

TOPIC OF THE WEEK

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Climate Change and Policies

India has a vulnerable position when it comes to its condition of climate deterioration. The reason is India is a large country with many living in poverty, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of government planning to deal with complex weather systems.

A recent World Bank report showed how India will be subject to flooding, irregular monsoons, rising sea levels, and higher temperatures. The monsoon season is vital to the Indian economy because many Indians are agrarian.

Climate change is going to continue to create uncertain extremes throughout the monsoon season. Preparation for weather irregularities brought by climate change is thus essential to protect the lives of the Indian people and the growth of the Indian economy.

India has tried to balance its carbon emissions with its economic growth objectives by not setting an outright pollution reduction goal.

But, being a part of the global climate change regime, India will have significant obligations to meet under the treaty. The country will have to reduce its carbon footprint by 33-35% from its 2005 levels. This has to be achieved by 2030.

The key challenge that will come in front of India in the form of the reduction of emission intensity targets, which is the volume of emissions per unit of gross domestic product (GDP).

The country will have to extend its power generation base and shift it significantly towards renewable energy sources to reduce volumes of emissions per unit of GDP.

In numbers, by 2025, India will need a 175 gigawatt-power production capacity from non-fossil fuel sources.

Yet another pledge under the treaty demands India to increase its forest cover by five million hectares along with an improvement in the quality of green cover of an equal measure.

It is reasonable to expect that increased forest coverage will help India absorb massive carbon emissions from the atmosphere.

India is one of the world's foremost emitters of CO₂. India accounts for about 5% of global emissions. India's emissions surged 65% between 1990 and 2005 and are projected to increase another 70% by 2020. When compared to other major economies, India's emissions are low. India accounts for only 2% of cumulative energy-related emissions since 1850. On a per capita basis, India's emissions are 70% below the world average and 93% below those of the United States.

The importance of New Delhi's support to the climate pact is seen in the fact that India accounts for over 4% of global emissions and is important for crossing the threshold mark of 55%.

The world's top two polluters are the US and China. They both together account for 40% of global carbon emissions, have already ratified the document. Once the 55% barrier is crossed, the climate regime will become

legally binding on all signatories after a period of 30 days.

Paris agreement

In Paris, 195 countries signed an agreement to slow the process of global warming in December 2015. The countries pledged to make efforts to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

This means that the countries were in agreement to try to reduce the increase in global temperature rise. In this agreement, poor countries and island states are requested a lower goal by considering threats of droughts and sea-level rise.

The climate experts have also agreed that maintaining a 2 degrees decrease will be a challenge in itself. Another important point in this agreement was a decision to limit the amount of greenhouse gases emitted by human activity to a level that can be naturally absorbed by soil,

trees and oceans. Climate experts have said that the agreement meant attaining for “net zero emissions” between 2050 and 2100.

Conclusion:

At the federal level, India has implemented two major renewable energy-related policies. First, the Strategic Plan for New and Renewable Energy, which provides a broad framework. Second, the National Solar Mission, which sets capacity targets for renewable. India has sets its aims for a total installed power production capacity of somewhere around 800 GW till 2030. It would be almost a three-fold jump from the current levels.

To fulfill this commitment, India would have to install 320 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030. India has also targeted 63 GW for nuclear energy for 2032. Therefore it can be said that the renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and biomass would play an important role to achieve the 40 per cent target India has set for itself.

The government has already announced an ambitious program of installing 175 GW of renewable capacity by 2022. If this target is achieved, adding another 50 GW in the next eight years would not be a very difficult task. So, by keeping all these initiatives in mind, we can conclude that India is heading in right direction when it comes to its stand and efforts related to climate change and environment.

References:

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