

India's National interests in Climate Change Regime

Mahendra Kumar Meena

Assistant Professor (Political Science)

Department of Political Science, Shri Govind Guru Government College, Banswara

Abstract

In international politics, achieving, maintaining, securing and enhancing the national interests is an ultimate goal of foreign policy and therefore foreign climate policy is not an exceptional. The foreign climate policy also executed with the aim to secure, maintain and enhance the national interests associated with the international climate regime. The climate change regime has also been turning as the conflict of national interests of countries. Climate change is real; its certainty is well established and unanimously accepted by the world. Despite this fact, different national interests of countries are big challenge for global collective efforts. The success of the climate regime is largely depends on the compromisation and articulation of different national interests in the regime. In presented research paper a sincere effort has been taken to identify India's national interests associated with the international climate change regime.

Keywords: foreign Policy, Climate Change, National Interests, International Climate Regime, International Politics.

Introduction

Often, national interests are defined as the goals of foreign policy in international relations. However, it is always difficult to precisely define and identify national interests of a country as they are dynamic in nature and subject to change under the influence of international circumstances. The climate change regime is also a battlefield of national interests where each country is marching to achieve the common and unanimous goal of protecting the earth from getting dangerously warm, but their efforts are vary in intensity and predominately guided by their enshrined national interests. It is relevant here to examine the concept of national interests, albeit in brief.

Van Dyke defined national interests "as an interest which the states seek to protect or achieve in relation to each other."¹

Morgenthau defined as "National Interest is the political tradition and the total culture context within which a nation formulates its foreign policy".²

In its simplest form, the national interest is the perceived needs and desires of one sovereign state in relation to the world policies, nations competing and opposing each other for power. Each country pursue to protect their physical, political, economic and cultural identity against intrusion by other countries.³

The definitions mentioned above, collectively draw a conclusion that national interests are goals of foreign policy that have to be secure, maintain and enhance in relation to other countries. India's foreign climate policy cannot be assumed as working in isolation rather it has to be seen in broader context of foreign policy. Therefore India's foreign climate policy is aiming to secure its specific interests associated with the climate regime. In context of climate change regime, India's national interests have not been officially disclosed by government and it is difficult to explicitly identify and isolate them from the broad spectrum of national interests of the country. However, fair indications, in this regard, can be drawn from the Indian position, role and stand in global negotiations under the auspices of the UNFCCC.

Development

Climate change is well established fact and various IPCC reports have been proved it beyond any reasonable doubts that it is attributed to anthropogenic emission. The Western model of development is

GDP driven and economic growth is fuelled by intensive use of fossil fuel which resulted in huge carbon stock in the atmosphere. The Southern countries, which are commonly referred as developing countries, home of billions of poor people, still struggling to provide basic human needs to their citizens. For developing countries, economic growth is inevitable to provide an essential minimum level of living standard. Therefore the issue of climate change is closely linked with development and to avert climate change drastic reduction in GHGs emission is the only solution.

Apparently, the equitation looks quite simple but, indeed, very complex in nature, especially in context of developing countries. Mr. Srikant has rightly pointed out in his words:-

“While achieving ‘Development’ remains as major challenge of the developing countries; most of them are not in a position to ensure basic need such as food, shelter, clothing and minimum ‘standard’ of living to all of their citizens. Getting rid from poverty, employment, literacy, lack of basic access to primary health care and education, free from malnutrition, stabilizing population, reduction in infant mortality rate, ensuring safe drinking water and sanitation; still remains far off for the more than the 90% population of the world today.”⁴

From Indian perspective, it was well recognized that development should be the primary concern rather than climate change. Mrs. Gandhi said “poverty is the greatest polluter” this statement was recognized as the voice of developing countries and laid down the foundation stone of India’s foreign climate policy.

From the beginning of climate change regime, India’s foreign climate policy has been consistently focused on the development and economic growth to eradicate poverty and for social development. The Former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh Said, “For a poor country like ours, development and eradication of poverty is the supreme concern. So we have to marry the concern of management of global climate with the concern for development, for removal of poverty.”⁵

India is the home of around 17.5% of the world population, while accounts only 2.4% of the world surface area. Around 30% of global poor houses in India; around 24% of global population without electricity living in India; around 92 million people have no access to safe drinking water. In 2011, the annual consumption of energy (average) was merely 0.6 tons of oil equivalents (toe) per capita as compared to 1.88toe of global average in terms of per capita.⁶ The domestic economic and social aspects of development (life expectancy, education level and incomes etc.) are denoted by Human Development Index (HDI) which globally ranked India at 135 positions out of 187 countries with a HDI of 0.586 in 2013. The Human Development Report released on 24th July 2014 by the UNDP said that India was the lowest performing country among the BRICS in all categories except life expectancy which was lower in S. Africa due to the HIV epidemic. The report placed India under medium human development group with HDI 0.614> India HDI 0.586; again the South Asian average 0.588 was also greater than India’s HDI.⁷

According to the World Economic Outlook (2015) released by International Monetary Fund (IMF), in 2014, India’s GDP (nominal) per capita was \$1627 compared to \$1508 in 2013. Despite the fact that India is 9th largest economy of the world, it was ranked 145 position on the basis of GDP (nominal) per capita due to its huge population around 1026 billion. India’s per capita income is 6.69 times lower in comparison of world’s average of \$10880.

India is 9th largest economy of the world; however, wide social and economical disparities still exists amongst its regions and people. Around 30% of population (363 million) live in poverty, around 5% of the population (aged 15 year and above) have no employment and around 1.77 million people is homeless. India has only 917Kwh electricity consumption per capita which is barely 1/3 of the world average consumption.⁸

India is a rapidly growing country and it is expected that its population will substantially increase in coming years. The increase in population will put pressure on every sector of economy. From agriculture production to electric production and infrastructure, every sector has to grow to meet the need and demand of population. Therefore, enormous development is the only solution to meet the increase demand of growing population.

Following key micro indicators denotes the future needs of India with growing population and urbanization.

Table 1.1: Population Growth, GDP and Growth in Electric Demand

Indicators	India2014	India2030
Population(billion) ^a	1.2	1.5
Urban population(million) ^b	377(2011)	609
GDP@2011-12 price(trillion) ^c	INR106.44, USD 1.69	INR 397, USD 6.31
Electricity Demand(Twh) ^c	776(2012)	2499

Sources: a-population Foundation of India, b-Un World Urbanization prospects, c-Government India. Data quoted in INDC.

The predictions are very clear that India will be large in every aspect of development and to support this huge requirement of development and economic growth, India needs consistent and secure energy supply. In fact, economic growth in term of GDP is inevitable for the development of every human aspect and economic growth depends upon energy availability. Thus, economic growth, development and energy security are correlated. This correlation is explored in following section.

Energy Development Linkage

Energy and development are strongly correlated to each other, in fact , energy is a prerequisite to the development and economic growth. Every aspect of development; housing, infrastructure, manufacturing, education, life expectancy, health,, mining, transportation, agriculture require energy. Energy can be produce from various sources; broadly divided into conventional sources like coal, wood and oil (emission intensive but cheaply available) and non conventional or renewable like solar, hydro and wind (expensive but nearly zero emissions).

The common form of energy which is widely used is electricity and largest part of fossil fuel is used to produce electricity. Therefore, to explore the linkage between development and energy, data related to electric consumption, development (in HDI) and economic growth (in GDP) is significant, presented below in a table.

Table 1.2: Correlation of Electric Consumption with HDI and GDP (nominal) 2014

Country	E. Consumption(Kwh) Per Capita*	HDI**	GDP in \$US per capita***
Canada	15546	0.919	50397
USA	12987	0.918	54596
Australia	10059	0.937	61219
Germany	7035	0.924	47590
France	6938	0.894	44538
UK	5130	0.908	45653
S.Africa	4198	0.665	6482
China	3927	0.734	7589
Brazil	2601	0.754	11604
India	806	0.615	1627

Sources: *Statistictimes; **World Bank; *** World Bank

The data presented in table 1.2 clearly shows that countries with higher per capita electric consumption have higher HDI and their GDP per capita is also on higher side. On the other hand, developing countries are on lower side of per capita electric consumption with lower HDI and lower per capita GDP. It becomes clear that these three indicators are positively related to each other. Girish Sant and Ashwin Gambhir has elaborated these correlation as:-

“These linkages are strong but also somewhat flexible. It is correctly argued that GDP growth in itself is an insufficient measure of development. Special policies are required for eliminating hunger and poverty from the lives of large section of the population, however, an increase in GDP is an important part of poverty reduction. Productive employment is associated with increased income and increased consumption of goods and services, both of which require increased energy use.”⁹

It is estimated that in 2030, India’s population will be around 1.5 billion and approx 609 million people will live in urban areas. In this scenario, consistent energy supply is necessary to support India’s future growth. In Indian perspective, which is fairly relevant to other developing countries also, the real challenge is associated with the emission of energy sources as most of the developing nations heavily rely on the fossil fuel for their energy demand.

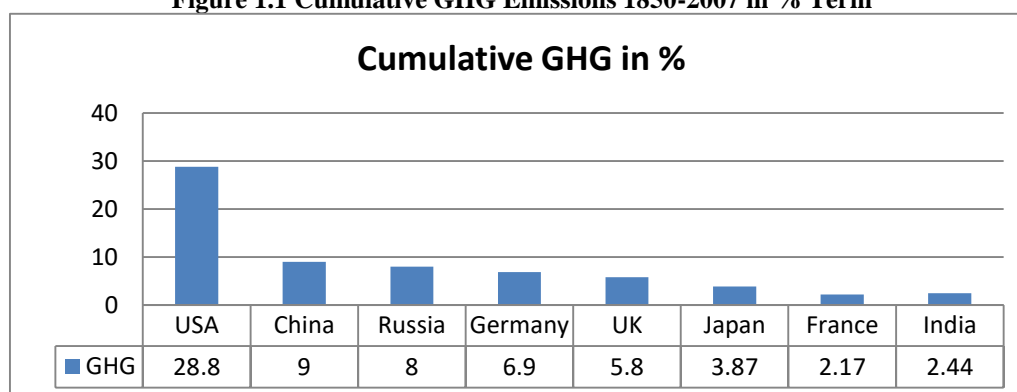
Equity and Climate Justice

India has been a prominent country advocating for the equity issue in climate regime. The issue of equity is core of India’s foreign climate policy. Right from the Earth summit, officially India is emphasizing that any global treaty or agreement should be based on the principles of equity, especially, distribution of mitigation efforts must be coupled with national circumstances and respective capabilities. In climate change regime the real challenge has been associated with the equity issue and it is still, a focal point of international negotiation. India, as a second largest populous developing country and 3rd biggest GHG emitter, find itself in a sticky position on the issue of equity.

The equity issue can be understood in five dimensions (discussed in chapter III), now, how India’s national interests are served by the most contentious issue of equity? It can be understood by analyzing the each dimension of equity with respect to Indian perspective.

Responsibility: With regard to assigning responsibility of climate change, India has crystal clear view that developed countries are responsible for the cumulative stock of carbon in the atmosphere hence primarily responsible for the mitigation efforts. Since Industrial Revolution, The Northern countries abundantly used fossil fuel for their developmental needs and still emitting more than their fair share on per capita basis. The historic emission in percentage term is shown in figure 1.1

Figure 1.1 Cumulative GHG Emissions 1850-2007 in % Term



Source: WRI, USA

In contrast to historical emission, big chunk of future GHG emission would be from large developing economies like China and India. If the historical emission data compared on the basis of per capita, India stands nowhere in the top emitter list. India has always emphasized and referenced the historical cumulative emission of developed nations and argued that developed nations have to drastically reduce their GHG emission to vacate the carbon space for the absorption of developmental emission of developing nations. India has further argued that the historical emission is a debt to developing nations and that should be pay back as financial and technological assistance to the developing nations.

Equal Entitlement: The fundamental of India's equity perspective is basically implies the equal right of every individual to the global common of atmosphere. It translates into the equal right to utilize the globally common natural resources for the sake of development. India has a long and very clear stand that emission responsibility and emission right should be decided on the basis of per capita. The per capita argument is the bedrock of India's foreign climate policy and has been strongly supported by other large emerging economies like China, Brazil and South Africa.

It is well established by the IPCC that there is a finite limit of carbon accumulation, the atmosphere can hold to keep the average temperature rise within the 2⁰ C limit. This finite limit is commonly regarded as available safe carbon space that can be used by the world to check the temperature rise within or around 2⁰ C. In other words, the gap or difference between the current world GHGs emission and the threshold GHGs emission that atmosphere can hold to keep the average temperature rise within the range of 2⁰ C.

The most contentious issue in the climate change regime is how this available carbon space should be utilize or distributed amongst the countries? India has been consistently demanded and pursued the equal entitlement as an equal development right on the basis of per capita. India has tried to frame the equal per capita right to carbon space as a 'climate justice'. India is second largest populous country and any allocation of carbon space on the basis of per capita would provide the maximum space for its emission. The per capita emission of India is very low; India is poor country on the per capita GDP basis and most of the HDI indicators are lower side therefore, India needs emission space for its development and that can be ensured by the equal entitlement.

Capability: Indian stand point of equity is closely related to the capabilities of a country to cope with the climate change. This dimension of equity implies that mitigation efforts should be allotted on the basis of economic, social and geographical circumstances and capabilities of a country. The capability dimension is more significant in context of adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change. India is keen to measure the economic capability in term of per capita so that the developed countries could be pressed for financial and technology transfer to the developing countries.

Basic Needs: In climate change regime, India has consistently argued that developing countries are under obligation of providing essential minimum living standard to their citizens. On account of under economic development, huge population of these countries still deprived of basic human needs. Further poverty, unemployment, poor health- sanitary services, and illiteracy are serious issues that have to be addressed by these developing countries on the priority basis. India has strongly demanded that "Luxurious Emission" and "Basic Needs Emission" should be differentiated. The GHGs emission in developing countries should be seen as the emission which is essential for their economic development to provide basic needs to their citizens.

Comparable Efforts: India has clear approach towards comparable efforts undertaken by the nations to tackle climate change. India has argued that dichotomy between developed and developing countries on the historical responsibility in aggravating climate change should be taken in consideration. Again national circumstances are different in different countries; therefore, obligations should be comparable in context of respective capabilities and national circumstances of nations.

Conclusively, all five dimension of equity concept has been enshrined in the principle CBDR regarded as basic principle of the UNFCCC. Since the inception of international negotiations over climate change, the principle of CBDR has been consistently referenced as to ensure the equity during conference of parties. It has been ethical and moral voice of developing countries for climate justice and exercised in Kyoto Protocol as a clear dichotomy between Annex I and Non Annex countries with respect to mitigation obligation to curb climate change.

Solidarity with Third World

India's foreign climate policy has been deeply rooted into the foreign policy of India. After independence, India's national interests were conceptualized on the democratic socialist pattern of development with the goal of poverty eradication and modernization through economic development. Post independence and during the era of cold war, India's foreign policy was mainly centered to safeguard its infant post colonial sovereignty through autonomous actions and independent policy decisions to attain the rightful position in international order. India played a pivotal role in articulation of the national interests of developing countries, especially new born African and Asian countries, under the auspices of Non-Alignment banner and called for South-South solidarity. India aligned itself with the G-77 and with support of G-77, successfully secured its interests in line with other developing countries during the negotiations for NIEO and Montreal Protocol.

In the early 1970, with the emergence of global environmental issues, developed nations attempted to frame the environmental issues as a need to limits to the growth. India along with other developing nations took it as a new form of colonialism to hinder development aspirations of developing countries. At Stockholm conference, Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi explicitly portrayed the northern attempt as an attack on sovereign right of developing countries in choosing their developmental model, policies and resources. India had reframed the environmental issues as a developmental issue and called for the solidarity within the Third World.

It had been well understood within Indian Government that any international agreement to restrict GHG emission could negatively change the economic destiny of the country. Hence, India prioritized development over environment issues and laid down it as a foundation stone to the solidarity of Third World. Mr. Sengupta pointed out another factor, he wrote,

“In 1991 India was in economic crisis, the cold war had just ended and the US-led Western World was at the peak of its ‘unipolar’ moment. Under these unfavorable circumstances, it was entirely rational for India to use principled arguments based on equity and justice, and adopt Southern coalition strategies, to ensure a climate regime that had minimal obligations for India.”¹⁰

It was inevitable for India to consolidate Southern co operation under the slogan of ‘solidarity’ to avert any attempt of the West to impose mitigation obligation on India.

The Third World solidarity was grounded on the G-77 and China, however, this group is highly heterogeneous with divisive interests of members with respect to climate change regime. The divisive interests apparently broke out during the Copenhagen (2009) and the Cancun (2010) CoP meeting. Specifically, The AOSIS and the LDC group demanded binding commitments from India and China. In Wiki leaks disclosures, released in December 2010, claimed that the US used ‘strong arm’ tactic and financial support as a bribe right from 2009 to crack the solidarity within G-77. The US targeted the AOSIS and the LDC countries to pressurized India and China to accept binding commitments.¹¹

Since Copenhagen Summit (2009), India has been aligned itself, specifically with BASIC group rather than representing the large canvas of G-77 group. The Copenhagen Accord, which was merely a political agreement, negotiated between the US and BASIC group in the backdrop of the conference. This

broke the rank with G-77, indeed splintered the group as AOSIS and LDC felt betrayed.¹² It was become clearer from the statement of India's Environment Minister who painted the emergence of BASIC group as 'a single biggest achievement' of Copenhagen Summit.

Post Copenhagen, the Chair of G-77 and a representative from AOSIS and LDCs/Africa group cordially invited to the meeting of Environment Ministers of the BASIC which has been organizing every quarter since Copenhagen summit to exchange the views of member countries. In fact, the BASIC, itself does not want to be seen as broken from parental group G-77, instead, hypocritically continue to claim the South-South solidarity.¹³

The BASIC is now a powerful group of large developing economies contributed 32% to the global total of CO₂ from fuel burning in 2010. Therefore, the role of the BASIC is crucial and decisive in climate change regime. India has departed from its 1991 image of a poor country to a powerful large economy and a global player of climate regime. Being the 3rd largest GHG emitter, India's interest cannot be secure only with G-77; that's why India's foreign policy is not that much oriented towards the Third World solidarity as it was earlier in 1991. India is now more focused on its own national interest rather than the Third World. However, it is also fact that, still India is largely supported by Third World countries and regarded as a prominent voice of the global South.

Business and Trade Interests

The economic dimension of climate change regime is important as any significant deviation from the traditional high carbon intensive economy to lower carbon economy involves huge cost addition over current production cost of the economy. Therefore, no country willing to lose its competitive advantage of lower production cost. The US withdrawal from Kyoto Protocol was based on the same ground that the quantified mitigation obligation would adversely affect its economic competitiveness, especially with China and India as these countries have lower production cost and they had not been under any legal mitigation obligation. In the KP, developed nations (Annex I) were under obligation of quantified, legally binding emission mitigation target by 5% below of 1990 levels in between 2008-2012. Three mechanisms were induced to facilitate the developed nations to achieve this target; clean Development Mechanism (CDM), Joint Implementation (JI) and Emission Trading (ET).

Initially, India opposed the inclusion of flexible mechanisms in KP as India thought that these flexible mechanisms would give escape to developed nations from their mitigation commitments. However, India took complete U-turn from its initial position in Marrakesh CoP in 2001. India's U-turn was greatly attributed to the feedback from the TERI and the CII. Both the institution calculated the potential economic benefits of CDM in terms of foreign investment and access to the new technologies.¹⁴ The CDM Authority of India, established in 2003, hosted "Carbon Bazaar 2009" in collaboration with Germany, in Delhi to facilitate direct meeting between buyers and sellers of CERs. By May 2013, the NCDMA had approved about 2800 projects of which 40 percent are registered with the UNFCCC, with the investment of around INR 1.6 Trillion.¹⁵

In a press released on November 2, 2015, Shri Ashok Lavasa, Secretary to MoEFCC, claimed that by 24th April 2015, 1564 projects from India were registered by CDM Executive Board and 191 million CERs were issued to these projects which are nearly 13.27 % of total CERs issued globally.¹⁶ India strongly advocated for the enforcement of the KP II after 2012, but major players of carbon market Japan, the US, Australia and Russia were not agreed to be the part of KP II, hence after 2012 CERs prices tanked and the shine of carbon trading is diminished as there are a few buyers of CERs.

In addition to CDM benefits, India has been getting financial assistance from the World Bank, ADB and Multilevel climate fund to finance the clean energy projects and for the capacity building to tackle climate change. India has set ambitious target of 175GW power generation from the renewable energy

sources by 2020 that includes 100GW from solar alone. India signed a US\$98 million loan agreement and US\$2 million grant agreement with the World Bank to finance solar capacity in India.¹⁷

Just before Paris Summit in 2015, India and France launched the “International Solar Alliance” (ISA) to make collective institutionalized efforts to ensure financial and technological support for clean energy generation. This was strategic move from India to strengthen its position in Paris Summit. With the launch of the ISA, India established itself as a global leader in renewable solar energy and conveyed the inherent signal that India is aggressively undertaking mitigation efforts to curb GHG emission. Secondly, India strongly reputed the statement of John Kerry (Secretary of State, US) that labeled “India as a challenge in CoP-21”. Thirdly, through the launch of the ISA, India galvanized its efforts to pressurized developed nations for their commitment of US\$100 billion fund for mitigation and adaptation efforts in developing nations. Fourthly, India always advocated that GHG mitigation efforts by developing countries must be coincided with financial and technological supports from developed nations. With the ISA, India proactively established its credibility to pressurized developed nations to fulfill their commitments.

With the ISA, India is eyeing to the funding that can be accessed through the ISA platform. In a joint declaration with ISA, the World Bank acknowledged the requirement of US\$1000 billion fund by 2030 for the investment in solar projects.¹⁸ Similar joint Declarations were also made with EU Bank and other Climate Funding Facilities of the UNFCCC.

India’s Clean Energy mission cannot be envisioned without Nuclear Power. Currently, less than 3 % is coming from Nuclear Power to the total power capacity of India. India has set a target of 14.6GW by 2020 and 27.5GW by 2032 from Nuclear Power. The Indo-US civil Nuclear Deal in 2008 followed by Civil Nuclear Cooperation agreements with The US, Russia, France and Australia paving India’s way to achieve the targeted capacity of Nuclear Power.

Economic Benefits

India is 3rd largest energy hungry country, largely depended on the imported oil and coal and natural gas. India’s import bill is predominately dominated by these fossil fuels. It is expected that India’s energy consumption to grow by 4.2% annually. In 2017, India’s net import bill stood around \$150 billion, expected to surge up to \$300 billion by 2030. India imports around 80% of crude oil and 18% of natural gas of its need. India is aiming to reduce 10% of its energy import by 2022 and by 2030 aiming to cut it by 50%.¹⁹ According to Economic Survey 2017-18, it is estimated that a \$10/barrel hike in international oil prices reduces growth by 0.2-0.3 % points and raises the WPI inflation by around 1.7% points and adds pressure on Current Account Deficit (CAD) by around \$9-10 billion dollar.²⁰ Nomura, a leading financial and investment firm elaborated this equation as:-

“At the macro level, with imports of 1575 million barrel of crude oil on an annualized basis, a dollar increase in prices on a permanent basis would increase the bill by roughly \$1.6 billion or 10000 crore on an annual basis. In FY2017, the oil import bill was \$86 Billion..... If prices do reign at above \$60/barrel, then there would be pressure on the import bill by around \$8-10 billion.”²¹

India has pledged to reduce emission intensity to its economy by 30-35%; this decision is vital to sustain long term growth with steady pace. Crude oil is a volatile commodity and sharp fluctuation in crude prices directly impacts the economic scenario of the country. All major economic indicators Inflation, Rupee Dollar exchange rate, interest rate, Stock Markets along with investment sentiment affects due to the high oil prices. Hence, India is focusing to curtail its oil import by gradually shifting the economy on Green Energy.

India has been taking a numbers of measures to reduce oil import. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways made 'Bharat Stage-IV (BS-IV) compliance for 4wheelers from 1st October, 2015 to improve fuel efficiency and reduce emission. Other policy efforts include Phasing out old vehicles, discouraging diesel vehicles, promoting CNG run vehicle, strengthening public transport and importantly, promoting and encouraging electric vehicles. India's EV Mission 2030 aiming to make India as a hub of electric vehicles under the mission 'Make in India'. The NITI Aayog estimated a \$300 billion domestic market for EV batteries by 2030, a gigantic economic opportunity which will impetus Green Development.

Tackling Climate Change Matters for India

India is especially vulnerable country to the adverse effects of climate change. Its Geographical, Ecological, social and Economic circumstances and diversities places it on the list of worst affecting country due to the climate change. It has 7500 Km long coastline, high rural agriculture based population; lack of pure drinking water; falling ground water level; huge population in cyclone prone areas; fragile ecosystem; low laying river deltas; melting of Himalayan glaciers, which contribute 70% of rivers; likelihood of massive displacement due to the submerge of around 5700 Sq.Km costal area on the rise of 1 meter sea level; water dispute with neighboring countries and illegal migration. These circumstances and implications peculiarly make India vulnerable to the climate change.

India is now 3rd largest GHG emitter in the world; this has caused the poor air quality across the country. Especially, in highly dense urban areas air quality is at its worst and crossing the dangerously alarming level of air pollution. The World Health Organization (WHO) placed 10 Indian cities in the category of worthy polluted cities of the world.

According to the census 2011, in India, out of 121 crore, 83.3 crore population lives in rural areas predominately depended on agriculture and related activities. Indian agriculture sector is largely dependent on Monsoon, seasonal wind pattern full with water vapor, nearly 60% of India's agro land is rain dependent. The climate change could be a disaster for Indian agro sector in two ways, one, rise in average temperature can severely affect the crop yield, cereal production could decrease, second, alteration in rain fall pattern can cause drought and flood like situations which could affect millions of people of the country.

There are numbers of implications can be counted that may stem from adverse effects of climate change. Conclusively, it is in India' national interest that there should be a comprehensive legally binding treaty or agreement to curb GHG emission to avert climate change. India cannot be isolated itself from the global effect of climate change, hence, India's role in climate regime is crucial and its national interests will be best served by such a global treaty that include the equity principles of the UNFCCC.

Aspiration for Esteem and World Leader Image

Acquiring esteem image in the international system is very common aspiration amongst all countries. Every country, in the world order, seeks recognition and respect from other countries. This is an important factor which drives or influences foreign policy of a country and frequently regarded as a national interest. After independence, acquiring the recognition and esteem position were the forefront objectives of India's foreign policy. India, under the auspices of the Non- alignment Movement, apart and independently from the both the power pole, acquired a credible position as a Third World leader. By articulating the interests of Third World, India had given the edge to the voice of African, Asian and Latin developing countries. India successfully defended the interests of the Third World during the negotiations of NIEO and the Montreal Protocol and gained the leadership position in the Third World.

In the climate change regime, India has been playing a crucial role since the formation of the UNFCCC. The inclusion of CBDR-RC as a guiding principle of the UNFCCC which was later incorporated into the Kyoto Protocol manifested India's leadership quality. By 2009, India was under immense pressure

for its refusal to accept any GHG mitigation obligation. Further India was painted as a stumbling rock in the way of global emission treaty. India changed its long holding stance and committed to reduce its emission by 20-25% and later by 30-35% to its economic intensity. India repositioned itself by adopting the emission cuts to its economic intensity and thus retained its frontline position in climate regime.

It is estimated that China's GHG emission likely to peak around 2030 and then decline from there. It could also happen before 2030 due to the decreasing economic growth of China. On the other hand, India's emission is estimated to grow further, in this scenario, the future of historical 'Paris Agreement' lies in the hands of the US, China and India.

The US President D. Trump's announcement of exit from Paris Agreement posed the threat to the credibility of the deal. However, India and China assured that they will honor their commitments made to the Paris Agreement. In June 2017, during the Berlin visit, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi stood alongside Angela Merkel and pointed out the US intention of withdrawal as "a morally Criminal Act". The US withdrawal from Paris Agreement could jeopardize the financing and technological mechanism for mitigation and adaptation efforts by developing countries. However, two big emitters of the world, China and India are likely to foster the execution of Paris deal by sharing the knowledge instead creating super funds.²²

Amidst of the US announcement of exit, India is posed to step up in the existing climate leadership. This is evidenced from the statement of Mr. Piyush Goyal, India's Energy Minister that India would stand committed to its mitigation pledges made to the Paris Agreement irrespective of "what happens to the rest of the world". It is further made clear by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi by affirming that India would go "above and beyond" the Paris Agreement. This statement has signaled the world that India is gearing up to take decisive leadership role in the climate change regime. India set the shining example of climate action along with development. India has strongly defended the equity in the Paris Agreement by inclusion of "differentiated responsibilities" in the agreement text.²³

Amid of the present leadership impasse, India is poised to steer the climate regime in a way that can safeguard the national interests of the country. Further, the present leadership void in international climate change governance presents a golden opportunity for India to assert its long standing demand of permanent seat in the UN Security Council and the NSG.

Conclusion

India has been consistently playing crucial role in the making of global treaty. India's stance and position in climate change regime is mainly derived from the national interests of the country. From 1991 to 2007, India was focused to its development agenda rather than climate change. During this period, India was played its role as a leader of Third World and at policy front, exerted enormous pressure on developed world to take the mitigation responsibility. India had poised itself as victim of the climate change and fought for the financial and technological assistance from the developed world. India's national interests are enshrined in the principle of CBDR-RC, hence, India is consistently emphasized the reference of the CBDR in every CoP and international platform.

From the no mitigation commitment to the affirmative mitigation actions, India has been safeguarding its national interests. In current scenario, India is gearing up to lead the climate regime by opting the path of Green Development but still want to ensure the Carbon space for its emission, which is expected to grow due to the high energy demand.

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