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# Rise of Green Politics and Evaluation in the Context of the Contemporary World

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## ABSTRACT

*Green politics, as the name suggests is a green approach towards politics. A common assumption made about green parties are that they have a single strict green agenda which is a misconception. This is a new concept that incorporates countless social issues prevalent in the modern world. The following paper seeks to enlighten the readers about this emerging concept and the need for it.*

*The uniqueness of the green political theory is that it takes the typical political issues like freedom, justice, equality, or rights and adds a green dimension to them. This gives rise to a much-needed co-dependency between humans and nature. The following research work begins with a brief introduction and explanation of the green political theory. The gradual development of green theory by many scholars and the formation of green parties around the world led this ideology to be a part of mainstream politics. The paper also examines the merits and demerits along with the criticisms faced by green politicians.*

*Although some principles of Green politics are widely followed in Indian politics, there is still a lack of a clear green ideology in the country. The paper goes on to elaborate on the causes for the same.*

*This article makes use of various books, journal articles, online blogs, and green websites along with prominent news websites to support its arguments in the field of green politics. It goes on to examine the current standing of green politics in the political arena and its future prospects. There is a natural obligation for the present generation for the duty of care for the future of the planet. The duty along with the political will and positive attitude of the citizens would*

**Keywords:** *Green Politics, Green Parties, Global Greens, Radical Ecology, Reformist Ecology, Green Politics in India.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Green politics or ecologism is a political ideology whose main aim is to create an ecologically sustainable society and take environmental issues to their main agenda. They tackle these issues through a grassroots level of democracy. The people supporting the idea of green political

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theory are popularly called “the greens”. They are the advocates of the green movement.

The term green party was coined in Germany and the first green party was formed in Australia in the late 70s. The green theory originally stood on these 4 core beliefs, ecological wisdom, social justice, grassroots democracy, and non-violence. It believes in the long-term solution so as to tackle climate change. In this paper, we are going to bring light to the concept of green politics by discussing its evolution through global politics and its impact on the current global political scenario. Major political parties while standing for elections keep their agendas to people welfare, human factors, green politics extends to nonhuman factors as well like environment. For example, the first green party to achieve prominence was the German green party whose agenda was the opposition to nuclear weapons.

The rise of green politics was one of the first ecological movements of the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> This political ideology evolved through the rising environmental concerns after World War 2. We will also discuss federations and countries that adopted these values and how they politicized issues of the environment to serve their political agenda.

We intend to discuss the advantages and disadvantages and challenges that were faced by the green parties and the advocates of green political theory and to analyze the question of whether this new ideology of green politics is reformist or radical in nature. What is the position of India and are the future generations obligated to follow the green political theory? We hope to answer these questions by the end of the research paper.

## **II. WHAT IS GREEN POLITICAL THEORY?**

Before we go into the emergence of green politics and the green party, it is important to know the theory that stands behind green politics and define the very essence of what green political theory is. It mainly focuses on two different facets which are the survival of the natural ecosystem as a whole and consequently the continuation of the homosapiens. How humans act politically impacts our nature and subsequently the survival of our species. Green theory articulates politics which is beneficial for nature. The greens use the normative view of political theory. Usually, the normative view focuses on human welfare but the greens focus more on the environmental issues that have an impact on human life in one way or another. Thus, green political theory takes the general political issues and conflicts like freedom, justice, equality, or rights and adds the dimension of green, which is it gives way to the co-dependency of humans with nature.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Green Politics*, green politics fandom, [https://greenpolitics.fandom.com/wiki/Green\\_politics](https://greenpolitics.fandom.com/wiki/Green_politics).

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Vincent, *political concepts* (2003).

### III. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Once upon it was regarded as the radical, reformist, out-of-the-box, new kid on the block idea, in the early 70s. This was the era where people truly acknowledged the need to protect the environment. It was the psychological aftermath of the war that created this backdrop of liberal ideas of spirituality and a more intimate connection with nature. They criticized the industrial revolution. These categories of people were called the "New Left".<sup>5</sup> They were mostly students who expressed their ideologies in form of protests. These worldwide protests were against the proliferation of nuclear power and weapons due to the Cold War between the USA and the Soviet Union. This was the central issue of the people who advocated for the green movement.

#### Origins of Green Political Theory

The "romantic" and unfavorable responses to the Industrial Revolution, which included working class and peasant opposition to capitalism, mechanization and the factory production system, enclosure of common lands, and despoliation of a rural setting and an extension to the French Revolution and a strong opposition to "colonialism" and "imperialism" during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as a concern for global ecological injustice, the "ecological debt" that the majority/"developed" world owes to the majority/"underdeveloped" world, and minority/majority world relations of power, gave rise to this school of thought.

The emergence of "global environmental problems" in the 1980s and 1990s, the growing public perception of a "ecological crisis" in the 1960s, claims of "Limits to Growth" from the 1970s onward, peak oil and climate change in the early years of this century, and more. It came from rising moral sensitivity and awareness of our interactions with the nonhuman world (from the advancement of "animal rights" and "animal welfare" to concepts of "sacredness" and/or intrinsic value for the Earth) and combining progressive social, political, and economic policies with the politics of society's transition to sustainability, particularly the widespread promotion of human rights, socioeconomic equality, and democratization of the state and economy.<sup>6</sup>

Following the Second World War, there was a rise in global awareness of pollution and environmental issues as the post-War economic boom brought both benefits and drawbacks, with environmental issues standing out among the drawbacks. Consequently, the 1960s can be regarded as the era when "modern" environmental consciousness first emerged. The following events were significant in the development of green theory. The starting point of all would be

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<sup>5</sup> James McBride, *How Green-Party Success Is Reshaping Global Politics*, council on foreign relation (May 5, 2022), [www.cfr.org/backgrounders/how-green-party-success-reshaping-global-politics](http://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/how-green-party-success-reshaping-global-politics).

<sup>6</sup> John Barry, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction* 153-178 (4th ed. 2014).

the 1972 United Nations conference on the human environment in Stockholm.<sup>7</sup>

The first green political party was formed in march 1972 called the United Tasmania Group and in May 1972 world's first national green party was formed called the Values Party in New Zealand and Australia.<sup>8</sup>

While contesting in general elections Values Party put forward radical policies such as “Zero Economic Growth, Zero Population Growth and abortion, drug and homosexual law reform.” Even though they didn't win the elections, they made a huge impact. Many Values Party members were involved in movements relating to world peace, women's rights, and the environmental movement. Their work towards

it was in Germany, one of the prominent events in Europe, it was seen that the German green party won representation at the national level in 1980.<sup>9</sup> The same party formed a coalition govt with the social democratic party in 1983. This german green party was instrumental in bringing popularity to the green parties at both national and international level. 2021 saw the best performance ever by the green party.<sup>10</sup>

Later emergence of green politics was seen in the US in form of a gathering held in Massachusetts in 1987. It was held at a national level and more than 600 activists attended it. Its Alaska Green Party becomes the first party to achieve access to the ballot.

In 1992, the earth summit took place in Rio de Janeiro and also where the first planetary meeting of the greens took place. It was here where the first global green statement was issued, “*Experience teaches us that governments are only moved to take environmental problems seriously when people vote for environmental political parties.*” Further, the Greens elaborated on what they stand for that is they condemn all kinds of issues that put a divide among humans like wars, injustice, ethnocentrism, racism, etc.

In 1995, Finland's green party become the first green party to be a part of a cabinet and its leader Pekka Haavisto become the environment minister. In the succeeding year, a green party leader, Ralph Nader becomes a presidential candidate but gets only had access to 22 ballots. He, in, 2000 runs again for the presidency and receives 2.7 percent of the popular votes. the highest a green party has ever achieved in the US.

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<sup>7</sup> Tayyar Ari, *Theories of International Relations- II* (2019).

<sup>8</sup> *history of green party*, Green party of Aotearoa New Zealand [web.archive.org/web/20081010175959/http://www.greens.org.nz/about/history.htm](http://www.greens.org.nz/about/history.htm).

<sup>9</sup> James McBride, *supra* note 4.

<sup>10</sup> David P Conradt, *green party of Germany*, Encyclopedia Britannica (Sept. 27, 2021), [www.britannica.com/topic/Green-Party-of-Germany](http://www.britannica.com/topic/Green-Party-of-Germany).

An international network of green political parties and movements was formed in April 2001, called the Global Greens. It has a total of 87 parties including political parties, associate parties, and observers. They aim to bind all the green parties together and adhere to the principles of participatory / grassroots democracy, non-violence, social justice, sustainable development, respect for diversity, and ecological wisdom.

In 2019, the Austrian green party win 26 seats in the parliament and it is for the first time that a green party enters the government. it joins the conservative coalition in exchange for stronger environmental policies. In the following year, Ireland's green party wins its best-ever election and establishes the government. 2021 marks the best year for the greens of Germany as they join the government of the chancellor, winning six cabinet seats including that of vice chancellorship and the ministry of foreign affairs.

#### **IV. GLOBAL GREENS FEDERATIONS**

**The Global Greens are organized into four regional federations across the world:**

**Asia Pacific Greens Federation (APGF)** – Found in 2015, the Federation's mission is to support, coordinate, and foster cooperation among its member Green political parties in order to advance and put into practice the Global Greens Charter. It is governed by the APGF council and has monthly meetings. Its congress meets every 5 years. it is led by two co-convenors, the general secretary and the treasurer. There are other members of management and administration who manage day-to-day affairs. The Asia-Pacific Greens Federation officially began with the adoption of the new Constitution, which included new governance provisions reflecting the organization's position within the Global Green movement.<sup>11</sup>

**European Green Party** - The Fourth Congress of the European Federation of Green Parties (EFGP), which drew more than 1,000 delegates, in Rome on February 22, 2004, saw the founding of the European Green Party. This new pan-European party now has the support of 34 Green parties from across the continent. The Greens were the first political party to be established at a continental level. In the years 2004 to 2006, the other political federations in Europe adopted a similar strategy. The European Greens make significant gains in local elections in 2020, winning green mayorships in cities like Lyon, Strasbourg, Besançon, Marseille, and Bourdeaux, among others, in France; Dublin, the capital of Ireland; and Aachen, Cologne, and Bonn, in Germany. The core principles of Green politics, including “environmental responsibility, individual freedom, inclusive democracy, diversity, social

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<sup>11</sup> *what is the asia-pacific greens federation (apgf)?*, The Greens, [greens.org.au/magazine/what-asia-pacific-greens-federation-apgf](https://greens.org.au/magazine/what-asia-pacific-greens-federation-apgf).

justice, gender equality, and nonviolence,” as mentioned in its charter, are upheld by the European Greens.<sup>12</sup>

**Federation of Green Parties of Africa** - The various national Green and environmental parties in Africa are united under the banner of the Federation of Green Parties of Africa. At a summit in Kampala, Uganda, the official alliance, the African Greens Federation (AGF), was established in 2010. The parties that make up the Federation of Green Parties of Africa adhere to the Global Greens Charter as members of that organization, which was created in 2001 in Canberra, Australia. The Rassemblement Des Ecologistes du Burkina Faso is the preeminent green organization in Ouagadougou, the nation's capital, where the organization has its permanent administration. These parties are frequently not well-liked in their home nations and have a left-leaning tendency, however, this is not always the case. Similar principles as the above-mentioned green parties. One of the coalition's objectives is to support these parties in their efforts to join parliamentary or legislative bodies in order to increase their political clout. The Democratic Green Party of Rwanda achieved this feat in 2018, garnering a large enough share of the vote to secure its place in the Rwandan parliament.<sup>13</sup>

**Federation of the Green Parties of the Americas** - it was founded in 2001 when the Association of State Green Party separated from the Green Party of the USA, a federation of Green state political parties in the US is known as the Green Party of the United States (GPUS). GPUS became a vital national green organization. “Environmentalism, nonviolence, social justice, participatory democracy, grassroots democracy, anti-war, anti-racism, anti-capitalism, libertarian socialism, and eco-socialism” are all championed by the party. The party is typically regarded as being on the left wing of the political spectrum. They support abortion and single-payer healthcare. They stand for tuition-free college at public universities. They developed a green new deal which includes clean energy etc. they are against the death penalty. They are for the legalization of marijuana. They stand for LGBTQ+ rights of marriage and healthcare.<sup>14</sup>

## V. THEORISTS OF GREEN POLITICS

There are many theorists of green politics such as Ernst Friedrich Schumacher (1911–77) who advanced a “Buddhist economic philosophy” and stressed the importance of morality. Arne Naess (1912–2009) was influenced by Gandhi, Buddha, etc, and emphasized ecology be equal to human welfare. Like them, Andrew Dobson in an interview discusses his journey and

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<sup>12</sup> *Europeans Greens* <https://europeangreens.eu/>.

<sup>13</sup> *African Greens* [www.africangreens.org/welcome-african-greens-official-website](http://www.africangreens.org/welcome-african-greens-official-website).

<sup>14</sup> *Green party US* [gp.org/cgi-bin/vote/propdetail?pid=835](http://gp.org/cgi-bin/vote/propdetail?pid=835).

thoughts on green politics, its evolution, and its future which is discussed below.

**Andrew Dobson** is one of the key figures who developed research in the area of green political theory. In an interview with the National Sciences Society, Dobson elaborated on his outlook on the trajectory of green politics. His first brush against such political ideology was in an article that was published in a journal of radical philosophy. It was for the first time he read something that talked about the non-human natural world being a part of politics or being a political actor. At that time, he was just getting started in his career in teaching political ideologies in Oxford and he found that there is no textbook on such ideology. This will lead him to write his own book on green politics called “Green Political Thought”.<sup>15</sup>

In the same time many advocates of green politics emerged in Australia and United States who were diving deep into this topic of green political theory. While a lot of philosophical research was going on ecology at that period, Dobson along with Robert Goodin, Robyn Eckersley and many others were on the political theoretical side of it. People around the world were working on this same ideology but with varying viewpoints. This was all much disorganised. They later established a journal called “Environmental Politics” in 1992.<sup>16</sup>

There was rise of environmental politics and ecologism at once and the distinction between them was cleared by Dobson. According to him core issues of ecologism is the intrinsic value of non-human factors which no other ideology has found out and there are limits to its growth. While environmentalism has a managerial approach to its issues, ecologism asks for change in society and change in our relationship with the non-human natural world. The thread of commonality is the commitment to grow their ideas and an anthropocentric understanding of politics. We are going through the second wave of ecologism as more and more people are writing about it. The core belief of ecologism would be that if we are seeking real solutions for the betterment of the world then an Ecostate is an ideal way to go. These ideas are can be found in the writings of John Barry. The advent of the second wave also includes the idea of our recovery from decentralization. Greens are aiming for economic ecologism as well. Ecologism is the ideology that needs as much science as it needs politics. Understanding the science behind this ideology is very much critical, unlike any other political ideology.<sup>17</sup>

The main topic of Dobson’s research is environmental citizenship. This is one of the conclusions conceived through ecologism. To implement any policy there are two tools, one is incentives

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<sup>15</sup> *Andrew Dobson: trajectories of green political theory*, Natures sciences societies [www.cairn.info/revue-natures-sciences-societes-2014-2-page-132.htm](http://www.cairn.info/revue-natures-sciences-societes-2014-2-page-132.htm).

<sup>16</sup> *Id.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

such as taxes, fines, etc. and the other is “nudging” or behavioral economics. Environmental citizenship provides an alternative to this for changing people’s behavior. It is a challenge to the above two policies. It follows the idea of other regarding which simply means that people doing something to help others, not acting in self-interest which the incentive and nudging policy prescribes. Environmental citizenship stands for the collective good of the community. It is a long-term behavioral change and a slow process to make people understand, it limits growth. That’s why ecology and democracy go hand in hand. Limits to growth and ecocentrism make green political theory different from other ideologies. Speaking of the issues of global depletion of resources, according to William Ophuls, you can’t promise people what you don’t have. It is quite a pessimistic view.<sup>18</sup>

## VI. GREEN POLITICS: REFORMISM OR RADICALISM

John Locke held human beings as “*the masters and possessors of nature.*” The environment has since long been a platform of political debate. This mostly includes the relationship between humankind and nature along with the problems arising from them and how to tackle them. Green politics consists of two distinct traditions, i.e., reformist and radical ecology.

### Reformist Ecology

This type of ecology resonates the main features of capitalist modernity, such as materialism and economic growth. Hence, it is often called modernist ecology or shallow ecology.

Reformist ecology finds influence from utilitarianism which is a theory of morality which allows actions which give happiness and pleasure while denying those which cause harm and unhappiness, thus, aiming for the welfare of a society.<sup>19</sup>

The most essential feature of reformist ecology is that there are “limits to growth”. Damage or degradation of the environment is an externality or “social cost”.<sup>20</sup> These costs are taken into account by the ecologists in order to create a balance between sustainability and modernization as they wish to save the urban-industrial society and attempt to solve its problems.<sup>21</sup>

An example of a reformist solution is green capitalism which basically tries to adjust the damage done by markets to the environment by implementing schemes like green taxes.

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<sup>18</sup> Id.

<sup>19</sup> Carla Tardi, *Utilitarianism: What It Is, Founders, And Main Principles* (Nov. 23, 2020), [www.investopedia.com/terms/u/utilitarianism.asp](http://www.investopedia.com/terms/u/utilitarianism.asp).

<sup>20</sup> Andrew Heywood, *Global Politics* 388 (2011).

<sup>21</sup> William B Devall, *REFORMIST ENVIRONMENTALISM*, 6 Department of Sociology, Humboldt State University 129

## Radical Ecology

In contrast to the other form of ecology, radical ecology consists of wider, more revolutionary approach. Instead of fixing capitalist modernity, it directly views modern institutions as the main cause of environmental destruction. It is also known as a form of social ecology as it attempts to balance nature and human activities through social constructs.

1. **Eco-socialism** is the critique of capitalism, especially commodification and ownership of private property because this divides nature.<sup>22</sup> It is an ideology that merges aspects of socialism with green politics and contains anti-globalization sentiments.
2. **Eco-anarchism** is the critique of authority and hierarchy. So, a balance between humanity and nature can be achieved after removing state domination on individuals and instead going for self-sufficient communities.
3. **Eco-feminism** is the critique of patriarchy in relation to environment. According to this concept, the issues of gender equality and environmental degradation are tied together by a single cause, i.e., patriarchal dominance.<sup>23</sup> Abolition of patriarchy is essential for establishing a balance between humankind and nature.

Hence, it is undeniable that Green Politics borrow principles from both reformism and radicalism. Radicalism in green politics aims at fixing modern institutions by changing values, lifestyles, social and political structures to preserve the eco-system.<sup>24</sup> Reformism emphasizes the co-dependency of conventional issues with nature and aims can be achieved through coalitions with existing structures. This principle is put forward by many reformist writers such as R. E. Goodin, John Barry and John Dryzek.<sup>25</sup>

## Advantages, Disadvantage & Consequences of green politics

Green politics is quite different from other political ideologies as it connects the people and the environment. It analyses the effect that human activity has on the planet and questions it through the political arena. Green parties generally discuss various social and economic issues while primarily committing to the previously discussed four pillars. These pillars are ecological sustainability, grassroots democracy, social justice and non-violence.

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<sup>22</sup> Kaleigh Rogers, *What Is Ecosocialism?*, (Oct. 10, 2018), [www.vice.com/en/article/zm988y/ecosocialists-believe-the-only-way-to-save-the-planet-is-to-abandon-capitalism](http://www.vice.com/en/article/zm988y/ecosocialists-believe-the-only-way-to-save-the-planet-is-to-abandon-capitalism).

<sup>23</sup> Sarah Regan, *What Is Ecofeminism? Understanding The Intersection Of Gender & The Environment*, Mindbodygreen (June 20, 2020) [www.mindbodygreen.com/articles/ecofeminism-history-and-principles](http://www.mindbodygreen.com/articles/ecofeminism-history-and-principles).

<sup>24</sup> Peter Barnett, *An introduction to Green Politics*, Green World (Jan. 16, 2015), [greenworld.org.uk/article/introduction-green-politics](http://greenworld.org.uk/article/introduction-green-politics).

<sup>25</sup> Vincent Andrew, *Green Political Theory*, Manchester University Press (2018).

Some basic goals of green parties universally are:

1. To eradicate war with the denial of the weapons industry, especially nuclear weapons.
2. Criticism of global trade arrangements, consumerist industry and capitalistic society.
3. A strive to achieve decentralized decision-making to create a self-sufficient and independent society.
4. Identify and fix various social issues like justice, racial and gender equality, economic growth etc.

It has been observed that the democratic systems around the world have been declining. The Freedom house, a US based non-profit which conducts research on democracy, claims that the world is about 15 years into a “democratic recession”. This is due to populist leaders with unchecked power which prioritise the interests of their supporters while sacrificing those of minorities and non-supporters or foes.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic induced economic and social worldwide disorder and the feeble response from the democracies has made people further lose faith in them. So, many mainstream parties have been losing support over the past few years.

As a result, green parties have benefitted from this dissatisfaction as they are able to attract supporters with their unique political approach. Green parties have come a long way, from being small protest parties with dispersed movements to gaining a position of influence in various regions of the world. They have managed to make space in the legislature of many countries, and emerge out of the sidelines.

How the parties use this new-found power will define the turn green politics will take in the upcoming years.

### **Positives of Green Politics**

Normally, there’s a common misconception that green parties are single issue parties, that their primary field of practice is just the issue of the environment. Most people are unaware about the detailed policies and aims of these parties which cover almost every aspect of life. Green parties aim for a change in the prevalent societal systems along with economic and political aspects.

Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, green parties have been increasingly breaking into mainstream politics, especially in Europe. In 2004, Indulis Emsis, became the world’s first

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<sup>26</sup> Freedom House, *Democracies in Decline*, Freedom House (July 14, 2022), [freedomhouse.org/issues/democracies-decline](https://freedomhouse.org/issues/democracies-decline).

Green politician to lead a country, by becoming the prime minister of Latvia.

With the continued loss of interest in mainstream parties, green parties have found their way into national governments in many countries like Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Ireland, and Luxembourg.

Sebastian Kurz, an Austrian right-wing politician, along with his new green partners, have put forward a coalition plan in an attempt to decarbonize the economy. By 2040, they aim to turn Austria on a path to becoming climate-neutral, i.e., balance greenhouse emissions by taking steps to absorb or entirely eliminate the emitted.<sup>27</sup>

World leaders should embrace the green policies and their criticism of growth-oriented capitalism filled with socio-economic inequalities. Green politicians have explained the obstructive outcomes of these inequalities such as poverty, increase in crime, psychological and health problems, family or domestic problems and public disorders. These all arise from income gaps and lack of equal opportunities in the society.<sup>28</sup> Greens seek to address the root causes of these.

The green path to tackling these problems of inequality are the redistribution of existing wealth and a commitment to sustainable development in economic and social fields. They encourage a shift of focus from money and material needs to a focus on human welfare and well-being.

### **Negatives and Criticism of green politics**

Although many people are attracted by the unique ideology and policies put forward by green parties, in extreme times, such as during recession, people are more focused on the immediate problems and often overlook environmental and related issues. Hence, they seek parties whose policies provide necessary relief instead of green parties.

Any political party would prove to be inefficient if they don't stick to the principles that they preach. So it all comes down to how the leaders will implement their policies, especially the ones demanding more and immediate attention such as the climate change policy.

In Latin America, green polity has achieved a significant position in the legislatures of several countries but hasn't always been beneficial. For instance, The "Ecological Green Party of Mexico", which is a green-conservative political party, has taken conservative

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<sup>27</sup> *Austria backs green agenda with new coalition deal*, BBC News (Jan. 2, 2020), [www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50969001](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50969001).

<sup>28</sup> John Barry, *Towards a Green Republicanism: Constitutionalism, Political Economy, and the Green State*, 17 *The Good Society* 4 (2008).

stands on many issues like opposing same-sex marriage and supporting death penalty.<sup>29</sup> This is a backward approach which goes against the basic principle of social change.

According to Jigs Gardner in his article, “Understanding Greenism”, he criticises Greenism by terming it to be the furthest away from environmentalism. He says, “*Environmentalism is an evolutionary process seeking appropriate solutions to tangible problems. Greenism exploits such problems to prevent their rational solution.*” He is extremely critical about the Greens and claims that they hinder solutions to problems by conducting endless hearings, petitions and protests. According to him, they devote a lot of their energy into furnishing fallacious and non-existent problems which require a lot of money to solve.<sup>30</sup>

The opposition to the Green parties have been painting them as wealthy and young urban residents who demand a lot of time and money for problems which are unimportant. Greens have been working hard to rid themselves of this stereotypical image and win the confidence of the middle class voters.

However, their relevance still remains low in Southern and Eastern Europe, according to studies. This is because in these countries, growth and development is rather slow and there is a huge number of unemployed people and an impoverished population. Even in rich countries, such as Germany, greens don't have popular support due to their criticism of industrial development. In order to regain trust, they must learn to put forward their ideas and policies in a better and more accommodative way.

According to Jan Dusik, the director of United Nations Environment Programme's Europe office, the green economy aims to achieve growth without harming the environment. But to transfer our current society, our leaders need to further embrace this change, i.e., political will is required. “The major obstacle at the moment is political will, the readiness of leaders to embrace this change and show the direction that the people and the private sector should follow.”<sup>31</sup>

The greens have recognised the flaws of our prevalent system since a long time and have tried to make amends. The environmental movement has had, and continues to play, a valuable role in damage limitation, but it may be fighting a losing battle.<sup>32</sup> Changing the entire system of

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<sup>29</sup> Tim Johnson, *For Mexico's Ecologist Green Party, 'Green' Mostly Means Money, Not Environment*, McClatchy Newspapers (June 18, 2012) [www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/world/article24731080.html](http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/world/article24731080.html).

<sup>30</sup> *What is Greenism? Pros and cons of the Green Movement*, The Newz Box (Aug. 7, 2020), [thenewzbox.in/lifestyle/fashion/what-is-greenism-pros-and-cons-of-the-green-movement/](http://thenewzbox.in/lifestyle/fashion/what-is-greenism-pros-and-cons-of-the-green-movement/).

<sup>31</sup> Steve Gillman, *If we want a green economy we need greener politics Jan Dusik, UN Environment*, Research and Innovation (Nov. 2, 2016), [ec.europa.eu/research-and-innovation/en/horizon-magazine/if-we-want-green-economy-we-need-greener-politics-jan-dusik-un-environment](http://ec.europa.eu/research-and-innovation/en/horizon-magazine/if-we-want-green-economy-we-need-greener-politics-jan-dusik-un-environment).

<sup>32</sup> Peter Barnett, *supra* note 22.

politics and pushing it towards a greener direction is not an easy or quick task. It will be an extremely slow and persevering process.

## VII. GREEN POLITICS IN INDIA

Mahatma Gandhi embraced green politics even way back in the day. He practiced all the principles of green politics, i.e., non-violence, social justice, sustainability, grass-roots democracy, and ecological wisdom. These were same policies adopted by the first Global Greens Congress at Canberra, Australia in 2001.<sup>33</sup>

But even with the Gandhian history, there is no specific green party in India. One of the reasons is probably because, as discussed earlier, single issue parties find it harder to gain the confidence and support of the people. Thus, over time, green politicians began expanding their agenda. “The Greens”, a political party of West Germany emerged in 1980, introducing the four pillars of green politics. This was later expanded to the 6 pillars in 2001 by the Global Greens Congress.

Indian already widely support 4 of the pillars, i.e., social justice, non-violence, grass-roots democracy and respect for diversity. But ecological wisdom and sustainability are yet to be realized and strictly implemented. Hence, although there have been powerful movements like the Narmada Bachao Andolan and the Chipko movement, green politics is still non-existent in the conventional political arena due to a weak commitment to the residual two pillars.<sup>34</sup>

Majority of Indians are so entrenched in run-of-the-mill kind of politics due to neo-liberal economic pressures that they have no time to think differently i.e. from an ecological viewpoint. And those who think about Green politics are not considered as ‘politicians’ in the real sense. This negative attitude sets back the emergence of green policies.

Middle class population is also an important factor in mobilizing green parties. In all successful green parties of Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Latin American countries, there is a good size of middle class voters. India has a sizeable middle class but along with the size, the attitude towards environmental issues is also essential. In the initial years after independence, the attitude of majority of the citizens was careless or denial of environmental issues, which is similar to many other countries. But, over time, the middle class has begun to recognize and engage themselves more in these issues. This is a positive sign for the future of green politics in India.

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<sup>33</sup>Ashok K Lahiri, *Green Politics and the Indian Middle Class*, 50 *Economic and Political Weekly* 35 (2015).

<sup>34</sup> *Id.*

Although the future of any political party, especially in a huge and diverse country like India, is hard to predict. But, with the gradual change in attitude of the people, there is a plausibility for some parties to gravitate towards becoming reformist green parties.

## VIII. FUTURE PROSPECT

There is no doubt green politics have achieved a lot over the decades and become quite prominent in many parts of the world. But they're still dispersed in others. A Green party isn't just a campaign movement or a protest, it is much more. It is an organization consisting of trustworthy and competent people who the citizens believe in and should be willing to vote for. Green politics has proven to be sustainable in the past. In Germany, a green politician from Hesse followed a pragmatic approach towards environmental issue of toxic wastes. Since there wasn't adequate facilities within the state to dispose toxic wastes safely, he started exporting toxic wastes. This approach saw a lot of criticism from other greens but it was in the best interest of the country's sustenance.<sup>35</sup>

Green parties must create a strong link with the people to ensure that the people perceive them as an organization who can run their country. The relationship between poverty and prosperity along with environmental degradation has to be analyzed by green parties to adapt to the needs of the country. Especially with the diversity in the ecosystems and cultures, the potential leaders require to devote a lot of time and patience towards understanding the system.<sup>36</sup>

The Indian government so far has attempted to develop a green vision but it is mostly restricted to water and plastic management and still remains weak at controlling pollution and climate change issues. India must realize green politics to be an essential part of the agenda in order to go on the path of development. In the short term, green policies might slow down economic growth and prove to be expensive but in the long term it would give promising results. For instance, if India moved towards green mode of production for exports, it would attract a lot of western consumers. This would give India an edge over other countries in the manufacture and export of green products.

By the end of this decade, India is likely to exceed China in terms of population, making it the most populous country in the world. Development needs to reflect on the living standards of the people. True development lies within the happiness and well-being of the people of the nation.

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<sup>35</sup>Sara Abraham, *Green politics must be pragmatic to succeed*, (Jan. 31, 1993), [www.downtoearth.org.in/interviews/environment/green-politics-must-be-pragmatic-to-succeed-30587](http://www.downtoearth.org.in/interviews/environment/green-politics-must-be-pragmatic-to-succeed-30587).

<sup>36</sup>Suresh Nautiyal, *Yes, there is a future for Green politics in India*, India Greens Party (Nov. 28, 2017), [indiagreensparty.org/2017/11/28/yes-there-is-a-future-for-green-politics-in-india/](http://indiagreensparty.org/2017/11/28/yes-there-is-a-future-for-green-politics-in-india/).

India's policymakers and leaders must keep in mind the growing population along with the issue of climate change while making plans for the country which should ensure economic and environmental development.<sup>37</sup>

## IX. CONCLUSION

Green politics is a political ideology which aims at economic development while integrating environmental goals. Their goals are often along the lines of the six pillars of social justice, grass-roots democracy, non-violence, respecting diversity, ecological wisdom and sustainability.

Shifting towards a greener economy doesn't mean entirely dismantling the existing system and replacing it with a new system. The shift must be gradual. Political parties generally use environmental concerns as a means to attract voters. As a result, many such agendas don't make it out of the election manifestoes and are confined to the campaigns. Green development does require technological advancements and might strain the country's wealth but it is essential to build a sustainable green economy.

Political will among the leaders and a good attitude of the country's population will act as a catalyst in achieving this. There is a natural obligation on the present generation for the duty of care for the future of the planet. Global green politics is a way of integrating all the countries to fight for a much greener system of development.

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<sup>37</sup> Telangana Today, *Green politics now and in future*, Telangana Today (Dec. 5, 2020), [telanganatoday.com/green-politics-now-and-in-future](http://telanganatoday.com/green-politics-now-and-in-future).