

A way to Sustainability in India through Green-Blue Economic Framework

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Abstract: *The transition to green-blue economic framework and inclusive economies has long been considered as a sustainable development measure both at national and global level. Over the decades, rapid growth, and development of the countries around the world have made significant advancements to substantially improve the standard of living of the masses. However, this remarkable growth process is constrained by a universal environmental issue leading to a degrading atmosphere and depleting natural resources, which has demanded taking necessary steps to achieve a green and decarbonized economy. A Sustainable measure in the form of Green-Blue economy has been identified as a crucial solution to tackle all the problems relating to environmental hazard. A green economic measure usually refers to projects that include renewable energy measures, green buildings, water, land, and waste management, etc. It is imperative to recognise its dependence on “blue” processes. Blue economics measure of sustainable development on the other hand refers to features of development which are planned to benefit both the quality and quantity of resilient provision of water supply. Therefore, the term blue-green economy is an amalgamation of both land and water resources to promote sustainable as well as resource efficient living. The present study has attempted to analyse the need of green-blue economic framework along with the challenges in its achievement. The paper further examines the policy initiatives undertaken by the government with reference to India.*

Key Words: *Green-Blue Economy, Sustainable Development, Environment.*

1. INTRODUCTION :

The mother earth is currently under the threat due to rapid increase in population. The rise in population irrespective of the nation has posed an adverse effect on the basic life sustenance parameters like climate, natural resources, flora and fauna among green resources and seafood, clean water and optimum energy among blue resources which are required to ensure overall social, economic, and environmental sustainability. To surge over this unfavourable situation, blue and green economy may be an effective roadmap. It is green and marine based economic development that leads to improved wellbeing and social equity. The high population densities in few countries of the world, particularly China (151 per sq km) and India (481 per sq km) are issues of concern (World Bank). This creates intense pressure and challenges on living space, resources, mobility and quality of the life, environmental condition, job opportunity etc.

The new approach Green Economy emerged to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the first Rio Earth Summit in 1992 in the conference of Rio de Janeiro, 2012. Green Economy is defined as “improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities” (UNEP, 2012). On the other hand, Blue Economy is defined as “sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of ocean ecosystem” (World Bank). Blue Economy came forward due to the concerns raised by the coastal countries for paying attention to the oceans which cover more than 72% of the Earth’s surface and constitute more than 92% of the biosphere as well as those contribute to the main lifeline of the human kind. The major sectors in blue economy that have the potential to strengthen the economic backbone of the nation are (i) maritime transportation, (ii) fisheries and aquaculture, (iii) ship breaking industry and ship waste recycling, (iv) coastal tourism, (v) marine based energy and (vi) deep sea minerals.

1.1. Blue-Green Economic Framework

The blue economy originates in the green economy concept of incorporating strategies to alleviate climate change and adjustment to result in “improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. Climate change, the loss of natural resources, pollution, income disparity, social inequality, famine, and financial crises - are all key issues that countries around the world are presently facing in some way or another. A pressing need to tackle all these universal matters has become the focal point, especially due to the UN’s action plan of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which aims to create a more sustainable and equal world for the population and the environment as well. The motto of the SDG 2030 agenda-“Leave no one behind”- very much embodies the essence of Gandhiji’s philosophy of Sarvodaya through Antyodaya, reaching the most marginalised first. This guiding principle has long been a part of Indian thought and policy and is a fundamental virtue for the execution of the national programmes and missions. The Governments have attempted to overcome these difficulties, and the economic factor that drives countries to prosperity and wealth, was seen as a prospective path to achieve sustainability and on the whole balance between nature and man. Hence, to resolve the idea that an economy can provide for its citizens as well as protect the environment, the concepts of “blue” and “green” economies were introduced and consequently adopted by countries around the world.

1.2. Historical Background

The term green economy was first coined by a group of leading environmental economists, entitled Blueprint for a Green Economy in a pioneering report for the Government of the United Kingdom (Pearce, Markandya and Barbier, 1989). Although it did not mention directly about the concept of Green Economy, they evaluated the dire impact of the climate changes and GDP was not considered as the accurate measurement to determine the human wellbeing & environmental riskiness. In addition to that they had pointed out the requirement for a change of the society. In 2008, the term was revived in response to multiple global crises and it inspired several governments to implement significant ‘green stimulus’ packages as part of their economic recovery efforts. UNEP launched its Green Economy initiative to provide analysis and policy support for investment in green sectors as well as to make conventional, material-consuming and pollution-generating sectors green as a respond to the world crisis (UNEP, 2008). In 2009, Global Green New Deal (GGND) Report which enclosed a proposal of measures for economic reconstruction and reinforcement of stability of the world economy was introduced (Armand K., 2017). Further UNEP Global Ministerial Environment Forum in Nusa Dua acknowledged in their declaration that the green economy concept “can significantly address current challenges and deliver economic development opportunities and multiple benefits for all nations” (UNEP, 2020). The UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, the UN released an interagency statement supporting the green economy as a transformation to address multiple crises (2009). The General Assembly agreed that green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication would form one of the two specific themes for Rio+20 in March 2010. The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) representing global business defines green economy as “an economy in which economic growth and environmental responsibility work together in a mutually reinforcing fashion while supporting progress on social development”.

Whereas, the term Blue economy in economics is related to the preservation, exploitation and regeneration of the marine environment. This term is generally used in the scope of international development to coastal resources. It includes conventional fisheries, aquaculture, maritime transport, coastal, marine and maritime tourism, or other traditional uses, to more emergent activities such as coastal renewable energy, marine ecosystem services (i.e. blue carbon), seabed mining, and bio-prospecting. The UN defined the Blue Economy that "comprises a range of economic sectors and related policies that together determine whether the use of ocean resources is sustainable." The central challenge of the blue economy is to understand and better manage the various aspects of oceanic sustainability, ranging from sustainable fisheries to ecosystem health to preventing pollution. Furthermore, the blue economy challenges us to realize that the sustainable management of ocean resources will require collaboration across borders and sectors through a variety of partnerships, and on a scale that has not been previously achieved. The UN notes that the Blue Economy will aid in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, of which one goal, 14, is "life below water". Reaching Goal 14 needs universal action to guard the planet and calls for implementation of international forces, through institutional and legal frameworks. Progress has been made, but the targets by 2030 remain a long way off, highlighting the need for action today.

2. Review of the Literature:

The concept of Green Economy was initially used in the report of Blue Print for a Green Economy of 1989 prepared for the government of the United Kingdom by a group of experienced environmental economists (Pearce et al, 1989). Though it did not directly mention about the concept of Green Economy, however the bad impact of the climate changes was thoroughly evaluated. As per the report, GDP is not the accurate measurement to determine the human

wellbeing & environmental riskiness and in addition to that the requirement for a change of the society was also pointed out. Further it highlighted that Green Economy as a concept includes not only environmental protection but also social justice, human wellbeing, strength and empowerment of the families.

Endl and Sedlacko (2012) discussed that the main objective of the Green Growth Strategy is continuing economic growth, and simultaneously recognising the role of natural capital in planning processes and national accounts. According to authors, the main measures to achieve this goal include adequate valuation of natural capital considering its role as a production factor (that is, in the first place, ensuring proper measurement of pollution and utilisation of resources, but also preventing risks resulting from limited resources and eliminating harmful subsidies), as well as continuing pressure on innovation and supporting competition.

Kamble and Ovhal (2016) studied the theoretical issues, nature and extent relating to the concept of a green economy achieved by India using time series secondary data provided by World Bank (National Development Indicators) during the period 2000 to 2015. The researcher selected six dummy or alternative but appropriate indicators for accounting of green performance of India. Indicators of Resource Efficiency: Total Renewable Electricity Generation, Adjusted Saving: Natural Resources Depletion, Indicators of Resource Efficiency: Energy use, Agricultural Raw Material Export, Indicators of Progress and Well-being: Life Expectancy at Birth, Total Health Expenditure (Private + Public). The thorough discussion of some indicators from their principal area of green economy with reference to India revealed that some indicators show positive trend useful for green economy except the indicator health. This adequately proves that India had adopted the strategy of green economy; hence it is endeavouring in that direction. But there is urgent need to improve the health sector and its positive results. The necessary provision for health in government budget with honesty and rigorous in spending and implementation will help us a lot.

Armand (2017) presented the issue of green growth, a new operating strategy and a practical tool for achieving the timeless objective, which is sustainable development, which the OECD is working on. The paper also discussed the relationship between green growth, green economy and sustainable development. The author analysed the purpose of simultaneous functioning of the three "green" ideas. The added value of the paper was a presentation of the author's model of GG-GE-SD relations and a new approach to defining the phenomenon of green growth. It was concluded that co-existence of the trio green economy - green growth- sustainable development is reasonable due to the complementary and synergistic nature of correlations between these concepts.

Bholane (2020) studied the benefits, principles and barriers of green economy and identified Green economy transition in key sectors like Agriculture, Construction, Power, Manufacturing, Transport and Tourism. The unsustainable way in which our natural resources are valued, used and managed is the most fundamental problem and there is need to operate within the 'planetary boundaries'. However, these national pathways can be informed and assisted by an international framework of rules, best practices, and actors. Countries like Japan, South Korea, China and Germany have already positioned themselves as green technology leaders and India should not be the perennial technology buyer. It can be concluded that there is need for a policy shift for green reforms to enable India to achieve sustained and sustainable development.

Madara & Perera (2020) evaluated whether Sri Lankan economy falls into Blue-Green Economy. The research framework captured three classifications and nine variables using secondary data gathered from Central Bank Reports and World Bank Reports during a period of eighteen years (2000-2018). The authors used descriptive analysis using T – test analysis for one sample t-test and paired mean t-test and content analysis and concluded that there is a blue- green economy in Sri Lanka but it should further reduce the impact of greenhouse gas emissions.

Bhattacharya (2021) analysed the advantages of blue economy in context of India, its opportunities, development in the blue economy in the country and the conditions for enhancing it. He further analysed that the fishery sector is a major contributor of blue economy, with India being the second larger producer of fish after China. Economic growth through the use of ocean, sea and ports, moving towards a sustainable development, tackling climate change, making the water pollution free and proper waste management sector are the basic requirements to achieve this goal. The author also emphasised the need to train farmers with better skills and introduce technology in the sector, better renewable energy run ships and boats and infrastructure development. He concluded that India has vast opportunities in the blue economy from blue minerals to blue hydrocarbons, fishery to aquaculture, import to export business through sea routes and there is need to bring in new technologies and work towards stabilizing relations with neighbours with whom we have water borders.

Kendil, H. (2021) discussed the importance of Blue Economy and its sustainable dimension that is considered as a pillar of the Green Economy with context to Algeria. The author elucidates that: firstly, although ambiguities surrounding the Blue and Green Economy definition, their sustainable dimension is strongly implanted in their approach. Secondly, with a strong institutional framework, the Blue Economy can contribute significantly to sustainable growth. Thirdly, Algerian sustainable policies, which are more focalized in the social dimension, should strengthen the environmental aspect and, give impetus to other sectors such as ecotourism.

Mitra et al (2021) discussed major sectors of blue economy with particular reference to Indian Sundarbans, the designated World heritage site. According to authors, Blue Economy can boost up the GDP of the nation by opening a new dimension in the sectors of marine biodiversity, fishery and aquaculture, coastal tourism, sea bed mineral-based industries, non-conventional energy etc. Being associated with low carbon foot prints, the sustainability of marine and estuarine ecosystem can be assured through Blue Economy. They further concluded that a well-defined policy needs to be formulated to safeguard the living and non-living resources of oceans, seas, bays and estuaries from over exploitation.

3. Objectives:

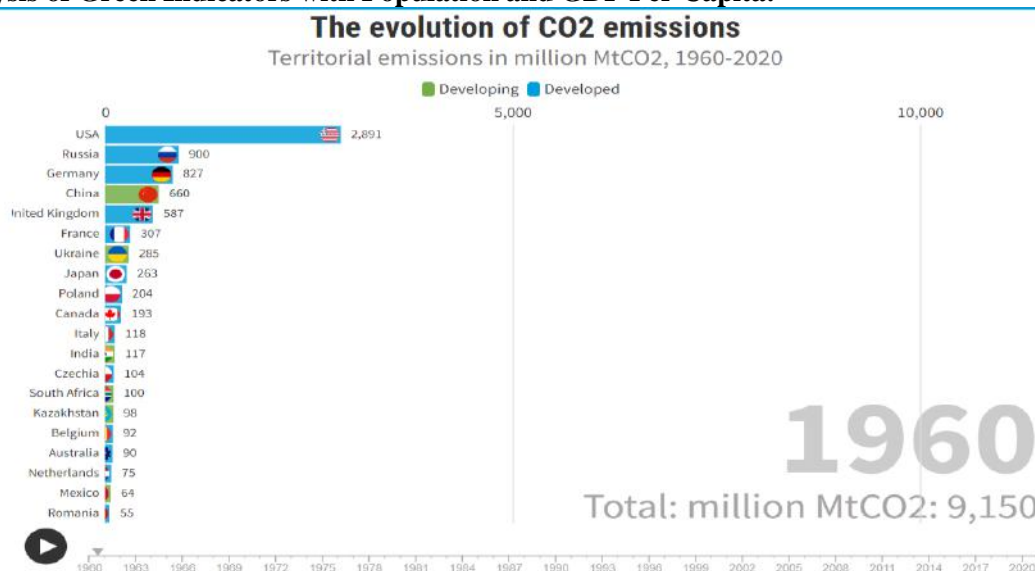
- i. To understand the concept of green and blue economy.
- ii. To study the challenges in the way to achieve green-blue economic framework.
- iii. To examine the policy initiatives undertaken by the government
- iv. To project the future with Green- Blue Economic Framework with reference to India.

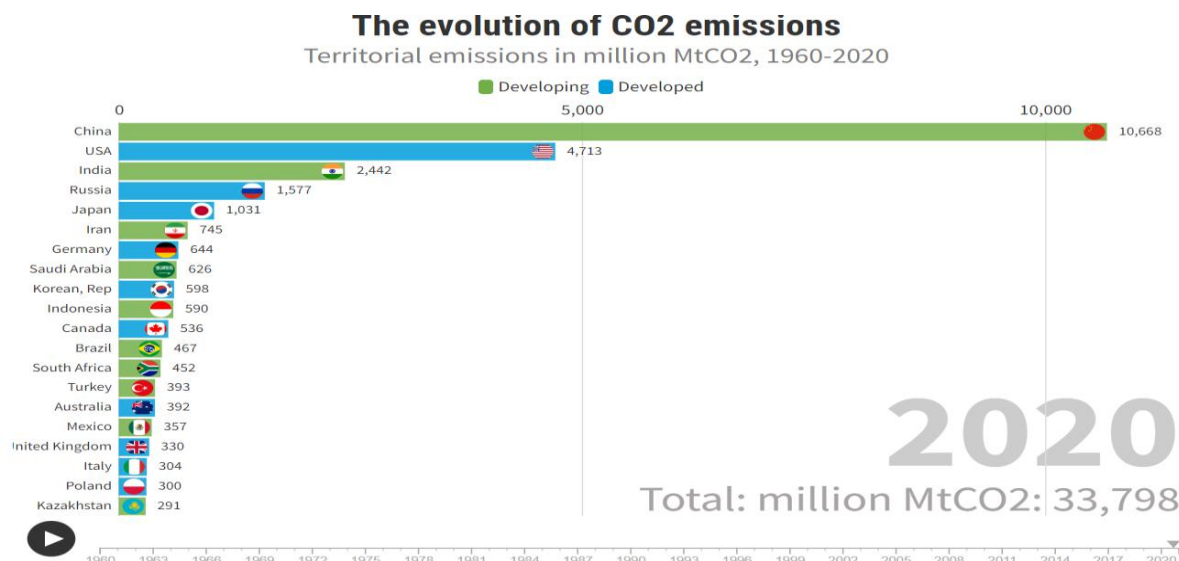
4. Empirical Analysis:

The green-blue economy realizes the disproportion between the limitations of nature's absorption and the demands of exploitation. Under these circumstances, the study promotes multidimensional prosperity by reforming the overall spectrum of production and consumption processes accordingly, in order to impact economies, the environment and society. Among the benefits of pursuing green-blue growth are:

- Facing and reversing issues pertinent to environmental degradation; hence, safeguarding environmental prosperity.
- Promoting sustainable economies and operations based on preventative measures.
- Redefining economies and approaching growth by turning attention to bio-fuels and renewable energy resources.
- Encourage expansion to new international markets that will benefit domestic contexts as well.
- Employment demands will increase, due to the increase in new industries' demands.
- The insertion of the innovation element will expand and redefine other fields as well.
- Maritime renewable energy sources, such as offshore wind, floating solar arrays and wave and tidal power, hold enormous promise to build energy independence and help countries meet their emissions reduction commitments under the Paris Climate Change Agreement.
- Coastal wetlands and ecosystems – such as salt marshes, sea-grass meadows, coral reefs and mangrove forests – need urgent protection in order to maintain their critical environmental services. It is estimated that these ecosystems sequester as much as five times the amount of carbon as terrestrial forests per unit area while shielding coastal populations from increasingly powerful storms and sea-level rise.
- Investing in sustainable fisheries and, in particular, aquaculture will create well-paid jobs and help promote food security and economic fairness, especially in developing countries.
- Sustainable and regenerative tourism can form a critical building block in ensuring a lasting economic recovery for coastal nations in a way that supports the ocean and nature – and the countless people who depend on them.

4.1. Analysis of Green Indicators with Population and GDP Per Capita:





Source: UNCTAD, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2023.

The figure shows the per capita emissions of carbon dioxide at global level. It offers an important perspective on the global CO₂ challenge. It demonstrates that the developed countries along with some high-income oil-producing developing countries have the highest emissions per capita. Almost all the countries show the emissions above the global average. Although the developed countries have shown downward trend in per capita emissions at the same time they remain well above those of developing countries.

With economic growth the developing countries witness rise in their per capita emissions. This, together with likely population increases will further aggravate the global problem. It has been in consistent with the empirical results of the study. Given the recent and historical link between economic and emissions growth, developing countries could recognise developed countries current per capita emissions as benchmarks – a price they must pay for economic progress. Such a situation would be devastating for global efforts to curb emissions.

These alarming trends highlight an obvious need for both developed and developing countries to “decouple” prosperity from CO₂ emissions. Developed countries must hasten the pace of their per capita reductions and developing countries must receive the technological and financial support necessary to transition towards green, low-carbon development trajectories. This is in everyone’s interest.

4.1.1. Impact of GDP per capita and Population on Total Green House Emissions:

In this section the impact of GDP per capita and population on total greenhouse emissions is analysed in case of India. The table 1 shows the regression estimates along with level of significance as the dependent variable (total green emissions) is regressed on independent variables (GDP per capita and population). The results indicate that the coefficient of GDP per capita is positive and statistically significant at 1 percent level of significance in explaining total greenhouse emissions. In other words the green house emission increases with the increase in GDP per capita. So as per the empirical estimation if an economy’s output of goods and services is increasing then it would lead to increase in total greenhouse emissions. The Economy has to realise the responsibility of reducing the greenhouse emissions along with economic growth. The greenhouse emission has been used as a proxy for green economy. In order to move towards green economy the country has to adopt green measures to control the environmental degradation. The similar results have been noticed for the impact of population on greenhouse emissions. With the increase in population there has been increase in greenhouse emissions. The burden of population is creating pressure on the economy in terms of environmental degradation.

Table 1: Impact of GDP per capita and Population on Total Green House Emissions			
D.V.	Independent Variables		
	Constant	POP	GDP per capita
Total Green House Gas Emissions	- 436728.5* (0.079)	.001*** (0.000)	354.7*** (0.000)

Note: (i) ***, **, * represents significance at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively. (ii) Figures in parenthesis of type () are p-values (iii) D.V. is Dependent Variable, POP is Population, GDP per capita PPP (constant 2017 international \$)

4.2. Challenges in harnessing green-blue economic framework: Implementing a green-blue economy and harnessing its benefits, has certain pre-requisites in order to prevent potential risks.

- First of all, successful implementation demands international cooperation and effort from within the national frameworks.
- Another key point of implementing a green-blue economy is that this concept demands the adoption of a holistic stance. And in developing country like India constrained resource and population pressure hinders the path of achieving such framework.
- Keeping up with the environmental standards set, in terms of product exports, may be challenging for developing countries to cope with, due to the lack of pertinent technology and resources.
- Obtaining such framework requires a stable economy and long-term financial plans which has become a large obstacle for some countries due to COVID-19. Financial barriers play a big role in the implementation of such Economy and it is usually developing countries that pay the price. Some developing countries have high levels of external debt and, therefore, focus won't be on transitioning the country's agricultural system towards a green-blue one. The transition becomes harder for some countries due to the lack of capacity and technology. Furthermore, the country needs a skilled workforce and therefore training within the field.
- The UN stresses that equity must not be forgotten when supporting a blue economy. Land and resources often belong to communities, and the interests of communities dependent on the ocean are often marginalized, since large sectors such as coastal tourism are viewed as bringing in a larger profit. This means that Blue Economy must help achieving SDG 14, but not undermine other goals of the 2030 Agenda at the same time.
- The Blue Economy is based on multiple fields within ocean science and therefore needs inter-sectoral experts and stakeholders. NGO's, fishers' organizations, indigenous people and communities are all crucial for an inclusive economy. However, science and innovation are needed to understand the environmental and socioeconomic aspects of a Blue Economy. Thus, the basis of creating a Green-Blue Economy can be demanding and needs numerous experts on the different fields that some countries may not have access to. Developing must then not only rely on their own national experts, but also on the expertise from other countries.

4.3. Government Measures to attain Green-blue economic framework:

A Green New Deal for India will need all stakeholders-government, the private sector, investors and civil society-to step forward and catalyse the next green revolution. India has an opportunity to take bold action to achieve strong, equitable and shared growth, and avert the worst impacts of a changing climate.

- For green energy implementation, Gumla, an aspirational district in Jharkhand, has already taken the first inspiring step. The installation of home based solar panels has enabled access to clean energy and reduced dependence on unreliable conventional energy. This has led the village out of darkness. The policy of *AatmaNirbhar Bharat* has encouraged production of solar cell technology within India, leading to lower costs and product reliability.
- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana: With 1.12 crore houses sanctioned, this Yojna (Urban) has focused on new construction technologies (for eg. using fly ash bricks) that are innovative, environmentally friendly and disaster-resilient. Overall, the mission has the potential to mitigate around 12 million tonnes CO₂ equivalent of GHG emissions by 2022.
- AMRUT: Under Amrut, water supply and management, energy efficiency and increased green spaces have been part of the goal in 500 target cities. The mission is likely to result in the mitigation of 48.52 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent to GHG emissions by 2022.

Growth in Delhi's green cover will be carried out by using only native plants and species, which will act as pollution filters, while techniques such as Miyawaki forests and smog absorption towers can be adopted at hotspots. A "tree directory" will also be maintained, with each agency identifying unique tree corridors or heritage trees in its area.

- Deep Ocean Mission: It was launched with an intention to develop technologies to harness the living and non-living resources from the deep-oceans.
- India-Norway Task Force on Blue Economy for Sustainable Development: It was inaugurated jointly by both the countries in 2020 to develop and follow up joint initiatives between the two countries.
- O-SMART: India has an umbrella scheme by the name of O-SMART which aims at regulated use of oceans, marine resources for sustainable development.
- Integrated Coastal Zone Management: It focuses on conservation of coastal and marine resources, and improving livelihood opportunities for coastal communities etc.

- National Fisheries Policy: India has a National Fisheries policy for promoting 'Blue Growth Initiative' which focuses on sustainable utilization of fisheries wealth from marine and other aquatic resources.
- Sagarmala Project: The Sagarmala project is the strategic initiative for port-led development through the extensive use of IT enabled services for modernization of ports. The Sagarmala Program was approved by the Union Cabinet in 2015 which aims at holistic port infrastructure development along the 7,516-km long coastline through modernization, mechanization and computerization. Sagarmala scheme also pushes forward Blue Economy tourism development in India. Additionally, the Sagarmala scheme will aid the development of cruise tourism through the development of ports. The Standard Operating Procedures of Cruises, which are a set of guidelines for operating cruises in India, have been relaxed to aid cruises tourism by reducing taxes, providing priority berthing and facilitating on arrival visas.

4.4. Way Forward

An accelerated approach to green technology, innovation, an overarching framework to catalyse green finance, an integrated approach to carbon, capture, utilization and storage, and a plan for climate adaptation can act as enablers to attain green-blue economic framework. The five pillars contribute to over 90% of India's greenhouse gas emissions are – energy, mobility, industry, infrastructure and cities, and agriculture. India will need to address and deal effectively with these pillars, along with these four cross-sectoral enablers, as part of its green and blue transition.

- **Sustainable Land Management:** Climate change cannot be mitigated only through greening and reversing land degradation. This will have to be coupled with sustainable land management strategies. Sustainable land management is the use of land to meet changing human needs (agriculture, forestry, conservation), while ensuring the land's socioeconomic and ecological functions over the long term.
- **Outcome-Based Policies:** The blue-green concept could transform India's urban planning approach from input to output based by focusing on the outcomes of projects and processes. This means that required environmental outcomes or specific levels of performance are specified in the framework and the method to achieve the outcome is flexible.
- Blue-green infrastructure can also accelerate progress on green employment prospects (SDG 1), food security (SDG 2), offsetting medical infrastructure load (SDG 3) and improving air and habitation quality in cities (SDG 11).
- **Swachh Bharat Mission:** The Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) focuses on achieving an open-defecation-free India, building solid waste management capacity and bringing about behavioural change. Swachhata movement, in effect, has become the harbinger of a total transformation of our urban landscape. It is estimated that the various initiatives under SBM-U can mitigate 17.42 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2022.

5. CONCLUSION:

The blue economy originates in the concept of green economy incorporating strategies to mitigate climate change and adaptation to result in "improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. Hence, blue economy will focus on looking after the ocean and its inhabitants, while a green economy will focus on land's natural resources to make them abundant and cater to the needs of the human population. However, as a result of threat from rise in climate hazards, the government of India should alter their planning and design approaches to incorporate Blue-Green Economic Framework as a counter to conventional practices by harnessing blue elements (eg: seas, rivers, lakes, wetlands etc.) alongside the green (for instance trees, parks, playgrounds and forests, etc.). All around the globe, economies are looking for transition to a 'green' economy i.e. low in carbon, socially inclusive and resource efficient. In other words 'green' has become short for a sustainable social, environmental and economic future. While the world's attention has been caught by the direct terrestrial implications of the green agenda, the 'blue economy' has not been prioritized to date. The 'green' economy should include the sustainable use of oceanic resources, but the pivotal role of the oceans in limiting temperature rises and stimulating. In nutshell, blue and green economies are two concepts that have the same objective i.e. to make the world a more sustainable and equal place for both living creatures and the environment. These two economies are the key to ensure a safe, sustainable, and clean environment for the people and also to preserve the world's resources, effectively preventing the human actions and activities.

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