

INDIA AND CLIMATE CHANGE NEGOTIATIONS: A CRITICAL GEO- POLITICAL ANALYSIS

“Sense of Superiority over nature a fundamental mistake, harbinger of
all environmental woes for humanity.”

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ABSTRACT

This research article analyses India's changing involvement in global climate change negotiations, emphasising its geopolitical strategy, national interests, and developmental concerns. India is shifting towards a low-carbon economy while reconciling economic growth and sustainable development. India's position in climate change negotiations is influenced by the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC), highlighting the necessity for developed nations to assume a greater portion of the responsibility in tackling climate change, owing to their historical emissions. The article examines India's negotiation position on significant international platforms, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and emphasises its promotion of climate justice and technological transfers. This paper is based on mixed research method which examines the geopolitical forces influencing India's climate policy, particularly its interactions with China, the U.S., and the European Union, highlighting the complexities and contradictions inherent in its approach. India's leadership in renewable energy, exemplified by projects such as the International Solar Alliance, Lifestyle for the Environment (LIFE) illustrates its commitment to actively participating in global climate governance. The nation's prudent strategy in establishing binding emission targets demonstrates its necessity to reconcile global environmental obligations with domestic economic development and Bhartiya culture.

Key Words: *Anthropocene, Geopolitics, Climate justice, Climate diplomacy, Sustainable development, Energy Security.*

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INTRODUCTION

As We are living in the Anthropocene which is a proposed geological epoch defined by the significant and unprecedented influence of human activities on earth's geology and ecosystems (Davies, 2016, p. 15). India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has been actively supporting concrete measures on a global scale to address climate change. We firmly believe that people and the earth are inherently interconnected, and that the well-being of humans and the natural world are fundamentally intertwined. India is striving to separate economic development from greenhouse gas emissions. India has effectively decreased the amount of emissions produced per unit of GDP by 33 percent from 2005 to 2019, therefore accomplishing the original goal for 2030 outlined in its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) 11 years ahead of schedule. India has made a substantial contribution to climate action not only through its domestic initiatives but also through its international efforts. These include the International Solar Alliance (ISA), Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS), International Big Cat Alliance, and the Green Credit initiative. These initiatives reflect India's commitment to the goal of "One Earth, One Family, and One Future". We are also prioritising the implementation of a development model that combines economic growth with environmental sustainability, sometimes referred to as "economy with ecology". This research paper is based on mixed research method i.e. qualitative and quantitative methods.

Various scientific studies and reports of international organizations and empirical observations are evidence that climate change is the reality of the 21st Century and is most likely occurring but with uncertain overall effects. Over the last three decades, climate change has graduated from an environmental concern to a matter of geopolitics in the twenty-first century. It has come to the center of global geo-political debate bringing together all

the countries and other stakeholders to discuss the strategies to tackle the effects of climate change worldwide. Climate change is a worldwide problem that disregards the boundaries of nations. Greenhouse gas emissions in any location have a global impact on human populations. Hence, this necessitates the implementation of solutions that must be synchronised on a global scale via international collaboration. Consequently, the growing political significance of climate change has elevated its priority in international politics and resulted in more sophisticated stances during international climate talks. The global effort to address global climate change began with the founding of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992. Following then, the UNFCCC has assumed responsibility for coordinating other international climate conferences, mostly held during the yearly sessions of the UNFCCC's COP. Recently, the UNFCCC has successfully secured worldwide representation on this matter. At present, the United States Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has 195 member states, which include the European Union, along with other observer governments. This implies that it encompasses all countries that are members of the United Nations, as well as several countries that are not part of the UN. The goal is to keep greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent any detrimental impact caused by human activities on the climate. The 28th Conference of the Parties (COP 28) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) took place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) from 30 November to 12 December 2023.

The government, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, hailed the final conclusion of COP 28. This decision demonstrates a successful balance between the need for increased ambition in addressing climate change and the requirements for sustainable development and poverty eradication in all nations. India expressed satisfaction with the implementation of the "Loss and Damages Fund" designed to assist poor nations affected by climate change. The introduction of the concept of "transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly, and equitable manner" guarantees that the

choice is in line with scientific principles and is expressed using language that promotes climate justice and fairness. In addition, nations were urged to raise their level of ambition and strengthen their efforts in implementing adaptation measures and providing assistance, in accordance with the global target on adaptation. India now has dedicated missions as part of the National Action Plan on Climate Change. Thus, the decision is in line with India's attitude to adaptability.

India strongly advocates for the principle of equity and climate justice as the foundation for addressing climate change. This can only be achieved if developed nations take a leadership role in tackling the issue. During the COP 28 high-level segment, Mr. Bhupendra Yadav, India's Minister of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, emphasised India's efforts to limit temperature increase by reducing emission intensity well before the target year specified in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which is India's plan for addressing the effects of climate change. India has effectively lowered the intensity of greenhouse gas emissions in relation to its economic development by 33% between 2005 and 2019. This achievement has allowed India to reach its original goal for 2030, as outlined in its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), 11 years earlier than planned. India has surpassed expectations in renewable energy by obtaining 40% of its installed electric capacity from non-fossil fuel sources, which is nine years ahead of the targeted goal for 2030.

The Kyoto Protocol officially established the first practical and legally binding implementation of the UNFCCC. The Kyoto Protocol was established in 1997 and became effective in 2005 after being accepted by 192 Parties (except the United States, which did not ratify it). The agreement required 37 industrialised nations to reduce their emissions by an average of 5% from 1990 levels (8% for the EU) between 2008 and 2012. The other nations did not make specific commitments in terms of numerical targets, but they participated in the process via the use of incentives. The Doha conference prolonged the Protocol for a further commitment

period, requiring developed countries to decrease their greenhouse gas emissions by a minimum of 18% from 2013 to 2020 in comparison to the levels recorded in 1990. However, in the end, the Protocol revealed its limitations when Russia, Japan, New Zealand, and Canada withdrew their support. Therefore, it was crucial to find a strong, enforceable, and practicable legal tool capable of accomplishing the goals outlined in the Protocol. From the COP15 in Copenhagen in 2009 until the COP20 in Lima in 2014, the conferences sought to achieve an agreement on the adoption of a “protocol, another legal instrument, or an agreed outcome with legal force” that would replace the Kyoto Protocol. To achieve this goal, the Parties have affirmed their commitment to limiting global warming to a level that is lower than 2°C. They made progress in obtaining funds for the necessary steps and therefore established the foundation for the COP21 meeting in Paris in 2015. The Paris agreement is generally seen as a notable accomplishment in the field of international diplomacy and political leadership, especially in the context of worldwide efforts to tackle climate change. However, the recent decision taken by former US President Donald Trump to withdraw from the Paris Agreement increases the uncertainties over the efficacy of global climate governance and climate cooperation.

Throughout the 25 years of UN climate change discussions, it has been recognised that the effective mitigation of global warming can only be achieved with the active involvement of all nations that contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions in a collaborative endeavour. However, before to the Paris Accord in 2015, all previous efforts in this regard had been insufficient. Although some progress has been made in recent COPs and several countries have initiated domestic and bilateral efforts, the overall evaluation of these negotiations since the 1992 UNFCCC shows that these summits have not successfully united all stakeholders to reach consensus on shared objectives and a comprehensive policy framework. Consequently, they have not fully achieved the desired goals of climate diplomacy.

This study aims to enhance comprehension of the ongoing

advancements and endeavours in climate change negotiations and diplomacy within the UNFCCC framework. Additionally, it seeks to offer insight into the factors that have resulted in the inability of different stakeholders to reach consensus on shared targets and policies. Although much study has been conducted on the causes and consequences of climate change, there has been less discourse about the methods used in international climate change diplomacy over the years. This research aims to fill this gap.

CLIMATE CHANGE NEGOTIATIONS: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The emergence of climatic talks and concern for the change in climate can be traced back to the Stockholm conference in 1972 where the word environment was used the first time which shifted the focus from nature to the “environment”. The Stockholm Declaration on Human Environment (UN 1972) was the first attempt to put some norms regarding the protection of the environment and it was the major shift (a paradigm) in law-making towards the environment.

There was a trend in terms of setting norms and legal restrictions for the protection of environment after the 1972 conference and environment and its protection became the center point in all the policy frameworks and everything was seen through the frames of environment and its protection became the trend but it had its limitations as protection of the environment was antipode to the routes of modernization adopted after the industrial revolution. Several conventions and the discovery of new levels, particularly the depletion of the ozone layer, prompted the development of more stringent conventions to protect the environment. The most significant ones include the Washington Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (1973), the Geneva Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (1979), the 1985 Vienna Convention, and the 1987 Montreal Protocol on the Control of Gases that Deplete the Ozone Layer. The notion of sustainability was introduced for the first time in the 1987 report of the Brundtland Commission, titled “Our Common Future.” This concept reached its peak with the approval of the UN

Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992, also known as the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro.

The adoption of the UNFCCC framework in 1992 led to the emergence of new ways of thinking regarding how the environmental problems would be tackled, the burden-sharing mechanism and which solution is feasible in the regional context in different parts of the world. This chapter mainly debates the routes of the development of climate change discussions under the UNFCCC and also in the pre- UNFCCC period, focusing on the key discourses, trends, and achievements in setting different norms and rules for the protection of the environment in last three decades. The progress in the emergence of different norms and obligations for the protection of the environment and retard the process of climate change can be categorized into the following sub-phases.

- I. Pre 1990s: Defining the Agenda z
- II. 1990-1995: Constitutional phase: adoption of UNFCCC
- III. 1995-2005: Regulatory Phase: Kyoto Protocol and Beyond
- IV. 2005-2015: Negotiating the Future Climate Regime
- V. Post-2015: Paris agreement and beyond

NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE IN CLIMATE CHANGE NEGOTIATIONS

Environmental degradation because of global climate change has become a worldwide concern. There is no further possibility for arguments over the negative impacts of global climate change on human life in particular and the entire planet in general. Lately, a new argument has begun concerning setting principles and benchmarks for the protection of the environment amongst the developed states and the developing states, and also in recognizing the main perpetrator responsible for the degradation of the environment. The debate between the developed nations and the developing nations – over the issue of identification, limitation and reducing the growing risks and threat

of global climate change – is commonly known as the North- South divide in international environmental politics (Uddin, 2017, p. 106).

Anthropogenic activities, such as deforestation, extensive combustion of fossil fuels, industrialization, and vehicular emissions, are the primary causes of environmental degradation. These activities significantly contribute to the continuous release of greenhouse gases (GHGs), which in turn, intensify the pace of climate change. Compared to the industrialised rich nations in the Northern hemisphere, the less industrialised and economically disadvantaged developing countries in the Southern hemisphere have a little impact on the production of hazardous gases that contribute to environmental deterioration. However, the impacts of environmental deterioration are complex and have several dimensions. While climate change affects both wealthy and impoverished regions, emerging countries in the southern hemisphere are more vulnerable to its overall consequences (Agrawal and Narain, 2003, p. 32).

Therefore, the more important issues and challenges in global climate change politics are: who is meant to come forward to take the responsibility for global climate change, who will be the lead actor for setting the benchmarks for monitoring the ever-increasing emissions of GHGs, and how can the essential activities be applied to prevent the further degradation of the environment? For instance, because of the high per capita income and a luxurious lifestyle, the more industrialized countries of the developed world have a very high level of energy consumption (Ramaswamy, 2017, p. 8). A developed country like the US accounts for four times more carbon emission as compared to developing countries such as China and India, and approximately 30 times more emissions than Kenya. With increasing awareness and increased urgency and criticality of the problem, several countries have decided to step forward to minimize their carbon emissions and thus regulate and monitor the increasing risks associated with the process of global climate change. It is at this stage that the role and contribution of less industrialized, poor developing nations of the south become indispensable (Uddin, 2017, p. 108).

Most of the developing nations believe that that the developed countries of the North are highly industrialized and rich and therefore it is their principal liability to take initiatives for the GHG emissions reductions as they have previously contributed highly in emission amounts of GHGs. Moreover, the poor developing countries of the south should be provided more flexibility in terms of resource usage as it is their right to develop their nation and also their emission rate is relatively low as compared to the developed countries (Parks and Roberts, 2008, p. 18). Nevertheless, the developed nations of North continue to deny this, emphasizing the argument that dynamics, which distinguish the positions of developing states with the developed states of North, are not similar rather different. For instance, according to the developed states, the key features that distinguish the global North and South are the low levels of development, poverty, unemployment, lack of environmental education, lack of awareness and development in the South, and that these are largely accountable for pollution and environmental degradation (Gogus, 2014, p. 4). Hence, developed nations contend that the developing countries in the global South have an equal share of responsibility for global climate change and should be held equally accountable and liable for the issue. This article evaluates the ongoing conflict between the North and South in the field of international environmental politics. By including relevant literature and expertise, it aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of this apparently intractable issue.

UNDERSTANDING NORTH-SOUTH DEBATE

Climate change negotiations are indivisible from the discussions over the North-South divide, including issues regarding the inequity and unfairness to restructure climate change responsibility (Archer, 2010, p. 62). The concept of the “North-South” divide, which refers to the differences between highly developed and industrialised nations in the global “North” and less developed and developing countries in the global “South”, remains a significant aspect of global climate change diplomacy. The global North often includes North America (the United States and Canada), Western Europe, developed regions

of Asia, Australia, and New Zealand. The global South encompasses emerging areas in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America.

The former category mostly includes the western part of the globe and the developed countries whereas the latter group mainly resembles the poor, less industrialized and developing regions. In terms of geographical location, developed states are mainly situated in temperate and arctic regions of the globe, whereas developing countries i.e. global south – are principally located in tropical and sub-tropical parts of the world. The distinctions between the North and the South based on their economic strength, political stability, level of technological advancement and scientific research and other factors are very intractable (Brunner and Streck, 1994, pp. 589-607).

Global climate change negotiation occurs within the context of disparate economic growth between the global north and global south. The terms and criteria included in multinational and bilateral climate change accords strongly prohibit developing nations from adopting and using the technology that was previously applied by industrialised countries during their first stage of industrialization and growth (Calvin, 2008, p. 6). Consequently, countries of the global south—who are still in their initial stages of industrialization and development—fear that committing to the binding emission reduction requirements will hamper the rate of economic development of their respective countries. The more industrialized and politically powerful countries of the Global North hitherto disagree to cut their excess of carbon emissions, except the developing nations of South agree to binding emission reduction requirements on par with developed countries. It implies that global climate change action often tends to compromise the economic development in developing and underdeveloped countries, while several developed countries, accounting for the maximum contribution to global warming and climate change do not necessarily have to go through the complex necessities of initial stages of industrialization (Chakrabarty, 2018, p. 42). Such climate actions make negotiations terms ambiguous and contradictory. Thus, the reason for

the late development of the Global South can be attributed to the system of the international division of labour created by the uneven flow of capital within the core and periphery of the world system (Chakrabarty, 2021, p. 7).

THE PREDOMINANCE OF THE NORTH OVER THE SOUTH IN GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION

A brief glimpse at contemporary global climate change cooperation uncovers the fact that the developing and underdeveloped countries are nevertheless far from achieving parity with developed countries in terms of the level of industrialization. Several global environmental agreements at the beginning excluded developing countries of the Global South from participating in the negotiation talks as well as from membership (Ghosh, 2016, p. 22). Amongst those are predominantly several treaties that have been formulated by major European countries within the framework of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). In the era preceding the Stockholm Convention, worldwide environmental treaties, specifically agreements formulated in the arena of environment protection, indicate clear traces of colonial legacy and still show the European genesis of international environmental law (Hansen, 2014, p. 32). This knowledge also applies also to treaties and agreements in the field of nature conservation (during the 1970s), which still follow the ideal of strict environmentalism, thus extensively overlooking the self-interests and welfare of the indigenous communities of developing countries residing in the natural habitats. As far as present-day international climate change agreements are concerned, the circumstances are quite different. The developing countries of the Global South are participating in the climate change dialogues and negotiation process in even larger numbers as compared to the developed countries. Nevertheless, the Global South, though it may be at par and considered equal to the Global North in an official sense, still awaits to earn the respect of developed states of Global North as an equal partner in the negotiation process (Uddin, 2017, p. 113).

The much-debated concepts of justice and fairness in climate talks,

which can also be discussed in fields such as global economics and trade dynamics, have increased and redefined the significance of the North-South divide in the field of climate diplomacy. The distinction between the Global North and the Global South has been created and shaped by positions about who should bear the costs and expenses of adaptation and mitigation measures of climate change. On the one hand, the Global North claims to pursue a progressive idea of justice and equity, upholding that present generations should not be penalized for the deeds they did not commit (Latour, 2018, p. 21). Besides, the developed states also argue that it would be unjust and prejudiced for present as well as future generations to bear these costs and at the same time unfair, too, that obligatory reductions in carbon emissions would be mandatory for developed states only under the Kyoto Protocol and not for large emitters in the Global South, such as Brazil, China, and India. However, developed states, on the other hand, debate that emission reduction obligations should be applicable to all the member states, irrespective of the past emissions, particularly as several developing nations have increasingly contributed in the huge carbon emissions and consequently should implement considerable mitigation targets at domestic level (Lovell, 2010, p. 42).

The Global South, in contrast, adheres to a conservative and traditional concept of justice and fairness. This concept posits that current generations in developed countries have benefited from the decisions and actions of their ancestors and should consequently be accountable for bearing the associated expenses of global climate change (Malm, 2016, p. 174). Moreover, as the Global North is indebted to the Global South for polluting the global atmosphere, there should also be a well- formulated mechanism of compensation for the developing states. As Stern states, past data reveals that industrialized states of the Global North have exploited more than half of the planet's fossil fuels throughout the past 120 years. Several developing states find it undesirable that their conventional agricultural practices are held responsible for the increased rate of emissions (Stern, 2007, p. 25). As these traditional indigenous practices sustain the livelihood of billions of people, they should be viewed

as different from energy-intensive agricultural practices, animal husbandry, and fossil fuel-based industries in the developed countries, which reveal “luxurious requirements” and also contribute extensively to the emission of GHGs. Moreover, the transfer of technology and other developmental projects undertaken by developed states should not be viewed as a goodwill gesture towards the developing nations, but rather perceived as compensation to be paid by developed countries to the developing countries for the payable by the North to the South for the irreversible damage caused to the global environment (Horn and Bergthaller, 2020, p. 5). The developing countries now also argue that the issue of climate change should not be compared with the traditional development support provided by more industrialized states, especially to the underdeveloped countries, as this will cause inequitable distribution. However, it is essential to define the boundaries of such mandatory commitments to circumvent a “blank check” condition. The notions of justice and fairness in the dissemination of burdens of global warming have been often labelled as “a tricky one practically, philosophically, and politically” (Grubb et. al, 1992, p. 306). Justice and fairness generally refer to distribution and sharing of the costs of adaptation, mitigation, and compensation, which is controversial in both Global North and Global South.

Therefore, in the last two decades, the developed countries of the Global North have dictated several multilateral climate change negotiations. India led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi one among them which will be discussed further. These developed countries predominantly put themselves in a leadership role in these negotiation processes. Thus, most of the least developed and developing countries, being exceedingly dependent on the developed states for the capital requirements and technology transfer, find themselves in the position of having negligible decision making and bargaining power as compared to the Global North. However, in recent years, with the appearance of small coalitions of states having common interests cutting across the conventional boundary of the North-South divide, it has become increasingly challenging for Global North to dominate and control the

proceedings and terms of the negotiations. Such flexible alliances and groups provide even poorer nations with a platform to become an active participant in the negotiation processes (Brunne and Streck, 2013, p. 23).

K. Mickelson has argued that the generally recognised international environmental legislation has been unsuccessful in adequately addressing the concerns and interests of the Third World. According to her perspective, the global South is portrayed as reluctantly involved in environmental systems, rather than being seen as an engaged collaborator in a continuous dialogue about the underlying nature of environmental issues and the required actions to address them. In addition, she has advocated for an integrationist strategy that incorporates the interests of the least developed and developing nations into the mainstream of global climate geopolitics. According to her perspective, it is crucial for researchers, activists, and practitioners in the field to pose the specific inquiries that the Southern approach to international environmental law requires.

THE GROWING INVOLVEMENT OF THE SOUTH IN THE CLIMATE TALKS

The complex and ambiguous nature of issues related to climate change has led to the acknowledgment of the significance of developing states in the process of climate change negotiations. Ignoring the role and participation of developing countries in climate change negotiation talks is no longer a choice for Global North. The absence of binding obligations agreed on climate mitigation and adaptation at COP15 in Copenhagen, Denmark has been rather counteracted for by developing states becoming significantly more participative in the climate mitigation and adaptation negotiations than they had been involved at earlier COP meetings. This progress in climate talks may help in the adoption and signing of a more inclusive mitigation agreement soon. Developing states have established new means to empower themselves and dynamically participate in climate change dialogues, assist in articulating the prime agenda of climate negotiations, and also affect the terms and conditions

of the negotiations. The empowerment of developing states has been attributed to the organizational and structural settings available within the international system. In 1964, the formation of a negotiation vehicle known as the Group of 77 (G 77, presently comprising 133 member countries) has played a significant role in the improved competence of developing states in the negotiation process. In 1972, the UN Conference on the Human Environment held at Stockholm recommended the formulation of climate policies that would not impede the development process (Maslin, 2004, p. 16).

APPROACHES TO BRIDGE THE NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE AND CONCEPTS FOR THEIR IMPLEMENTATION

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

J. Macdonald asserts that solidarity is not just a basic basis of international law, but also a one that is essentially correct. When discussing the concept of solidarity in international law, the author highlights the discussions that took place at the UN General Assembly in 1974, which focused on the New International Economic Order (NIEO). These discussions showed a shared determination to establish a new global economic system based on the principle of solidarity. The Charter on Economic Rights and Duties of States and Declaration on the New International Economic Order (NIEO), both ratified by the General Assembly in 1994, impose an obligation on wealthier nations to actively support the least developed countries (LDCs). Thus, according to the NIEO charter, solidarity is seen as a principle that obligates rich nations to provide support and assistance to the LDCs. Macdonald, however, has challenged this meaning of solidarity. He firmly asserts that it is not possible to impose one-sided commitments based on the idea of solidarity. According to him, the years after the NIEO have shown the basic mistake and unreliability of this approach.

INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

Justice as fairness and equity and distributive justice is more holistic

than justice where it is based on the concept of equality along with fairness. E. Brown Weiss talks about justice among generations and fairness to future generations and this led to the concept of inter-generational equity and it is this sense of justice which enlighten the negotiators to save the environment and resources for the future generation and if that is not done urgently then it will be a huge injustice to the coming generation. According to Franck not only fairness in terms of making laws and negotiations but fairness in terms of its developmental process and terms of outcomes as outcomes are considered are the indicators of fairness. This same concept and forms of justice are found in the studies of Anand where she talked about procedural justice i.e equality and inequality of bargaining power and distributive justice i.e the outcome or inequality in terms of socio-economic and political burden in different societies with different level of development.

This concept of international solidarity and international justice with an emphasis on procedural and substantive equality can be very helpful in bridging the gap between north and south and can lead to the development of some more egalitarian concepts which will lead to a more focused effort on environmental protection.

CONCEPTS

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Rio declaration of 1992 with its principle 5 and 6 emphasized the poverty reduction along with the goal of equality of standard of living among different states and this special priority given to the south block emanates the sustainable development vision, which can lead to narrowing the north-south gap. In its essence sustainable development is a way of achieving progress along with preserving and protecting the environment without compromising the needs of poor countries. Although A. Geisinger considered the concept of sustainable development as a way of imposing a western ideology on the people of the south or developing the world. A balance was sought between

the development requirement and protection of the environment and condition of sustainability became a prerequisite before any development project and environmental protection became an essential part of all socio-economic projects and vice versa. The importance of both protection and development was met with a fine balance as a slight inclination towards development disturbs the balance which will have its repercussions on the development itself as if a free hand to socio-economic development will lead to generating environmental problems which will have further impact on the resources making the process of complicated in further stages and hence by protecting the environment we are protecting the continuation of socio-economic development of a society or in other words making the development sustainable (Muller, 2002, p. 3). The intragenerational equality in development process in which poor states are given preference in development and a compromise was sought where development of poor states would be assisted by the advanced nations and through which intragenerational sustainability could be sought and this was further expanded when intergenerational sustainability was sought where present development should not be carried out compromising the future generation developmental prospects. This intra generation and inter generation equality is the core of any developmental process and hence making the developmental process sustainable spatially and temporally within the threshold of earth's capacity of resource regeneration and pollution dissipation where earth act as a sink of generated environmental waste and this natural process would be assisted by technological growth production. The sustainability concept is both anthropocentric and eco-centric. There is a tinge of deep ecology concept in this expanded form of sustainable development where every life has some intrinsic value and cannot be exploited arbitrarily for the sake of human good (Mann and Wainwright, 1999, p. 13).

COMMON BUT DIFFERENTIATED RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESPECTIVE CAPABILITIES (CBDR-RC)

The principle of common but differentiated responsibility had its roots

from the beginning of the climatic talks and annexure 2 countries in the Kyoto protocol argued over this concept as it allows them to be out of the legal binding circle by giving them the breathing space. At the same time, differentiated responsibility enforces the developed world countries to act as the leaders by initiating the reduction of GHGs as stipulated in the Kyoto protocol. The principle 7 of Rio earth's summit focuses on the cooperative action by the global leaders to protect and restore the health of the living planet. Developed countries accepted the norms of differentiated responsibility as they were considered as the historical polluters and now it's time for them to act as leaders in the environmental fight (UNFCCC 1997). The idea behind CBDR-RC is the equality among unequal and sometimes differential treatment is required to establish the concept of equality whenever individuals are not equally placed. Hence unequal treatment of unequal individuals leads to equality. As countries in developed and developing parts are placed unequally and have different role in the historical degradation of the environment, so placing these countries at the same level will be a huge injustice to the developing part of the world as they were not the frontrunner in creating problems but asked to clear the mess created by the developed part of the world (Michell, 2011, p. 16).

The principle of CBDR-RC helps in bridging the gap of north-south as it put the responsibility of taking actions differentially although the responsibility is common to all the nations but it is also differentiated where different states have different responsibilities and idea of equal treatment under unequal circumstances defeat the idea of justice and equality in certain situations and hence this CBDR saves the world from the huge injustice which would have occurred to the developing part of the world if this principle would not have evolved (Hurell and Sengupta, 2012, p. 482).

Therefore, the developed countries should take responsibility on their shoulders to clear the mess created by them in the process of development. They should act as leaders in the global environmental movements and should be the frontrunners in taking stringent actions, which retard the climate change

phenomena. Along with acting as leaders in taking responsibility for the reduction of GHGs another way of differential treatment is giving long time span and deadline for the parties which are not able to meet the deadline in the stipulated time and this is where it is required to give different time spans to different states as they have different technology to achieve those targets and differing local circumstances. But such a time frame should not be too long where it defeats the ultimate purpose of the protocol (Morrison, 1999, p. 42).

The CBDR-RC favour the developing world by giving differential treatment and this positive discrimination of the developing world is bridging the north-south divide and paving the path of combating the climate change with different responsibility although having common goals of both the developed and developing world (Soroos, 2001, pp. 7-8).

PROCEDURAL JUSTICE AND EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION

Along with benign discrimination, equitable participation is required to bridge the gap of north-south where all the parties have equal say in decision making irrespective of their socio-economic conditions and this is what is termed as democratic law-making where the leaders are chosen to bridge the gap of north-south. Equitable participation means that all the parties have just and fair share in all the environmental negotiations and decision-making processes (Bondansky, 1994, p. 43). So how to achieve this just and fair participation and one way is to give one state one vote logic irrespective of population, size, and economic and social condition. This following of democratic principle applies to even those countries who are against the democratic ideals at their national levels such as authoritarian states and one-party communist states. There are differences in states in terms of population size, power and wealth and thus according to D. Bodansky's view, there is neither an intrinsic nor an equitable reason to treat states as equal. He questioned the idea of the unequal population but equal votes sometimes the difference is 1000 times between the two states say for example India and some island state and he questioned the logic behind treating these states equally with an equal share in voting.

There are arguments like benign discrimination where the vulnerability of island states due to environmental degradation is more and hence they should have equal say in policymaking and law formulation. The voting should be designed in such a way that both groups have equal say, which depicts just and fair procedure (Pearson, 2011, p. 23).

INDIA AND CLIMATE CHANGE NEGOTIATIONS

India has generally been at the forefront in the Climate Change negotiations like the Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). India has also taken several initiatives and pledges over the years for ensuring Climate Justice. However, with a long development path ahead, India has adopted a cautious approach in the recent climate change negotiations at the COP 28 to protect its own national interest recently held in Dubai, UAE.

LEADERSHIP ROLE OF INDIA

1. **Innovative Policy Initiatives-** The International Solar Alliance (ISA), Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA), Green Credit Initiative (GCI) showcase India's proactive role in fostering international cooperation for sustainable energy solutions.
2. **Renewable Energy Leadership-** India has enhanced its renewable energy targets to 500 GW by 2030. This has inspired the "Global Renewables and Energy Efficiency Pledge" at COP 28.
3. **Ambitious INDC Targets-** The ambitious Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) targets adopted by India has nudged developed nations to take up more ambitious targets. e.g. Mission Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) of India. It has been estimated that 2 billion tonnes of CO₂ emissions can be reduced through adoption of LiFE-aligned measures worldwide.

4. **Commitment to the Principles of Climate Justice-** India has consistently advocated for the principles of “common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, polluters pay principle, compensation for loss and damage” to be the guiding light in all climate change negotiations. India’s stance has aimed for equity in sharing the burden of climate action.

WHAT ARE INDIA’S INITIATIVES TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

Panchamrit- India has presented the following five nectar elements (Panchamrit) of India’s climate Action under the leadership of our Prime Minister Narendra Modi:

1. Reach 500 GW Non-fossil energy capacity by 2030.
2. 50 % of its energy requirements from renewable energy by 2030.
3. Reduction of total projected carbon emissions by 1 billion tonnes from now to 2030.
4. Reduction of the carbon intensity of the economy by 45 % by 2030, over 2005 levels.
5. Achieving the target of net zero emissions by 2070.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The objective is to raise awareness among public representatives, government agencies, scientists, industry, and communities about the dangers of climate change and strategies to mitigate them.

WHAT MORE CAN INDIA DO TO COMBAT THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

1. **Enhancing Carbon Sequestration-** India may increase its capacity for carbon sequestration by extending its forest and tree coverage, rehabilitating degraded areas, encouraging agroforestry, and implementing low-carbon

agricultural techniques.

2. Driving India's Green Transportation Revolution- It is necessary to encourage the use of electric cars (EVs) by creating a strong network of charging stations and providing incentives to promote the adoption of EVs.
3. Climate Smart Agriculture- By using technology-driven solutions like remote sensing, Internet of Things (IoT) devices, and AI-based analytics, we can effectively optimise resource utilisation, decrease water usage, and improve crop output.

CONCLUSION

We are fortunate to belong to a culture that places great importance on living in perfect harmony with the environment as a core aspect of our beliefs. Let us make sure that every modest action we do in our everyday lives contributes to the preservation of environment and natural resources. When we only discuss climate change, it creates the impression that we are motivated by a desire to protect the conveniences of our way of life. However, when we discuss climate justice, we are expressing our awareness and determination to safeguard the future of impoverished individuals from the dangers posed by natural calamities. We consider the preservation of the environment to be a fundamental belief. The presence of natural resources may be attributed to the diligent conservation efforts of our ancestors. We must ensure that our future generations are treated in the same manner. As the current generation, it is our duty to serve as custodians of the abundant natural resources for future generations. Climate change is an urgent and significant worldwide problem. It necessitates a unified effort from all humans and a thorough and inclusive reaction. In India, there has been a profound connection between spirituality and environment since ancient times. The matter at hand is not just focused on climate change; it encompasses the concept of climate justice. Addressing climate change requires ingenuity, teamwork, and determination to enact the necessary changes for the betterment of the globe. Contemporary society acknowledges that lifestyle has a significant part in climate change. India has suggested a unifying initiative consisting just a single word. The phrase

“LiFE” stands for Lifestyle for Environment. Today, it is imperative that we unite and advance LiFE as a collective endeavour.

It can be summed up by one of the most impactful quotes on climate change comes from the former secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon: “Climate change does not respect border; it does not respect who you are - rich and poor, small and big. Therefore, this is what we call ‘global challenges,’ which require global solidarity.”

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