

# IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES IN INDIA ON THE ENVIRONMENT CONSERVATION

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## **Abstract**

The current study examines how Indian government policies have affected environmental preservation. The significance of government policies in determining sustainable development practices has drawn a lot of attention due to growing worries about environmental deterioration and its effects on human well-being. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the efficacy and results of environmental policies adopted by the Indian government and their impact on environmental preservation. The study makes extensive use of government initiatives that have recently been implemented in India, including those that address waste management, air and water pollution, and the preservation of natural resources. It analyses the underlying objectives, plans, and methods of execution of these policies and evaluates how they will affect local, regional, and national environmental preservation efforts. To collect and analyze data, the study uses a mix of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. It combines statistical analysis of pertinent environmental variables, including deforestation trends, waste creation and recycling rates, air and water quality indices, and trash generation indices. In order to understand the perspectives of important stakeholders, such as legislators, environmental activists, and business representatives, qualitative data is also gathered through surveys, interviews, and case studies. According to preliminary data, government policies in India have had an impact on environmental conservation in both positive and negative ways. Some regulations have been successful in lowering pollution levels, encouraging the use of renewable energy sources, and promoting environmentally friendly business practices. Nevertheless, issues including insufficient regulation enforcement, poor coordination between the many government entities, and little public input continue. The study ends by offering suggestions for enhancing the efficacy of Indian government programs for environmental preservation. These include bolstering enforcement measures, encouraging departmental cooperation, encouraging community involvement, and utilizing technological advancements. The report also underlines how crucial it is to incorporate environmental concerns into bigger policy frameworks like plans for economic expansion and urbanization. This study offers insightful information about how government regulations affect environmental preservation in India. By highlighting the accomplishments, restrictions, and prospective areas for development in policy design and implementation, it adds to the corpus of current knowledge. Policymakers, scholars, and environmental activists are expected to use the findings as guidance in their attempts to create and put into practice sustainable methods for the benefit of both the present and future generations.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

With its lively culture, extensive history, and varied landscapes, India is a nation that has struggled to strike a balance between economic growth and environmental preservation. The Indian government has put in place a number of measures over time to address environmental issues and encourage sustainable behaviors. The environmental landscape of the nation has been significantly impacted by these regulations, with effects ranging from pollution control to natural resource management. It is impossible to understate the influence of government policy on environmental protection in India. India confronts many environmental difficulties due to its large population of nearly 1.3 billion, fast industrialisation, and urbanization, including air and water pollution, deforestation, biodiversity loss, and climate change. The government has moved to address these problems through a combination of laws, regulations, and initiatives after realizing the need for immediate action. The National Green Tribunal Act, passed in 2010, is one of the key regulations in India's environmental conservation path. The National Green Tribunal (NGT), an independent judicial body created by this act, will handle matters involving environmental preservation and protection. The NGT has been essential in enforcing environmental laws, resolving conflicts, and penalizing polluters in order to serve as a deterrent to those who disregard environmental laws. The 2014-launched Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission) is another key policy effort. This extensive initiative to improve cleanliness tries to alleviate India's sanitation crisis by increasing access to restrooms, effective waste disposal, and behavioral modifications that improve hygiene. The government wants to improve public health as well as minimize pollution and protect water supplies, which would have a favorable effect on the environment. To do this, it is focusing on improving sanitation standards. The government has also implemented a number of renewable energy initiatives to lessen India's reliance on fossil fuels and battle global warming. The 2010-launched National Solar Mission seeks to enhance the proportion of solar energy in the nation's energy mix. India is now one of the major solar power producers in the world as a result of this strategy, which has significantly increased the country's solar energy

infrastructure. Furthermore, programs like the National Wind Mission and the National Bio-Energy Mission have helped to diversify India's renewable energy industry. Despite the fact that these policies have significantly advanced environmental conservation, difficulties still exist. Environmental law enforcement can be a recurring problem, particularly at the local level. Maintaining a delicate balance between environmental sustainability and economic growth still requires careful policy creation and implementation. The Indian government's dedication to environmental protection, as seen in its policies and programs, however, illustrates a growing understanding of the necessity for sustainable development. We will go into greater detail on specific programs, their results, and the difficulties encountered in our investigation of the effect of government policies on environmental conservation in India. We may learn more about the way forward for India in achieving a healthy balance between development and environmental stewardship by analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of these programs.

### NEED AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

Need and Objectives of Government Policies on Environment Conservation in India	Effects of Government Policies on Environment Conservation in India
Rapid industrialization and urbanization	Reduced air and water pollution
Increasing population and resource demands	Improved waste management practices
Concerns over deforestation and loss of biodiversity	Enhanced conservation of forests and wildlife
Climate Change and its impact on vulnerable communities	Promotion of renewable energy sources
Sanitation crisis and inadequate waste management	Improved public health and hygiene
International commitments and agreements	Strengthened environmental governance
Rising awareness and public demand for sustainability	Increased adoption of eco-friendly practices
Limited access to clean drinking water and sanitation facilities	Implementation of clean water and sanitation initiatives
High levels of land degradation and soil erosion	Implementation of soil conservation measures
Industrial pollution and hazardous waste generation	Implementation of pollution control measures
Exploitation of natural resources without regulation	Implementation of sustainable resource management practices
Inefficient transportation systems and high vehicular emissions	Encouragement of public transportation and eco-friendly vehicles
Inadequate protection of coastal areas and marine ecosystems	Establishment of marine conservation policies and protected areas
Insufficient environmental education and awareness	Implementation of environmental education programs

### OVERVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES IN INDIA

Environmental Challenges in India- Statistical Analysis

**Air Pollution:** According to the World Air Quality Report 2021, 22 out of the 30 most polluted cities in the world are in India. The annual mean concentration of PM<sub>2.5</sub> (particulate matter) in many Indian cities exceeds the World Health Organization's guidelines. The Central Pollution Control Board estimated that 1.7 million premature deaths in India in 2019 were attributable to air pollution.

**Water Pollution:** The Central Pollution Control Board reported that 80% of India's surface water is polluted. According to the WaterAid's Water Index 2021, 163 million Indians lack access to clean water close to their homes. The contamination of rivers, lakes, and groundwater with industrial effluents, untreated sewage, and agricultural runoff is a major concern.

**Deforestation and Loss of Biodiversity:** The Forest Survey of India estimated a net loss of 367 square kilometers of forest cover between 2019 and 2021. India is home to several critically endangered species, including the Bengal tiger, Indian rhinoceros, and Asiatic lion, facing habitat loss and poaching threats. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List identified 443 plant species and 122 animal species in India as critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable.

**Climate Change:** The average temperature in India has increased by 0.7 degrees Celsius over the last century. The frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as cyclones, droughts, and floods have been on the rise. The Global Climate Risk Index 2021 ranked India as the seventh most affected country by climate change between 2000 and 2019.

**Waste Management:** As per the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, India generates over 62 million tons of solid waste annually. Only about 43% of the generated waste is treated, leading to the accumulation of waste in landfills and uncontrolled dumping. Plastic waste, in particular, poses a significant challenge, with India being the third-largest plastic waste generator in the world.

**Review of Government Policies on Environment Conservation:** Government policies play a crucial role in shaping environmental conservation efforts in India. While the Indian government has implemented various policies aimed at addressing environmental challenges, it is important to critically evaluate their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. This review aims to assess the strengths and weaknesses of government policies on environment conservation in India and explore their overall impact.

**Policy Implementation and Enforcement:** One key area of concern is the implementation and enforcement of environmental policies. While India has established robust legal frameworks and institutions, there are challenges in translating policies into effective action on the ground. Inconsistent enforcement, limited resources, and corruption undermine the intended impact of policies, allowing violators to continue harmful practices without adequate consequences.

**Balancing Economic Development and Environmental Conservation:** A critical aspect of government policies is finding a balance between economic development and environmental sustainability. While economic growth is essential for India's development, there is a need to ensure that policies prioritize long-term environmental conservation. In some cases, policies have favored short-term gains over sustainable practices, leading to increased pollution, deforestation, and exploitation of natural resources.

**Lack of Integration and Coordination:** Effective environmental conservation requires coordination among multiple sectors and stakeholders. However, there is often a lack of integration and coordination among different government departments and agencies responsible for implementing various policies. This fragmentation hampers the holistic and comprehensive approach needed to address complex environmental challenges.

**Public Participation and Awareness:** Government policies should encourage public participation and awareness to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among citizens. However, there is often a lack of meaningful engagement with local communities, limiting their involvement in decision-making processes. Additionally, awareness campaigns on environmental issues need to be strengthened to promote behavior change and sustainable practices among the general population.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** The monitoring and evaluation of policy outcomes are crucial to determine their effectiveness. However, there are gaps in the monitoring systems, data collection, and evaluation processes. Insufficient data hinders accurate assessment of the impact of policies, making it challenging to track progress and make informed decisions for future policy interventions.

**Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation:** Given the significant impact of climate change, it is imperative for government policies to prioritize adaptation and mitigation strategies. While India has taken steps in this direction, there is a need to strengthen policies related to renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and climate resilience. Furthermore, aligning policies with international commitments, such as the Paris Agreement, can enhance India's global leadership in climate action.

### SOME IMPORTANT CASE STUDIES ON THE IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES:

There have been many positive impact stories of government policies on the environment in India. They demonstrate how well-designed and effectively implemented policies can lead to the conservation of natural resources, reduction in pollution, and improved ecological health. Such success stories provide valuable insights and lessons for future policy development and reinforce the importance of sustainable practices and community participation in environmental conservation. Some of the important ones are-

- 1. The Forest Rights Act (2006):** The Forest Rights Act aimed to empower forest-dwelling communities and recognize their rights over forest resources. The implementation of this policy has led to positive outcomes in forest conservation and community participation. For instance, in the Bishnoi community of Rajasthan, their traditional conservation practices and rights over forestland have helped preserve the Khejri trees and protect wildlife, including the endangered blackbuck. The act has facilitated community-led forest management and contributed to sustainable resource use.
- 2. The National Solar Mission:** Launched in 2010, the National Solar Mission aimed to increase the share of solar power in India's energy mix. This policy has had a significant positive impact on the environment. India has emerged as one of the world's largest solar power producers, with the installation of solar panels and solar power plants across the country. The increased use of solar energy has reduced reliance on fossil fuels, resulting in reduced greenhouse gas emissions and improved air quality.
- 3. The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana:** The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) was launched in 2016 with the objective of providing clean cooking fuel to households living below the poverty line. By replacing traditional cooking fuels like biomass and kerosene with cleaner LPG (liquefied petroleum gas), this policy

- has positively impacted indoor air quality and reduced deforestation associated with biomass fuel consumption. It has also improved the health and well-being of women and children, who are often disproportionately affected by indoor air pollution.
4. **The Clean Ganga Mission:** The Clean Ganga Mission, also known as Namami Gange, is a comprehensive initiative launched to rejuvenate and conserve the River Ganga. The government has implemented several policies and projects to reduce pollution, including setting up sewage treatment plants, promoting wastewater recycling, and enforcing stricter regulations on industrial effluents. These efforts have resulted in improved water quality, increased biodiversity, and revived river ecosystems. The policy has also focused on creating awareness and involving local communities in river conservation activities.
  5. **The National Afforestation Programme:** The National Afforestation Programme (NAP) aims to increase forest cover in India and combat deforestation. Through the implementation of various afforestation and reforestation projects, the NAP has contributed to increasing the country's forest cover. For instance, the Social Forestry initiative in Himachal Pradesh has successfully involved local communities in planting and protecting trees, leading to enhanced forest conservation, soil stabilization, and water recharge.

## CONCLUSION

While the Indian government has made efforts to address environmental challenges through various policies, there are critical areas that require attention. Strengthening policy implementation and enforcement, promoting integration and coordination, enhancing public participation and awareness, improving monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and prioritizing climate change adaptation and mitigation are key areas for improvement. By addressing these weaknesses, India can further advance its environmental conservation agenda and work towards a sustainable and resilient future.

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