

Ecopreneurship: A Step towards Going Green

¹P Varsha Pramod & ²Dr. Remya Ramachandran

¹Research Scholar, PG and Research Centre, Department of Commerce, Sacred Heart College(Autonomous), Ernakulam, Kerala, India

²Assistant Professor, PG and Research Centre, Department of Commerce, Sacred Heart College(Autonomous), Ernakulam, Kerala, India

ARTICLE DETAILS

Article History

Published Online: 15 May 2019

Keywords

Entrepreneurship; Green Initiatives; Sustainable Development; Green Entrepreneurship; Ecopreneurship.

*Corresponding Author

Email: varshapramod29@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

'Going Green' is a new buzzword in the current scenario where there is growing concern for environment. It is evident from the emergence of a slew of 'Green Initiatives'. A change is inevitable to reduce the negative environmental impact by economic activities and this can be brought about by the entrepreneurs, the so-called agents of change. Entrepreneurship is fundamental to transform the idea into practical application and Ecopreneurship or Green Entrepreneurship strives to address environmental issues during the process of business. Green Entrepreneurship is one of the most significant components of sustainable development. This study based on secondary data helps to gain an overview about the concept of Ecopreneurship and its importance. Further, it helps in understanding the link between green initiatives and entrepreneurship through a conceptual framework.

1. Introduction

Environmental degradation and climate change has caught the attention of countries world-wide. Ranging from waste management to global warming, it is a burning issue which demands action at the earliest, the fact that governments all over the world has recognized. (Gevrenova, 2015)

As per the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), "climate change refers to a change in the state of the climate that is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and that is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods". (TradeLab, 2016) From the definition, it is clear that for a betterment of this situation a change is inevitable. This change can be brought about by the entrepreneurs, the so-called agents of change. Innovation is essential to produce solutions to the rising problems. Since innovation and entrepreneurship go hand in hand, it is "fundamental to transform the idea into practical application". (Abraham, 2010)

In response to the need to reduce the negative environmental impact, a slew of 'Green Initiatives' has emerged from the Government, Business organizations, Educational Institutions, Non-Governmental Organizations(NGO's) etc. It was practiced earlier in western countries but now spreading to other parts of the world. From the basics of 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' to use of renewable sources of energy such as solar, wind etc according to the nature of the region to construction of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified, the so-called 'Green Buildings', the initiatives fall in a wide spectrum.

Being green is a part of sustainability and thus Ecopreneurship is one the significant components of sustainable development. (Gevrenova, 2015) Ecopreneurship or green entrepreneurship strives to address environmental issues during the process of business.

2. Objectives

- To understand the concept of Ecopreneurship
- To understand the link between Green initiatives and Entrepreneurship

3. Discussion

In recent decades, the concept of Ecopreneurship has been receiving increasing attention. Ecopreneurship is known by various names such as "green entrepreneurship", 'ecological-entrepreneurship', 'eco-entrepreneurship' and 'sustainopreneurship'. (OECD, 2011) According to Gwyn Schuyler, "Ecopreneurs are entrepreneurs whose business efforts are not only driven by profit, but also by a concern for the environment. Ecopreneurship, also known as environmental entrepreneurship and eco-capitalism, is becoming more widespread as a new market-based approach to identifying opportunities for improving environmental quality and capitalizing upon them in the private sector for profit." (Schuyler, 1998) As compared to traditional entrepreneurs, Ecopreneurs are often responsible for the introduction of breakthrough innovation and they need to be more aware of underlining the social aspects of their work i.e. Ecopreneurs must have a social perspective when proposing an innovative solution.

Proactive strategies are those actions taken by anticipating the future concerns and strategies are reactive when they are adopted in response to a situation. In this context Ecopreneurs engage in developing proactive strategies to create products or provide services that are environment-friendly rather than being reactive in response to the existing law and regulations, Corporate Social Responsibility(CSR) etc., as in the case of others. (Brigitte Hoogendoorn, 2015)

In the book 'The Green Entrepreneur: Business opportunities that can save earth and make you money', written by Gustav Berle in 1991, he declares that "one man's garbage is another man's treasure". He introduced terms like preservation; recycling, renewable energy etc. hinting the

concept of 'Green Entrepreneurship'. (Berle, 1991) Ecopreneurs came to be defined as individuals who invested in green business processes to earn profit as well as serving society through protecting the environment. (Issak, 1997)

Green Initiatives or eco-friendly practices are becoming the need of the hour. Initiatives for energy conservation like production and use of energy efficient devices, use of renewable sources of energy, reduction of green house gases, practices for water conservation in the form of maintenance and repairs of water leaks, rain water harvesting. Further, increased use of bio-degradable products, use of principle of 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle', other methods for the purpose of waste management, Reduction in the usage of fossil fuels by choosing public transportation or car pooling, Construction of green buildings, (Elkington) green websites like ces.iisc.ernet.in, green mapping to locate community's environment conscious points such as socially conscious business, recycling centers etc. are gaining prominence in the current scenario. (Rishiraj Sarkar, 2015)

GREENT Project is an initiative for teaching green entrepreneurship and instilling green mindset of future generations of European Union (EU) entrepreneurs. (GREENT) An example of Green IT is Community IT Innovators (CITI) a US based IT Consultancy. CITI reviews the energy use of the organizations and provide recommendations to reduce their carbon footprint on the basis of paper, electricity and equipment utilized by the organizations. (Andy Spackman, 2010) The Government of India's Swachh bharat mission /Clean Indian Mission, the 'Make in India' policy mentioning about 'five sustainable green initiatives that India can learn from Sweden' (Government of India) etc. highlight the importance placed in this area.

In this way, the Government of India is very proactive in pursuing various initiatives for boosting innovation driven entrepreneurship and job creation such as National Institution for Transformation of India (NITI Aayog), 'Startup India' etc. (NITI Aayog) There may be a requirement for solution to specific problems apart from those listed in various schemes as part of green initiatives and entrepreneurs can act as a catalyst of change. India has a favorable demographic dividend and the youth can channel their creativity by adopting environment friendly business practices if they are given proper awareness regarding importance and implementation of green initiatives along with Entrepreneurship Development Programs (EDP's) and thus become Ecopreneurs. Government can formulate policies to combine green initiatives and entrepreneurship to bridge this gap.

References

1. Abbey, H. N. (2012). The Green Archivist: A Primer for Adopting Affordable, Environmentally Sustainable, and Socially Responsible Archival Management Practices. *Archival Issues* , 34 (2), 91-115.
2. Abraham, M. M. (2010). *Entrepreneurship Development and Project Management*. Prakash Publications & Printers.

Effective and efficient utilization of available resources without resulting in environmental degradation is inevitable for the purpose of fulfilling the idea of sustainability, (Sanjeela Mathur, 2016) that the needs of the present has to be met without compromising the same needs of the future generations. (Abbey, 2012)

In short, entrepreneurs are essential for the successful implementation of green initiatives in order to reduce the negative environmental impact by economic activities through novel ways. Similarly, in the long-run, by adopting green initiatives, the entrepreneurs not only achieve profit but also gain a competitive advantage. They can enhance their reputation by conserving nature along with economic development and thereby ensuring long term sustainability of business. This link between green initiatives and entrepreneurship is expressed in Figure1

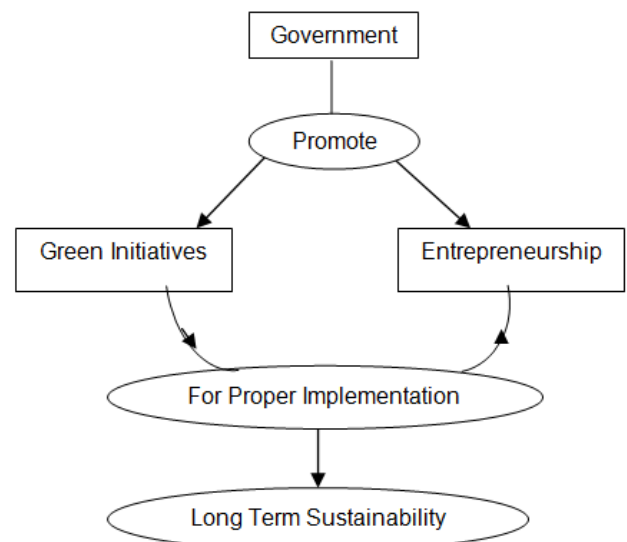


Figure 1: Self-made by the researcher

4. Conclusion

Ecopreneurship is the process of adopting green business practices to earn profit as well as serving society through protecting the environment. The study gives an insight to society in general on the concept of Ecopreneurship and importance of green initiatives in the current scenario. Further, it gives an understanding about the link between green initiatives and entrepreneurship through a conceptual framework. It also hints the role Government can play by formulating policies combining both for sustainable development.

3. Andy Spackman, C. R. (2010). *Clean, Green, and Not So Mean: Can Business Save the World?* Retrieved May 07, 2019, from <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/62870712.pdf>
4. Berle, G. (1991). *The Green Entrepreneur: Business Opportunities that can save the Earth and make you money*. Blue Ridge Summit ,Pennsylvania: Liberty Hall Press.

5. Brigitte Hoogendoorn, D. G. (2015). What drives environmental practices of SMEs? *Small Business Economics* , 44 (4), 759-781.
6. Elkington, J. B. (n.d.). *Green Entrepreneurship*. Retrieved March 27, 2019, from <http://www.via-india.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Green-Entrepreneurship-Nagpur-WTC.pptx>
7. Gevrenova, T. (2015). Nature and Characteristics of Green Entrepreneurship. *Trakia Journal of Sciences* , 13, 321-323.
8. Government of India. (n.d.). *5 Sustainable Green Initiatives that India can learn from Sweden*. Retrieved March 27, 2019, from Make in India: <http://www.makeinindia.com/article/-/v/5-sustainable-green-initiatives-that-india-can-learn-from>
9. GREENT. (n.d.). *About the GREENT project*. Retrieved March 27, 2019, from <http://greentproject.eu/greent-project/>
10. Issak, R. (1997). Globalisation and Green Entrepreneurship. *Greener Management international* , 18, 80-91.
11. NITI Aayog. (n.d.). *Atal Innovation Mission*. Retrieved 2019, from <http://niti.gov.in/content/atal-innovation-mission-aim#>
12. OECD. (2011). *Measuring Green Entrepreneurship*. Retrieved March 26, 2019, from Entrepreneurship at a Glance 2011: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264097711-4-en>
13. Rishiraj Sarkar, S. G. (2015). Green Entrepreneurship in Business Schools: Determining the Green Culture in Education. *International Journal of Science, Technology & Management* , 04 (Special Issue No.01).
14. Sanjeela Mathur, N. T. (2016). Green Entrepreneurship: The Emerging Paradigm for Sustainable Growth and Development in India-A Study of the Millennials. *Indian Journal of Science and Technology* , 9 (45).
15. Schuyler, G. (1998, December 02). *Merging Economic and Environmental Concerns Through Ecopreneurship*. Retrieved May 07, 2019, from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED434220>
16. TradeLab. (2016, December 20). *UNFCCC Nationally Determined Contributions: Climate Change and Trade*. Retrieved May 8, 2019, from <https://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/ditc-03102017-Trade-Measures-UNFCC-NatDet.pdf>