

## **Green Jobs for a New India: Opportunities, Readiness and Vision**

India aims to become an economic power and a developed nation by 2047. However, the development path is not smooth, as it faces significant ecological challenges such as environmental degradation, which affects the current growth trajectory and the nation's productivity. Hence, it seeks an urgent need for climate action. Amidst these gravities lies a powerful chance– the emergence of green jobs. The green jobs are not merely an employment that contributes to environmental preservation, but also promote economic resilience and social equity.

India's commitment to addressing climate change is reflected in its ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) plans submitted to the UNFCCC under the Paris Agreement, which outline a comprehensive strategy focused on transitioning to renewable energy and advancing sustainability across various economic sectors. The idea of green jobs, long advocated by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), is gradually taking root in the Indian policy and employment landscape. In its fundamental form, a green job contributes to preserving or restoring the environment while fulfilling the ILO's criteria for decent work, including fair wages, security, workplace safety, and equal opportunity.

### **A Sectoral Landscape of Green Opportunities**

The Skill Council for Green Jobs (SCGJ), a not-for-profit society under the public-private partnership, has identified key sectors already seeing a green transformation. These include:

- a) Renewable Energy: Solar, wind, small hydro, bioenergy, and energy storage.
- b) Environment and Climate Change: Solid and e-waste management, sewage and water treatment, carbon sink development, and eco-tourism.
- c) Sustainable Development: Green hydrogen, green construction, electric vehicles, and pollution control.

These sectors are not only central to India's decarbonisation goals but also have the potential to become chief employment generators.

### **Government Initiatives: Building the Institutional Framework**

The Government has played an influential role in advancing the green jobs agenda. The establishment of the SCGJ under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in 2015 marked a significant institutional milestone. This council works with various ministries, industries, and academia to

develop occupational standards, competency frameworks, and skilling programmes aligned with India's environmental and energy goals.

**Some of these initiatives are:**

- **Suryamitra Skill Development Programme:** Over 78,000 individuals trained in the solar energy sector.
- **Green Skills Development Programme (MOEFCC):** Focused on youth employment in areas such as Clean Energy (Solar, wind, small hydro, energy storage, bioenergy, eco-tourism, forest conservation, waste management, and organic agriculture).
- **FAME-II and Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Schemes:** Boosting employment in electric mobility and clean manufacturing.
- **E-Shram Portal:** Capturing data of over 309 million informal workers, facilitating inclusive policy-making in the green transition.
- Furthermore, as part of the PAGE India project, the ILO conducted a Green Jobs Policy Readiness Assessment to establish a baseline understanding of existing green jobs and transition policy frameworks in India. The assessment aimed to evaluate policy coverage and coherence, identify best practices and gaps, and explore region-specific challenges, focusing on Jharkhand, a state heavily reliant on coal mining and seeking economic diversification.

### **Job Forecast and Labour Market Impacts**

According to the ILO's Green Jobs and Just Transition Policy Readiness Assessment, Policy Brief (2024), India's green transition could result in substantial employment growth in renewable energy, electric vehicles, energy efficiency, and waste management sectors. Although precise national-level job projections are still being formalised, think tanks and sectoral studies estimate that the renewable energy sector alone could generate over 3 million jobs by 2030, especially in solar photovoltaic installations, operations, maintenance, and component manufacturing. Similarly, electric mobility and clean vehicle industries are expected to create 10 million direct and indirect jobs by 2030, facilitated by schemes like FAME-II and the PLI for battery storage. Employment in areas like green construction, sanitation, and water management is expected to rise steadily due to fast-paced urbanisation and the adoption of green building codes and micro-irrigation techniques. The transition to decentralised renewable energy (DRE) systems offers livelihood potential through installation, maintenance, and entrepreneurship in solar-powered appliances, particularly in rural areas. However, this transition needs to be carefully managed, as jobs in

traditional carbon-intensive sectors, such as coal mining, conventional thermal power, and associated transmission infrastructure, are likely to decline. This calls for well-designed strategies focused on employment diversification, targeted reskilling, and strategic investments to ensure the transition is just and inclusive.

### **The Road Ahead: Building an Ecosystem for Green Employment**

While India has made remarkable progress in promoting green jobs, several challenges persist. To fully realise the potential of green jobs, India must work on using a standardised definition of green jobs, develop a robust job and skill measurement framework, and enhance skills through closer collaboration between the Skills Council for Green Jobs and emerging industries. Similarly, targeted incentives for MSMEs, social protection for informal workers and women, inclusive planning and active social dialogue with stakeholders are needed to boost green jobs.

With its demographic dividend, rich natural resources, and forward-looking policies, India is well-positioned to lead the global green economy. Green jobs are a practical solution to the emerging climate crisis and offer a transformative opportunity to generate decent livelihoods. Embedding sustainable goals into core economic planning, mainstreaming green skills in education, and entrepreneurship in this direction will ensure the transition is inclusive and future-ready.

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#### **References**

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