like India while allowing industrialized countries to evade historical accountability. They introduce the concept of environmental colonialism, wherein developed nations—historically responsible for the majority of greenhouse gas emissions—place excessive mitigation burdens on countries in the Global South. The authors meticulously examine carbon emissions per capita, energy consumption patterns, and historical contributions to climate change, concluding that industrialized economies have largely built their prosperity

on resource exploitation and environmental degradation, leaving developing nations to deal with the consequences. They challenge the Western-centric approach in climate negotiations, advocating for differentiated responsibilities in global environmental agreements. They argue that imposing universal emission reduction targets on all countries, regardless of their historical emissions, is unjust and counterproductive. Instead, they propose a sustainability framework where developed countries must take greater responsibility for emission reductions while allowing developing nations to prioritize poverty alleviation, economic growth, and sustainable development. Their work has been instrumental in shaping India's stance in climate negotiations, particularly in forums like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol. From a critical theory perspective, this work falls within postcolonial environmentalism, highlighting how global climate policies are often dictated by hegemonic powers that ignore the historical role of colonialism and industrial capitalism in creating ecological crises. The book's argument aligns with the broader Global South critique of neoliberal environmentalism, which sees market-driven climate solutions (such as carbon trading) as inadequate in addressing structural inequalities in emissions and resource access. **"The Violence of the Green Revolution: Third World Agriculture, Ecology, and Politics" (1991) by Vandana Shiva** "The Violence of the Green Revolution" is a comprehensive critique of the Green Revolution's impact on Indian agriculture, highlighting the long-term environmental and socio-economic consequences of intensive farming practices introduced in the 1960s and 1970s. Shiva argues that while the Green Revolution was promoted as a technological breakthrough aimed at increasing food production and reducing hunger, its implementation led to widespread ecological destruction, socio-economic inequalities, and the erosion of traditional farming systems. The book meticulously examines how high-yielding variety (HYV) seeds, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and intensive irrigation techniques transformed Indian agriculture into an industrialized, monoculture-based system. Shiva contends that this shift disrupted traditional biodiversity, depleting soil fertility, groundwater reserves, and genetic diversity. She provides empirical evidence from Punjab and Haryana, regions that became the epicenter of the Green Revolution, to illustrate how excessive chemical use led to soil degradation, pest resistance, and declining productivity over time. Furthermore, she documents the social consequences, arguing that small farmers became dependent on expensive inputs, leading to debt cycles, land dispossession, and increased rural inequality. A critical dimension of Shiva's analysis is the patriarchal and corporate control over agriculture that intensified under the Green Revolution. She highlights how multinational agribusiness corporations, seed monopolies, and chemical industries profited from selling hybrid seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides, further disempowering local farmers and making traditional seed-saving practices obsolete. This, she argues, represents a form of economic violence, where agricultural policies prioritize corporate interests over community resilience. From a critical theory perspective, Shiva's work aligns with eco-feminism and postcolonial agrarian studies, challenging the technocratic and neoliberal approaches to food production. She critiques the hegemonic development discourse, which portrays industrial agriculture as inherently superior while dismissing indigenous and ecologically sustainable farming methods. Her book calls for a paradigm shift toward agroecology, advocating for organic farming, seed sovereignty, and community-led agricultural models that restore biodiversity and empower small farmers. **"This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India" (1992) by Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha** This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India is a pioneering work that traces the complex relationship between human societies and the environment in India from ancient times to the present. The book is structured as an interdisciplinary analysis, combining historical, ecological, and sociological perspectives to explore how different civilizations have interacted with nature. The authors argue that traditional Indian communities practiced sustainable resource use, as seen in village commons, community-managed forests, and sacred groves, which played a crucial role in biodiversity conservation. However, colonial and post-colonial policies significantly altered these traditional ecological balances, leading to

widespread deforestation, soil degradation, and biodiversity loss. They emphasize that British colonialism introduced exploitative resource management policies, such as state-controlled forestry and commercial agriculture, which displaced local communities and led to the destruction of ecosystems. The shift from community-based conservation practices to state-dominated resource extraction resulted in ecological crises that persisted even after independence. Post-1947, India's modernization drive—marked by large-scale industrialization, dam construction, and intensive agriculture—further deepened environmental inequalities, marginalizing indigenous communities, forest dwellers, and small farmers who relied on natural resources for their livelihoods. A key contribution of this book is its critique of mainstream conservation policies, which often exclude local communities from environmental governance. The authors argue that top-down approaches to conservation, such as the establishment of national parks and wildlife reserves, frequently result in forced evictions and conflicts with indigenous groups. They advocate for a more participatory model of environmental governance that integrates scientific knowledge with traditional ecological wisdom, ensuring both biodiversity protection and social justice. From a critical theory perspective, This Fissured Land aligns with political ecology and postcolonial environmental studies, challenging the dominant state-centric and corporate-driven models of resource management. It critiques the neoliberal development paradigm, which prioritizes economic growth over environmental sustainability, and argues for a more equitable and community-driven approach to conservation. **"Green Politics: Global Environmental Negotiations" (1999) by Anil Agarwal, Sunita Narain, and Anju Sharma** In Green Politics: Global Environmental Negotiations, they provide an in-depth analysis of the power dynamics, conflicts, and challenges involved in global environmental negotiations, particularly from the perspective of developing nations like India. The book critiques the global climate governance system, highlighting how developed countries manipulate environmental agreements to serve their economic interests while shifting the burden of sustainability onto poorer nations. The authors argue that environmental negotiations are inherently unequal, often dictated by the interests of Western industrialized economies, which have historically been the largest contributors to environmental degradation. One of the central themes of this work is the concept of "differentiated responsibilities", which states that developed nations must take greater responsibility for climate mitigation due to their historical carbon emissions. This argument has been central to India's position in international climate summits, including the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. The book provides case studies on how trade policies, carbon credit mechanisms, and market-driven solutions often favor wealthier countries while failing to address the structural inequalities that make developing nations more vulnerable to climate change. The authors also examine the role of multinational corporations in shaping climate policies, arguing that corporate interests often dilute the effectiveness of environmental agreements. They discuss how global trade agreements, intellectual property rights, and technology transfer restrictions prevent developing nations from accessing green technologies, thereby limiting their ability to transition to sustainable economies. From a critical theory perspective, Green Politics aligns with dependency theory and postcolonial environmental justice, as it critiques the global economic order that perpetuates environmental inequalities. The book challenges neoliberal approaches to environmental governance, arguing that market-based solutions (such as carbon trading and offset programs) fail to address the root causes of ecological crises. Instead, the authors call for a more radical restructuring of global environmental policies, advocating for greater representation of developing countries, stronger climate finance mechanisms, and decentralized decision-making structures. Sunita Narain on Green Politics **"Conflicts of Interest: My Journey through India's Green Movement" (2017) by Sunita Narain** In her memoir, Conflicts of Interest: My Journey through India's Green Movement, Sunita Narain provides a first-hand account of her experiences within India's environmental movement, offering deep insights into the complex interplay between development, policy-making, and environmental conservation. As a longtime environmental

activist, researcher, and Director-General of the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), Narain narrates the struggles, achievements, and challenges of advocating for sustainable policies in a rapidly developing nation. Narain emphasizes the tension between economic development and environmental protection, a recurring theme in India's policy discourse. She recounts policy battles over issues such as air pollution, water conservation, industrial regulation, and climate justice, highlighting the resistance from corporate lobbies and government institutions in enforcing strict environmental laws. She also discusses her role in the push for Bharat Stage VI (BS-VI) emission standards, the campaign against toxic pesticides in agriculture, and India's stance in international climate negotiations. A crucial aspect of the book is community involvement in environmental decision-making. Narain argues that top-down governance models often fail to account for local realities, leading to ineffective and unsustainable policies. Instead, she advocates for a participatory approach, where local communities, grassroots organizations, and civil society groups play a central role in shaping environmental policies and conservation programs. She illustrates this with case studies on water management initiatives in Rajasthan, waste segregation programs in Delhi, and afforestation efforts across India. From a critical theory perspective, Conflicts of Interest aligns with environmental justice and political ecology frameworks, as it critiques the corporate-driven, neoliberal approach to environmental governance that prioritizes economic growth over ecological well-being. Narain exposes the conflicts of interest that arise when industrial lobbies manipulate environmental policies to serve their profit motives, often at the expense of public health, biodiversity, and rural livelihoods.

- Book Overview - Conflicts of Interest
- Sunita Narain's Environmental Work

"Recovery of Tigers in India: Critical Introspection and Potential Lessons" (2021) by Y.V. Jhala et al. provides an in-depth analysis of India's successful tiger conservation programs, highlighting key strategies, challenges, and broader implications for wildlife management and environmental governance. The study examines how political will, community engagement, and adaptive management strategies have played a crucial role in the revival of tiger populations across Indian forests. The authors present historical data and conservation case studies, particularly focusing on the Project Tiger initiative (1973), which was one of the earliest and most ambitious conservation programs in India. They analyze how a combination of policy interventions, scientific monitoring, habitat restoration, and anti-poaching efforts contributed to stabilizing and increasing tiger populations. The study also discusses the use of modern technology, such as camera traps, satellite tracking, and genetic analysis, in monitoring tiger numbers and understanding their behavioral ecology. A key aspect of this research is the role of local communities in tiger conservation. The authors highlight how human-wildlife conflict remains a major challenge, as tiger habitats often overlap with agricultural lands and human settlements. While relocation programs and community-based conservation models have helped mitigate conflicts, the study critiques the social costs of conservation policies, particularly when tribal and forest-dwelling communities face displacement in the name of wildlife protection. This raises important ethical concerns about the balance between biodiversity conservation and human rights. From a critical theory perspective, this study falls within the conservation governance and political ecology framework, as it examines how state policies, international conservation funding, and scientific research interact to shape wildlife management strategies. The authors acknowledge that while India's tiger conservation success is globally recognized, future efforts must focus on reducing habitat fragmentation, addressing climate change impacts, and ensuring sustainable coexistence between humans and wildlife.

- Project Tiger - Government of India
- NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority)

"National Action Plan on Climate Change" (2008) by the Government of India The National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), launched in 2008 by the Government of India, represents a comprehensive policy framework aimed at addressing climate change

challenges while ensuring sustainable economic growth. It was designed to align India's developmental priorities with climate resilience, promoting energy efficiency, renewable energy, and resource conservation. The NAPCC is structured around eight core national missions, each addressing key aspects of climate mitigation and adaptation. The NAPCC reflects India's commitment to integrating green policies into its national development agenda, aligning with international climate commitments such as the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC framework. However, its implementation faces challenges, including limited financial resources, inter-departmental coordination issues, and delays in policy execution at the state and local levels. From a critical theory perspective, the NAPCC represents India's proactive approach to climate action, but critics argue that it lacks enforceable targets and stronger accountability mechanisms. Many scholars have also pointed out that while renewable energy initiatives like NSM have been successful, other missions—such as the Green India Mission and Sustainable Agriculture Mission—have struggled due to inadequate policy execution and funding constraints.

Official Government of India - NAPCC Report NAPCC Report by Government of India
National Missions under NAPCC - Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change National Missions under NAPCC
India's Climate Strategy and Paris Agreement

Paris Agreement and India's Climate Strategy "The Fight Over Land Holding Back India's Green Energy Revolution" (2024) by Benjamin Parkin and Jyotsna Singh This article by they examines one of the biggest challenges in India's transition to renewable energy—land acquisition and conflicts between development and social equity. As India aims to expand its solar and wind energy infrastructure to meet its commitment of achieving 500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030, large-scale land acquisition for solar parks and wind farms has become a contentious issue. The article highlights the growing land conflicts that arise as marginalized communities, farmers, and indigenous groups resist land takeovers that threaten their livelihoods, traditional land rights, and ecological balance. The study provides case studies from states like Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Maharashtra, where massive solar parks have displaced local farming communities. Despite government incentives and policies promoting "Green Energy Corridors", the process of acquiring large tracts of land for renewable energy projects has led to disputes over compensation, environmental degradation, and loss of fertile agricultural land. The authors argue that policies must address these socio-economic concerns to prevent renewable energy projects from becoming another form of land dispossession. From a critical theory perspective, this issue falls under the lens of political ecology and environmental justice, questioning whether green energy transitions are truly sustainable if they perpetuate inequality and land-based conflicts. The authors emphasize the need for community-inclusive policies, land-sharing agreements, and benefit-sharing models where local populations are stakeholders in renewable energy projects rather than victims of displacement.

- India's Renewable Energy Goals - Ministry of New & Renewable Energy
- Land Rights and Renewable Energy in India

"Making Climate-Friendly Lifestyle Choices Isn't Always Easy: India Learned the Hard Way" (2024) by Aniruddha Ghosal and Chonchui Ngashangva In this piece, they explore the challenges of promoting climate-conscious lifestyles in India, shedding light on the economic, cultural, and infrastructural barriers that hinder the widespread adoption of sustainable living practices. While India has made strides in policy-driven environmental reforms, such as the banning of single-use plastics, electrification of public transport, and the promotion of solar energy, the transition to climate-friendly consumer habits remains slow. The authors argue that the biggest challenge in shifting towards sustainable consumption is economic disparity. Millions of Indians—particularly those in low-income and rural communities—still rely on cheap fossil fuels, plastic-based products, and non-renewable resources due to their affordability and accessibility. The article discusses how urban elites can afford eco-friendly products like electric vehicles (EVs), organic food, and energy-efficient

appliances, but for the majority of the population, these remain costly and impractical. Another crucial issue highlighted is the cultural resistance to change. Traditional cooking methods using wood and biomass are deeply rooted in rural life, and shifting to clean cooking technologies like LPG or electric stoves requires more than just subsidies—it needs behavioral change programs. Similarly, despite efforts to promote public transport and cycling, urban mobility habits remain heavily car-centric, partly due to poor infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians. From a sociological and behavioral economics perspective, this article critiques the assumption that top-down policy initiatives alone can drive sustainable behavior change. Instead, the authors argue for a bottom-up approach, where community-driven sustainability programs, affordable green technologies, and incentive-based systems play a larger role in shaping climate-friendly lifestyles.

- Original Article on Climate-Friendly Lifestyles (AP News)
- Government of India's Climate Awareness Initiatives
- The Economics of Sustainable Lifestyles - World Bank

4. The Evolution of Green Politics in India

Period	Initiative	Description	Challenges	Links
1973	**Chipko Movement**	A grassroots movement where villagers, mainly women, hugged trees to prevent deforestation in Uttarakhand, raising awareness on forest conservation.	Faced opposition from loggers and government policies favoring commercial exploitation.	Chipko Movement
1985	**Narmada Bachao Andolan**	Protest against the Narmada River dam project, highlighting the displacement of indigenous communities and environmental degradation.	Conflict between development goals and environmental sustainability; resistance from the government.	Narmada Bachao Andolan
1986	**Environment Protection Act**	A comprehensive legal framework empowering the central government to regulate industrial pollution and environmental degradation.	Weak enforcement, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and limited public participation.	Environment Protection Act
2008	**National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)**	A strategic framework with eight missions aimed at promoting renewable energy, energy efficiency, and climate resilience.	Implementation challenges due to inadequate funding, lack of inter-state coordination, and policy enforcement issues.	NAPCC
2010	**National Green Tribunal (NGT)**	A judicial body established to handle environmental disputes efficiently, ensuring compliance with laws related to pollution and conservation.	Lack of enforcement authority, backlog of cases, and limited jurisdiction.	National Green Tribunal
2019	**Jal Shakti Abhiyan**	A government initiative to address water scarcity and promote rainwater harvesting and efficient water use in agriculture.	Implementation gaps, over-extraction of groundwater, and lack of community involvement.	Jal Shakti Abhiyan
2020	**National Hydrogen Mission**	Launched to promote green hydrogen production and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.	High initial investment costs, technological challenges, and infrastructure constraints.	National Hydrogen Mission

2021	India's Net-Zero Pledge (COP26)	India committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2070 and increasing renewable energy capacity to 500 GW by 2030.	Balancing economic growth with emission reduction, financial constraints, and technological dependency.	India at COP26
2022	Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Plastic Waste	Policy requiring manufacturers to manage post-consumer plastic waste responsibly.	Compliance issues, lack of effective recycling infrastructure, and monitoring challenges.	EPR in India
2023	Green Energy Open Access Rules	Designed to boost renewable energy consumption by enabling industries to procure green power directly from renewable energy sources.	Resistance from traditional energy industries, policy execution delays, and high infrastructure costs.	Green Energy Rules 2023

5. Pros of Green Politics in India

Green politics in India has significantly advanced environmental sustainability through multiple avenues:

1. Legislative Reforms

India has enacted progressive environmental laws to safeguard its natural resources. Notable among these are:

- **The Forest Rights Act (2006):** This Act recognizes and vests forest rights and occupation in forest land to forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers, aiming to correct historical injustices and ensure their livelihood and food security. en.wikipedia.org+2tribal.nic.in+2tribal.nic.in+2
- **The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act (1981):** This Act provides for the prevention, control, and abatement of air pollution, establishing Boards with powers and functions to address air quality issues. climate.law.columbia.edu+5indiacode.nic.in+5en.wikipedia.org+5

2. Increased Public Awareness: Environmental movements and policies have heightened public awareness about sustainability, leading to behavioral changes in consumption and resource management. For instance, the National Green Tribunal (NGT), established in 2010, has played a pivotal role in addressing environmental issues and enforcing regulatory measures, thereby educating the public on environmental matters. en.wikipedia.org

3. Integration of Renewable Energy

India has implemented policies to promote renewable energy sources:

- **International Solar Alliance (ISA):** Launched by India, the ISA aims to facilitate the deployment of 1,000 GW of solar capacity and mobilize USD 1 trillion in solar energy investments by 2030. Asia Foundation
- **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evem Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) Scheme:** Initiated in 2019, this scheme provides financial and technical support to farmers for installing solar pumps and grid-connected solar power plants, reducing reliance on diesel and enhancing farmers' income. ceew.in+3renewableaffairs.com+3en.wikipedia.org+3

4. Sustainable Urban Planning: The Smart Cities Mission integrates sustainable urban planning practices, including the development of green spaces, energy-efficient buildings, and waste management initiatives, contributing to environmental sustainability.

5. Judicial Activism: The judiciary, particularly the Supreme Court and the National Green Tribunal (NGT), has been instrumental in enforcing environmental laws and ensuring compliance:

National Green Tribunal (NGT): Established under the National Green Tribunal Act of 2010, the NGT handles cases related to environmental protection and conservation of

forests, ensuring expeditious disposal of cases and effective enforcement of environmental regulations.

6. Challenges and Constraints of Green Politics

Despite its benefits, green politics in India faces significant challenges:

Political and Economic Barriers

➢ Industrialization vs. environmental conservation often leads to policy compromises.
➢ Economic growth priorities overshadow environmental policies.

Weak Enforcement of Laws

➢ Regulatory frameworks exist but lack strict implementation.
➢ Bureaucratic inefficiencies and corruption weaken law enforcement.

Lack of Green Political Representation

➢ Environmental concerns remain secondary in major political party agendas.
➢ Limited presence of green political movements in mainstream politics.

Public Apathy and Limited Participation

➢ Socio-economic priorities reduce public engagement in environmental activism.
➢ Limited awareness and accessibility to green political movements.

Corporate Influence and Greenwashing

➢ Many businesses engage in superficial sustainability efforts.
➢ Profit-driven motives overshadow genuine environmental responsibility.

7. Prospects for Green Politics in India

The prospects for green politics in India are increasingly robust, driven by heightened environmental awareness, legislative reforms, judicial activism, and grassroots mobilization. A 2022 Lokniti-CSDS survey found that over 72% of urban Indians consider environmental issues like air and water pollution to be a top priority, indicating a significant rise in public consciousness. This growing environmental awareness is translating into stronger political engagement, with citizens advocating for greener policies and more robust implementation of environmental laws. Youth-led climate movements, NGOs, and community-driven initiatives have amplified this advocacy, enhancing environmental discourse at both national and local levels.

One of the key areas of transformation is India's renewable energy sector. According to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), as of December 2022, India's installed renewable energy capacity reached 168.96 GW, including 63.30 GW of solar and 42.26 GW of wind power. With a government target of 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030, policies promoting solar, wind, and hydrogen energy have taken center stage. The launch of the National Green Hydrogen Mission in 2023, with an outlay of ₹19,744 crore, marks a strategic shift toward building a green economy and reducing dependence on fossil fuels. On the legal and institutional front, India has witnessed continuous amendments to environmental laws to enhance sustainability regulations and enforcement. The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 has been reinforced, while proposed amendments to the Forest Conservation Act (FCA), 1980 and the EIA Notification have spurred public debate, underlining the need for transparent and inclusive policymaking. The Supreme Court, the National Green Tribunal (NGT), and environmental courts have played a critical role in upholding environmental justice. The NGT, for instance, handled over 30,000 cases from 2011 to 2022, issuing landmark rulings on issues such as illegal mining, deforestation, and industrial pollution. Its intervention in the Sterlite Copper Plant case in Tamil Nadu demonstrates how judicial mechanisms can safeguard ecological interests. At the grassroots level, eco-centric governance is gaining momentum, with new political entities and grassroots campaigns advocating for sustainable development. Regional parties like the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) have incorporated green policies into their governance models, such as promoting tree plantations, incentivizing solar energy use, and implementing electric vehicle (EV) policies in Delhi. These developments signify the mainstreaming of green politics and the rising demand for environmentally responsible governance. Corporate accountability is also on the rise, with regulations like the Extended

Producer Responsibility (EPR) under the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, playing a crucial role. The 2022 amendments mandated stricter recycling and waste management compliance for plastic producers. A joint report by NITI Aayog and UNDP highlighted that EPR compliance increased by 18% within a year, bringing over 150 companies under regulatory scrutiny. Such mechanisms are essential in reducing industrial pollution and encouraging sustainable production practices.

Finally, the rise of youth-led environmental movements and civil society campaigns underscores the dynamic role of citizen activism. Initiatives like Fridays for Future India, the #SaveAarey campaign, and Citizens for Clean Air have successfully influenced policy and halted ecologically harmful projects. According to Climate Action Tracker (2023), such activism has significantly contributed to India's evolving climate commitments under the Paris Agreement. With this momentum, the future of green politics in India holds promise, reflecting a shift toward environmentally conscious governance, policy reform, and sustainable development.

8. Impact of Green Politics on the Masses

1. Health and Well-Being: One of the most tangible effects of green politics is its impact on public health. Policies aimed at reducing pollution, conserving natural resources, and regulating industrial emissions have contributed to improved air and water quality. Initiatives like the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), launched in 2019, aim to reduce PM2.5 and PM10 levels by 20-30% in 132 cities by 2023. This program enforces stricter emission norms and promotes electric vehicles (EVs), urban afforestation, and renewable energy expansion, helping reduce respiratory illnesses caused by air pollution. Additionally, India's Bharat Stage VI (BS-VI) emission norms, introduced in 2020, have significantly lowered vehicular emissions, leading to improved air quality in metropolitan cities. Similarly, the Jal Jeevan Mission, which focuses on providing safe drinking water to rural households, has contributed to reducing waterborne diseases. These policies have collectively enhanced life expectancy and overall public health outcomes.

  ✑ **NCAP Policy** | **BS-VI Emission Norms** | **Jal Jeevan Mission**

2. Livelihood Sustainability: Green politics has redefined employment opportunities, particularly in agriculture, renewable energy, and afforestation. Policies promoting organic and sustainable farming through initiatives like Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) and Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) have encouraged farmers to shift away from chemical-intensive agriculture, reducing input costs and improving soil fertility. Renewable energy expansion, under the National Solar Mission and PM-KUSUM scheme, has generated employment in solar panel manufacturing, installation, and maintenance, creating thousands of jobs in rural and semi-urban areas. Furthermore, afforestation programs such as Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) have provided sustainable livelihoods to indigenous and tribal communities by engaging them in forest conservation and eco-tourism activities.

  ✑ **PKVY Scheme** | **National Solar Mission** | **PM-KUSUM**

3. Climate Resilience and Disaster Management: Green politics has played a vital role in strengthening India's resilience against climate change and natural disasters. The State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCCs), developed in alignment with the National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC), focus on climate-resilient agriculture, water resource management, and urban heat mitigation strategies. These plans have led to the development of flood-resistant infrastructure, drought adaptation programs, and mangrove restoration projects in coastal regions. Additionally, policies like the National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP) integrate early warning systems, community-based preparedness, and sustainable urban planning to mitigate the impact of cyclones, floods, and heat waves. The government's Ecosystem-Based Adaptation (EbA) approach, which promotes wetland conservation, agroforestry, and biodiversity protection, has also enhanced climate resilience in vulnerable regions.

4. Education and Public Awareness: One of the most significant outcomes of green politics has been the inclusion of environmental education in school curricula. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has introduced climate literacy and sustainability modules in primary and secondary education, ensuring that students develop an understanding of biodiversity, waste management, and carbon footprint reduction. Additionally, initiatives like the National Green Corps (NGC) and Eco-Clubs in Schools have encouraged students to actively participate in tree plantation drives, water conservation efforts, and recycling programs. Beyond formal education, public awareness campaigns such as the Swachh Bharat Mission and Plastic Waste Management Rules (PWM 2016, updated in 2022) have educated communities about the importance of waste segregation, sustainable consumption, and eco-friendly alternatives. This shift towards environmental consciousness has paved the way for behavioral changes in everyday life, from reducing single-use plastics to adopting energy-efficient technologies.

🔗 **NEP 2020 Overview** | **National Green Corps** | **Swachh Bharat Mission**

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

Green politics in India has emerged as a crucial force in addressing climate change, environmental degradation, and sustainability challenges, shaping the country's approach to ecological governance. Over the past few decades, various legislative frameworks, judicial interventions, grassroots movements, and policy-driven initiatives have contributed to integrating sustainability into mainstream governance. However, despite these advancements, significant gaps remain in enforcement, political prioritization, and public engagement. Environmental laws, such as the Environment Protection Act (1986) and National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), provide a foundation for sustainable governance, but weak implementation mechanisms and regulatory inefficiencies often undermine their effectiveness. Similarly, while judicial bodies like the National Green Tribunal (NGT) have played a vital role in ensuring environmental justice, limited jurisdiction, underfunding, and slow enforcement hinder their full potential. Green politics, therefore, must evolve from reactive litigation-based approaches to a more proactive and participatory governance model that involves policy reforms, citizen engagement, and technological innovations. To enhance the effectiveness of green politics in India, several policy recommendations must be considered. Firstly, strengthening institutional capacities is essential for ensuring the effective implementation of environmental policies. Government bodies like the State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) and Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) require better funding, autonomy, and workforce training to effectively monitor and regulate industrial pollution, deforestation, and resource exploitation. Additionally, clearer accountability mechanisms and stricter penalties for non-compliance must be enforced to prevent industries from bypassing environmental regulations. Secondly, expanding environmental education and awareness is key to fostering a culture of sustainability. Integrating climate change education, biodiversity conservation, and resource efficiency principles into school curricula and higher education institutions will create a generation of environmentally conscious citizens. Furthermore, public campaigns on waste management, water conservation, and energy efficiency should be scaled up through digital media, community-driven programs, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

Another critical area for improvement is the integration of technology in environmental governance. Emerging digital tools, such as satellite-based environmental monitoring, artificial intelligence (AI)-driven climate forecasting, and blockchain-enabled carbon credit systems, can significantly enhance the efficiency of climate mitigation strategies and pollution control measures. The government must leverage these technologies to improve real-time monitoring of air and water quality, detect illegal deforestation, and optimize resource utilization. Furthermore, promoting green entrepreneurship and sustainable business models through policy incentives, subsidies, and investment in clean energy startups can accelerate the transition toward an environmentally friendly economy. Renewable energy initiatives, such as PM-KUSUM for solar farming and the National Hydrogen Mission for clean energy

production, must be expanded with greater financial backing and ease of access for small-scale entrepreneurs and rural communities. Additionally, political representation of green issues must be amplified to ensure that sustainability becomes a fundamental part of national and regional policy debates. Currently, mainstream political parties in India often prioritize economic development, industrialization, and employment generation, with environmental concerns remaining secondary. To shift this paradigm, green political parties, independent environmental candidates, and sustainable development coalitions should be encouraged to contest elections and advocate for stronger climate policies, environmental justice, and eco-conscious urban planning. Moreover, citizen-led movements and grassroots environmental activism must be further strengthened through policy incentives, decentralized governance models, and legal protections for environmental defenders. The rise of youth-led climate action movements, digital activism, and eco-volunteering programs provides a strong foundation for increased public participation in decision-making processes related to environmental governance. Future research on green politics in India should explore the intersection of digital technology, policy-making, and grassroots activism, particularly in the context of smart cities, sustainable urbanization, and climate-resilient infrastructure. The role of artificial intelligence (AI) in policy analysis, machine learning for pollution control, and Internet of Things (IoT) applications in resource management could provide new insights into how technology can bridge policy implementation gaps. Additionally, comparative studies with other developing and developed nations could help India adopt best practices in green governance, renewable energy integration, and climate resilience strategies.

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