



Green entrepreneurship as a tool for sustainable development: Insights from the Kaziranga National Park

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Abstract

In recent times, green entrepreneurship has emerged as an important approach for simultaneously tackling environmental issues and fostering economic advancement. This abstract examines the status of environmentally oriented entrepreneurial activities in India, emphasizing their scope, constraints, and relevance to sustainable development. With a rapidly expanding population and escalating ecological challenges, India provides a conducive environment for the growth of green enterprises. The nation's abundant natural resources, vast potential for renewable energy, and increasing preference for eco-friendly alternatives create significant prospects for entrepreneurs to introduce innovative goods and services with reduced ecological footprints. Environmentally sustainable entrepreneurship in India spans multiple domains such as clean energy, waste recycling and management, climate-smart agriculture, eco-tourism, and green technological innovations. The present paper seeks to assess the current condition of green entrepreneurial initiatives in Assam. The research draws upon both primary and secondary sources of information. The findings indicate a gradual expansion of green enterprises in the region, supported by rising environmental awareness among stakeholders. Nevertheless, green entrepreneurship in Assam continues to encounter several challenges, including inadequate awareness and other structural limitations.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Environment, livelihood

Introduction

Green entrepreneurship has emerged as a transformative approach to business in response to escalating environmental degradation, climate change, and the growing need for sustainable development across the globe. It refers to entrepreneurial initiatives that consciously integrate environmental protection, economic viability, and social well-being into business operations. Unlike conventional entrepreneurship, which primarily emphasizes profit maximization, green entrepreneurship places sustainability at the core of value creation by developing eco-friendly products, services, and processes that address environmental challenges while ensuring financial sustainability. Green entrepreneurs actively seek innovative solutions to pressing ecological problems such as carbon emissions, depletion of natural resources, pollution, biodiversity loss, and waste accumulation. By leveraging innovation, clean technologies, and sustainable business models, green entrepreneurship contributes to the transition towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient, and inclusive economy. This form of entrepreneurship spans a wide range of sectors including renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, waste management and recycling, green construction, clean technology, eco-tourism, and the production of environmentally responsible goods and services. The growing relevance of green entrepreneurship is closely aligned with the global agenda for sustainable development, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize responsible consumption and production, climate action, decent work, and inclusive economic growth.

A defining feature of green entrepreneurship is its strong environmental orientation, where entrepreneurs prioritize ecological sustainability as a fundamental business objective. This includes minimizing environmental footprints through efficient resource utilization, reduction of

greenhouse gas emissions, adoption of renewable energy sources, and promotion of biodiversity conservation. Innovation and problem-solving are central to green entrepreneurial activities, as entrepreneurs continuously explore new technologies, business models, and processes that can offer sustainable alternatives to environmentally harmful practices. In doing so, green entrepreneurs play a crucial role in driving technological advancement and facilitating structural changes in production and consumption patterns. Furthermore, green entrepreneurship is guided by the principle of the triple bottom line, which evaluates business success not only in terms of economic performance but also through social and environmental outcomes. This holistic approach ensures that profitability is achieved alongside positive contributions to society and nature, thereby redefining the conventional metrics of business success.

In addition to environmental benefits, green entrepreneurship significantly contributes to social development by creating employment opportunities, improving livelihoods, and supporting local communities. Many green enterprises operate at the grassroots level, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, where they promote inclusive growth through sustainable agricultural practices, decentralized renewable energy solutions, and community-based eco-tourism initiatives. By fostering social responsibility, green entrepreneurs address issues such as poverty alleviation, social equity, and community resilience. Collaboration and networking further strengthen the green entrepreneurial ecosystem, as entrepreneurs engage with government agencies, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, financial bodies, and other stakeholders to share knowledge, mobilize resources, and scale sustainable innovations. Active participation in such networks facilitates learning, diffusion of best practices, and collective action towards sustainability goals.

Policy advocacy and institutional support also play a vital role in the growth of green entrepreneurship. Green entrepreneurs often engage with policymakers to advocate for regulatory frameworks, incentives, and financial mechanisms that encourage environmentally responsible business practices. Supportive policies related to renewable energy, waste management, green finance, and sustainable innovation can significantly enhance the viability and scalability of green enterprises. Moreover, green entrepreneurs contribute to consumer education and awareness by promoting sustainable lifestyles and influencing consumer behavior towards environmentally conscious choices. Through transparent communication, eco-labeling, and awareness campaigns, they help consumers understand the environmental and social implications of their consumption patterns.

Literature review:

Goswami and Agarwal (2024) ^[2] stated that Green entrepreneurship involves the creation and management of enterprises that prioritize ecological sustainability alongside the pursuit of financial prosperity. Within India, a country grappling with substantial environmental issues stemming from rapid industrial growth and population expansion, the concept of green entrepreneurship has emerged as a strategy to tackle these challenges while also fostering economic advancement

Bordoloi *et al* (2025). Existing studies on Eri weaving primarily emphasize its cultural heritage, traditional techniques, and ecological significance as “Ahimsa silk.” However, limited research has examined its role in green entrepreneurship, market innovation, and value-chain development. Scholars increasingly call for integrating indigenous weaving practices with sustainable entrepreneurship, women empowerment, and inclusive green growth frameworks.

Borah (2022) ^[4] stated that of green entrepreneurship among Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) as a pathway to sustainable development. Several studies report that while SMEs acknowledge environmental concerns, the adoption of green entrepreneurial practices remains limited and uneven due to financial, technological, and awareness-related constraints. Research also emphasizes that integrating green perspectives can enhance competitiveness, innovation, and long-term business viability, particularly in developing regions like India. Hazarika (2024) ^[8] Existing studies suggest that home-based industries are inherently sustainable due to their minimal reliance on power-intensive machinery and fuel-based production processes. The Industrial Policy of Assam (2015) identified labour-intensive sectors with low energy requirements as priority areas. Subsequently, the Industrial Policy of Assam (2018) further recognized several non-polluting activities, including tailoring and garment production, handloom weaving, furniture making, electrical appliance assembly, candle production, and carpentry, as environmentally benign industrial practices.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the contemporary scenario of green entrepreneurship in Assam with special reference to Kaziranga National Park

Methodology

The present study adopts a descriptive research design based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data were collected through a field survey conducted by the researcher in the study area using direct observation and informal interactions with green entrepreneurs. The research primarily follows a qualitative approach to capture in-depth insights into the nature, practices, and challenges of green entrepreneurial activities. Findings are therefore analyzed and presented in a qualitative form. Secondary data were obtained from published reports, journals, government documents, and relevant online sources. The scope of the study is confined to small and medium green entrepreneurial initiatives operating in and around Kaziranga National Park (KNP), excluding large-scale business enterprises.

Analysis and Findings

Green entrepreneurship in Assam, a state in northeastern India, has been gaining traction in recent years. Assam, known for its rich biodiversity and natural resources, presents significant opportunities for green businesses that focus on sustainability and environmental conservation. Here are some key aspects of green entrepreneurship in Assam.

Biodiversity Conservation: Assam is home to diverse flora and fauna, including the Kaziranga National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Green entrepreneurs in Assam are actively engaged in initiatives related to biodiversity conservation, wildlife protection, and habitat restoration.

Organic Farming: Assam's agricultural sector offers potential for green entrepreneurship, particularly in organic farming. Startups and individuals are promoting organic agricultural practices, such as organic tea cultivation, rice farming, and horticulture. These initiatives aim to reduce chemical inputs, preserve soil health, and produce environmentally-friendly agricultural products.

Eco-Tourism: Assam's natural beauty, wildlife reserves, and cultural heritage make it an attractive destination for eco-tourism. Green entrepreneurs in the state are establishing eco-friendly resorts, community-based tourism initiatives, and adventure tourism ventures that prioritize sustainability, responsible tourism practices, and conservation awareness.

Renewable Energy: Assam has substantial potential for renewable energy generation, particularly in the form of hydropower, solar energy, and biomass. Green entrepreneurs are capitalizing on these resources by establishing renewable energy projects, including small-scale hydropower plants, solar energy installations, and biomass-based power generation.

Waste Management: Effective waste management is a growing concern in Assam, especially in urban areas. Green entrepreneurs are working on innovative solutions for waste management, including recycling, waste segregation, composting, and waste-to-energy conversion. These initiatives aim to address the environmental impact of waste and create a circular economy.

Sustainable Handicrafts: Assam is known for its traditional handicrafts, such as handloom weaving, bamboo crafts, and pottery. Green entrepreneurs are reviving and promoting sustainable and eco-friendly practices in these sectors. This includes the use of natural dyes, organic fibers, and sustainable sourcing of raw materials, thereby promoting environmentally conscious and socially responsible craftsmanship.

The Government of Assam, along with various organizations and institutions, provides support and incentives to promote green entrepreneurship in the state. These include financial assistance, skill development programs, incubation centers, and policy frameworks that encourage sustainable businesses and entrepreneurship in Assam.

Success stories

Rupjyoti Saikia Gogoi, a certified master trainer, has imparted training to over 2,300 women in the domains of handloom weaving and market-oriented skills within the study region. One of the significant outcomes of this initiative is the establishment of the Kaziranga Haat Boutique, which functions as a commercial outlet for the sale of handloom, handicraft, and bamboo-based products to both domestic and international visitors. This marketplace has emerged as an important sales channel for local artisans, enabling them to reach a wider consumer base. In addition to craft-based activities, she has also initiated a hospitality venture named Rup Kitchen, which offers traditional Assamese meals prepared using indigenous ingredients known for their therapeutic value. These culinary offerings have been well received by tourists, as reported by the entrepreneur. Furthermore, the initiative extends to cultural preservation through the operation of the Dekagiri Music and Art platform, which actively promotes local art forms and cultural expressions among local youth and tourists, thereby integrating cultural tourism with entrepreneurial development.

Conclusion

The present study highlights the growing relevance of green entrepreneurship as a viable pathway for achieving sustainable development in Assam, with special reference to the region surrounding Kaziranga National Park. The findings indicate that green entrepreneurial activities in the study area are gradually expanding, driven by increasing environmental awareness, abundant natural resources, and the rising demand for sustainable products and services. Assam's rich biodiversity, cultural heritage, and ecological sensitivity provide a strong foundation for the development of environmentally responsible enterprises across sectors such as eco-tourism, organic agriculture, renewable energy, waste management, and sustainable handicrafts. These initiatives not only contribute to environmental conservation but also support livelihood generation and inclusive economic growth at the grassroots level.

The study further reveals that green entrepreneurship in the region plays a dual role by promoting conservation-oriented practices while simultaneously strengthening local economies. Case evidence, such as the initiatives undertaken by Rupjyoti Saikia Gogoi, demonstrates how green enterprises can empower women, preserve traditional skills, promote local culture, and create market linkages for

sustainable products. Such initiatives underline the potential of green entrepreneurship to foster community participation, social empowerment, and responsible tourism, particularly in ecologically sensitive areas like Kaziranga National Park. However, despite its promising prospects, green entrepreneurship in Assam continues to face several challenges, including limited awareness, inadequate access to finance, lack of technical expertise, and insufficient institutional support. Addressing these constraints through targeted policy interventions, capacity-building programs, and improved access to green finance is essential for scaling up sustainable entrepreneurial activities. Overall, the study concludes that green entrepreneurship holds significant promise for balancing environmental conservation with economic development in Assam and can play a crucial role in building a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable regional economy if supported by conducive policies and stakeholder collaboration.

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