

# India Green Policy Push : Initiatives to Promote Energy Conservation and Energy Efficiency

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As an economist, one can better understand the fact that in a family some savings are always done whether in the form of stocks, fixed deposits, etc. But not all these savings are liquidified and used at once. Just like that in the current atmosphere, the concentration of carbon is around 700 billion tonne, other 700 billion tonne of carbon is present in the form of fossil fuels which can be considered as a fixed deposit of it, and other 450 billion tonne of carbon is present in the form of organisms whether living or dead. If seen at present, the carbon moves between the atmosphere and the organisms in the environment, but if the fixed deposit or should we say the 700 billion tonne of carbon is introduced to this cycle of carbon then several changes will be observed which will be irreversible in nature and can lead to a very harmful impact on the environment which later on cannot be mended.

## Introduction

Carbon is one of the most abundant elements in the world. We are made of carbon and so are our homes and hearth. Most economic activities lead to carbon emission into the atmosphere. Rapid industrial growth, an outcome of the Industrial Revolution and its spread, led to the accumulation of carbon in the atmosphere. Climate change is already being experienced and would only intensify once a tipping point is reached. This uncertainty is a worry to all. Global energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions grew in 2022 by 0.9%, or 321 million tonnes, reaching a new high of more than 36.8 billion. Although the rise in emissions last year was far smaller than the exceptional jump in 2021, emissions still remain on a growth trajectory, calling for stronger actions to accelerate the clean energy transition and move the world onto a path towards meeting its energy and climate goals. During Budget for the Financial Year 2023-24, Government of India has made several announcements to pick up the pace on renewable, and to rapidly reduce emissions from fossil fuels and all concerned. Ministries and Departments are ensuring expeditious action to implement the same. Highlights of Union Budget 2023-24 announcements and actions initiated by Ministry of Rural Development and the concerned Ministries/Departments are discussed.

## GOBARdhan Scheme

500 new-waste to wealth plants under GOBARdhan (Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan) scheme will be established for promoting circular economy. These will include 200 compressed biogas (CBG) plants, including 75 plants in urban areas, and 300 community or cluster-based plants at total investment of Rs.10,000 crore.

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In due course, a 5 per cent CBG mandate will be introduced for all organizations marketing natural and bio-gas. For collection of bio-mass and distribution of bio-manure, appropriate fiscal support will be provided. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme(MGNREGS) is a demand driven wage employment scheme. This scheme guarantees at least 100 days of unskilled wage employment against the demand by an adult member of a rural household.

The works to be taken up under the scheme are planned, prioritized and approved in the Gram Sabha at the Gram Panchayat level. Accordingly, shelf of work is prepared at the Gram Sabha with submission to Programme Officer (PO) at Block level and subsequently approved at the District level by District Programme Coordinator.

The construction of biogas plant of capacity of 2 cubic meter for individual beneficiaries eligible as per Schedule-I, para 5 of the Act is a permissible work under MGNREGS. It may be mentioned that unskilled wage component for the community biogas plant is permissible under the scheme.

The details of progress of biogas plant of 2 cubic meter capacity for individual beneficiary are given in **Table 1**

## MISHTI

Building on India's success in afforestation, 'Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes', MISHTI, will be taken up for mangrove plantation along the coastline and on salt pan lands, wherever feasible, through convergence between MGNREGS, CAMPA Fund and other sources. MGNREGS is a demand driven scheme with bottom up approach of implementation. The works to be taken up are approved and prioritized

**Table 1. Construction of biogas plant for individual under MGNREGS in all States/Uts as on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

Number of Works		
Ongoing	Completed	Total
4,397	316	4,713

at the Gram Sabha at the Gram Panchayat level.

Mangrove plantation is a permissible activity under MGNREGS. In this regard, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has approached Ministry of Rural Development for promotion of Mangrove plantation on a larger scale under Mishti Mission on Healthy Mangroves-Wealthy Coasts in convergence with MGNREGS. Both the Ministries are in the process of implementation of mangrove plantation in convergence. The technical resource and financial resources from both the Ministries will be impetus for promotion of Mangrove plantation in the concern areas for large scale implementation.

#### Energy Storage Projects

To steer the economy on the sustainable development path, Battery Energy Storage Systems with capacity of 4,000 MWH will be supported with Viability Gap Funding. A detailed framework for Pumped Storage Projects is being formulated by Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

#### Renewable Energy Evacuation

The Inter-state transmission system for evacuation and grid integration of 13 GW renewable energy from Ladakh will be constructed with investment of Rs. 20,700 crore and including central support of Rs.8,300 crore and formulated action plan is already initiated by Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

#### Green Credit Programme

For encouraging behavioural change, a Green Credit Programme will be notified under the Environment (Protection) Act. This will incentivize environmentally sustainable and responsive actions by companies, individuals and local bodies, and help mobilize additional resources for such activities.

#### PM-Pranam

PM-Programme for Restoration, Awareness, Nourishment and Amelioration of Mother Earth will be launched by Department of Fertilizers to incentivize States and Union Territories to promote alternative fertilizers and balanced use of chemical fertilizers.

#### Amrit Dharohar

Waterways Wetlands are vital ecosystems which sustain biological diversity. In his latest Mann Ki Baat, the Prime Minister said, Now the total number of Ramsar sites in our country has increased to 75. Whereas, before 2014, there were only 26..." Local communities have always been at the forefront of conservation efforts. The government through MOEF&CC will promote their unique conservation values through Amrit Dharohar, a scheme that will be implemented over the next three years to encourage optimal use of wetlands, and enhance biodiversity, carbon stock, eco-tourism opportunities and income generation for local communities.

#### Amrit Sarovar Mission

Another great initiative to Promote Energy Conservation and Energy Efficiency by Government of India i.e. Amrit Sarovar Mission (launched on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2022) to develop and rejuvenate 75 water bodies in each district of the country, creating 50,000 water bodies of a size of about an acre or more, as part of the celebration of **Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav is with lead participation of Ministry of Rural Development**, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Department of Water Resources, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The mission utilizes MGNREGS, XV Finance Commission Grants, PMKSY sub-schemes such as Watershed Development Component, and Har Khet Ko Pani besides States' own schemes. As per overwhelming National report - Mission Amrit Sarovar, total works completed as on 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2023 has already touched 49,131 and total number of works commenced is 71,635 which is more than 130% higher than target. As people's participation in the Mission is the focal point and objective of the mission is to conserve water for the future, the mission is turning out to be 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas'

#### Coastal Shipping

Coastal shipping will be promoted by Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways as the energy efficient and lower cost mode of transport, both for passengers and freight, through PPP mode with viability gap funding.

### **Bhartiya Prakritik Kheti**

Over the next 3 years, 1 crore farmers are to be facilitated by Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare to adopt natural farming. For this, 10,000 Bio-input Resource Centres will be set-up, creating a national-level distributed micro-fertilizer and pesticide manufacturing network.

### **Vehicle Replacement**

Replacing old polluting vehicles is an important part of greening our economy. In furtherance of the vehicle scrapping policy mentioned in Budget 2021-22, adequate funds are allocated to scrap old vehicles of the Central Government. States will also be supported in replacing old vehicles and ambulances. Action plan has already been formulated by Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

India is committed for energy efficiency efforts and as per the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2022, its commitments which may be relevant for energy efficiency efforts is to facilitate the achievement of COP-26 goals, and to introduce concepts such as mandated use of non-fossil sources and carbon credit trading to ensure faster

decarbonisation of the Indian economy. India through the Green Strategic Partnership collaborate with other countries to accelerate climate action for holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C only. The need of hour is to speed up the phase out of fossil fuels and the deployment of renewable energy to reach the goal of reducing emissions by 70% by 2030.

### **References**

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