

## **India's Evolving Climate Diplomacy: Reassessing the Present, Envisioning the Future**

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### **Abstract**

India, a rapidly developing economy, plays a significant role in shaping international climate governance. This paper examines India's climate diplomacy efforts, focusing on its historical context, diplomatic strategy, and domestic climate policies. It highlights India's involvement in multilateral negotiations and the Paris Agreement. Despite challenges like balancing economic growth and environmental concerns, India has the potential to become a leader in sustainable development and climate action. Finally, the paper evaluates the outcomes of India's climate diplomacy and envisions prospects for its continued engagement in global climate governance.

**Keywords:** *Climate Diplomacy, Global Climate Governance, Diplomatic Manoeuvres, Bilateral Interactions, Domestic Climate Strategies*

### **Introduction**

Environmental issues are now at the top of the global agenda due to the growing threat posed by climate change, which calls for coordinated efforts to find sustainable solutions. India, one of the world's largest and most rapidly growing economies, is crucial in determining the direction of international climate policy in the middle of this global call to action. In order to determine how well India's diplomatic strategies in global climate governance have worked to solve the multifaceted issues raised by climate change, this review paper undertakes a thorough analysis and evaluation of such tactics. India's economy has experienced a significant upheaval in the last few decades, coinciding with a rise in energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. Consequently, the country finds itself at a crossroads between environmental sustainability and economic development, which calls for a careful balance in its diplomatic interactions abroad. India combines adaptation and mitigation strategies with active involvement in multilateral forums to provide a unique approach to global climate governance. A rigorous analysis of these tactics' efficacy in producing significant and just outcomes for India and the international community is still ongoing.

The paper examines India's historical participation in international climate agreements in great detail, analysing the changes in its stances, pledges, and contributions. In addition, it examines the effectiveness of domestic policies in India intended to reduce and adjust to climate change, taking into account the socio-economic complexity entailed in the nation's heterogeneous terrain. This research aims to identify the fundamental reasons driving India's

position on climate policy by examining significant diplomatic events, bilateral agreements, and involvement in international negotiations. Understanding India's role in defining and influencing global climate policies becomes increasingly important as the world community struggles with the requirement to limit the rise in global temperatures. Through a critical analysis of India's diplomatic methods, a discussion of the country's achievements and shortcomings, and an evaluation of India's influence on the global climate agenda, this review paper seeks to add significant insights to the conversation on climate governance.

### **Historical Context**

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which was founded in 1992, is considered to be the institution that laid the groundwork for the development of international climate governance. Since then, other global climate conferences, most notably the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 and the Paris Agreement in 2015, have attempted to bring governments together in order to solve the myriad of difficulties that are posed by climate change (Kuyper et al., 2017). The discourse has evolved over the years, moving away from the practice of allocating obligations only on the basis of past emissions and instead recognizing the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. For almost thirty years, India has been a proactive participant in global climate talks (Chopra, 2017). India's stances in the international climate negotiations have changed three times in a row. India had a significant role in forming alliances with developing nations during the initial phase of the establishment of international regimes in the 1980s and 1990s in order to get explicit promises from wealthy nations about financing, technological transfers, and emission reduction. During the second phase of transition and contestation, which lasted from 2005 to 2010, India demonstrated adaptability and made voluntary pledges while resisting attempts to weaken the notion of differentiated responsibility. Indian compromise with shifting negotiation parameters that pushed for symmetrical treatment of developing and developed countries in questions of distinction characterized the third term, which ran from 2011 to 2015 (Sengupta, 2019).

India's participation in these negotiations has been motivated by a number of things, such as its goals for internal development, its wish to keep its strategic independence, and its desire to be acknowledged as an accountable player in the world arena. India's economic growth, energy security, and technological innovation are just a few of the many internal and international elements that have impacted the country's climate foreign policy behaviour across this entire era (Atteridge et al., 2012). In addition, India's domestic attempts to combat climate change have experienced substantial alterations in recent developments. India, which has transitioned from an economy that is primarily based on agriculture to one that is rapidly becoming a hub for industry and technology, is confronted with the simultaneous problem of rescuing millions of people from poverty while also reducing the effects of climate change. India's domestic commitment to climate reduction and adaptation is demonstrated by the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and the pledge to increase the capacity of renewable energy sources (Singh & Singh, 2021).

### **Diplomatic Strategies**

The Indian government has modified its diplomatic strategy in order to successfully traverse the complex web of international politics as climate negotiations continue to become more complex. From coalition-building with like-minded developing nations to creating alliances with major polluters, India has worked to combine its national interests with the global duty to address climate change (Dubash et al., 2018). India's involvement in global climate governance has grown increasingly essential as the globe grapples with the serious concerns of climate change. The country's diplomatic initiatives in this field have developed to match its developmental objectives with the pressing need for environmental sustainability. One significant feature of India's approach is its emphasis on equality and common but differentiated responsibilities, a notion inherent in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). India, being a developing nation, has always campaigned for a fair division of the burden of climate action, highlighting the historical role of wealthy nations in contributing to greenhouse gas emissions (Majra & Gur, 2009). This diplomatic approach strives to guarantee that the global response to climate change accommodates the different economic and social realities of states (Jenkins, 2003). Furthermore, India has been engaged in collaborating with international programs while achieving its own national climate goals. The country has pledged to ambitious goals, such as significantly increasing the proportion of renewable energy in its energy portfolio. India's diplomatic activities involve collecting support for its renewable energy initiatives through collaborations, partnerships, and global platforms. The International Solar Alliance (ISA), founded by India, illustrates its commitment to collaborative action on renewable energy. By promoting solar energy as a viable and sustainable alternative, India hopes to not only meet its domestic energy demands but also contribute to global efforts to reduce climate change (A. Kumar et al., 2010).

India's diplomatic outreach extends beyond conventional alliances, as it actively engages with both developed and developing states. The country realizes the necessity of developing coalitions to influence international climate debates. Through programs like the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), India strives to develop collaboration to increase the resilience of infrastructure to climate-related threats. This not only coincides with India's national interests but also adds to the broader global objective of climate adaptation and mitigation (VijayaVenkata Raman et al., 2012). Additionally, India's plan entails harnessing its demographic dividend and technological advantages. With a rising youth population and a thriving technological industry, India is well-positioned to contribute to global climate solutions. Diplomatically, India invests in knowledge-sharing and capacity-building programs, promoting alliances that support the transfer of green technologies to poor nations. By establishing itself as a hub for innovation and sustainable development, India aims to play a prominent role in influencing the discussion on climate solutions globally (Belis et al., 2018). Nevertheless, India faces its own set of obstacles in negotiating the complicated environment of global climate governance. The contradiction between growth imperatives and environmental commitments offers a tricky diplomatic balancing act. Striking the perfect chord between economic growth and carbon reduction needs smart negotiation and strategic

involvement. India's diplomats need to properly express the country's unique problems while underscoring its commitment to sustainable development.

### **Bilateral Engagements and Partnership**

India's diplomatic initiatives in the field of global climate governance are based mostly on bilateral engagements and alliances, which are crucial in determining the country's contributions to international climate action. India, a significant actor on the global scene, has aggressively pursued cooperation with important countries in order to tackle the complex issues brought about by climate change. With common commitments to renewable energy, sustainable development, and climate resilience, the Indo-US cooperation has become an important alliance. Significant progress has been made because of bilateral discussions between the United States and India; one example is the collaboration on projects like the U.S.-India Clean Energy Finance Task Force (Jorgensen et al., 2015). Similarly, collaborations with China, another significant emitter, have also become more prominent, indicating the realization that global climate initiatives depend on the cooperation of the most populous countries on Earth. These interactions are more than just symbolic; they represent real-world attempts to bring interests together and pool resources in support of effective climate solutions (Ojha et al., 2016). Moreover, India has demonstrated a commitment to promoting technology exchanges and financial support for climate adaptation and mitigation projects through its relationships with European countries like Germany and France. These partnerships play a critical role in promoting a shared commitment to the objectives outlined in international climate agreements, easing the transfer of green technologies, and strengthening India's ability to reach ambitious targets for renewable energy (Torney, 2019).

India not only forms alliances with large nations but also nurtures bilateral relationships with smaller countries, particularly those more vulnerable to climate change impacts. India has established alliances with more than 120 nations through the International Solar Alliance (ISA) with the goal of advancing solar energy and easing technology transfer. This program demonstrates India's dedication to South-South collaboration while recognizing the common vulnerabilities and obligations of developing countries in tackling climate-related issues. Furthermore, India's collaborations with regional blocs like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) facilitate cross-national action on climate-related concerns. The interdependence of climate impacts and the need for cooperative methods of adaptation and resilience building are highlighted by these regional engagements (Ghosh & Chawla, 2021). However, there are still issues with India's bilateral relations. Maintaining environmental sustainability while balancing the demands of economic development is still a difficult task, especially when working with developed countries that have historically had huge carbon footprints. In talks, addressing issues with technology transfer, funding, and distinct roles is still a top priority. Furthermore, skilful diplomatic manoeuvring is needed to navigate geopolitical difficulties and align varied state interests.

### **Multilateral Negotiation Alliances**

India's approach to global climate governance is significantly shaped by its membership in multilateral negotiation alliances, which are indicative of the country's dedication to inclusive

and cooperative methods. In order to address the many issues raised by climate change, India, a major participant in global climate negotiations, actively participates in multilateral forums like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (Banerjee, 2012). India works to strike a balance between its obligations to the environment globally and its domestic development imperatives within these alliances. India's participation in programs such as the BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India, and China) group, where it works with other emerging countries to lobby for just and equitable climate policy, demonstrates the efficacy of its diplomatic efforts (Narlikar, 2017). Furthermore, India has supported the G77+China group, highlighting the need for wealthy nations to take the lead in mitigating the impacts of climate change while assisting developing nations in their efforts to achieve sustainable development. These partnerships give India a forum to speak up more, solidify its positions during negotiations, and promote collaboration on matters like financing, technology transfer, and capacity-building. (Kasa et al., 2007)

India's adherence to the concepts of Respective Capabilities and Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR-RC) is a fundamental component of its multilateral participation. India highlights that national development gaps and past emissions should inform climate action, arguing for differentiating obligations according to each nation's industrial and economic capacities. India has often emphasised in multilateral negotiations the significance of technology transfer and financial assistance from developed to poor countries to help them make the transition to low-carbon economy. India strategically links itself with the global south by building partnerships with like-minded states that share similar concerns, hence increasing its impact on the climate governance agenda (Stone, 2004). The Paris Agreement is evidence of India's skilful diplomacy in multinational talks. India ensured that the agreement meets the various needs of developing countries by contributing positively to its formulation. India demonstrated its diplomatic skills in manoeuvring through intricate discussions by advocating for climate justice and obtaining measures for adaptation and financing. Moreover, India's commitment to multilateral climate goals is demonstrated by its pledge to attain 40% cumulative electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy sources by 2030, enhancing its credibility on the international scene (Dimitrov, 2016). India still has difficulties in international partnerships notwithstanding its diplomatic successes. Maintaining a delicate balance between its environmental responsibilities and developmental objectives is still a difficult undertaking. Additionally, given the dynamically changing nature of the global geopolitical scene, India has to modify its approaches in order to effectively tackle new threats. The country needs to keep communicating with its friends in order to improve and modernize its diplomatic strategy, especially in groups like as the G77.

### **Domestic Climate Policies**

India's contribution to global climate governance is becoming more and more significant, especially in light of its national climate policy. India, one of the most populous and quickly developing countries in the world, has a big impact on international efforts to mitigate climate change through its attitude. India's internal policies have a significant influence on how well its diplomatic methods work in influencing international climate agreements. India



has made impressive progress in the last few decades towards the use of greener energy sources, increasing its capacity for renewable energy, and improving energy efficiency measures. The nation is committed to sustainable development as evidenced by its ambitious objective of obtaining 40% of its total energy capacity from renewable sources by 2030 (Gulagi et al., 2017).

Nonetheless, there are still issues, such as the requirement for significant infrastructural improvements and the continuous reliance on coal. India's capacity to actively engage in global climate governance and play a substantial role in the collective endeavours to combat climate change hinges on its adept handling of these challenges and the enforcement of robust domestic climate policies. India now plays a more important role in global climate governance as the globe struggles to meet the pressing need to combat climate change. India's participation is centred on its domestic climate policies, which form the foundation of its international diplomatic tactics. India, whose economy is among the world's largest and fastest-growing, must simultaneously manage climate change mitigation and maintain economic growth. The nation has made great strides in recent years to match its domestic policies with the international climate goals. With eight national missions concentrating on topics including solar energy, sustainable agriculture, and water conservation, the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), which was introduced in 2008, explains India's all-encompassing approach to combating climate change (Quitow, 2015). An important diplomatic tactic that India uses is putting a strong focus on "climate justice." India contends that developed nations have a bigger responsibility for mitigation and adaptation measures because their historical emissions have contributed disproportionately to the current climate issue. India's negotiation strategy in international fora such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has been based on this position. India aims to make sure that the cost of combating climate change is distributed fairly among all countries by approaching the issue through the prism of justice (Das, 2019).

Moreover, India has become a global leader in the deployment of renewable energy, having made major advancements in this area. India's determination to shift to a low-carbon economy is demonstrated by the ambitious goal set forth in the Paris Agreement, which is to attain 175 giga watts of renewable energy capacity by 2022. By increasing the capacity of solar and wind energy, the nation has significantly decreased its reliance on fossil fuels. This domestic shift places India as a major player in the global renewable energy industry in addition to being in line with the aspirations of the global climate movement (Gulagi et al., 2017). India understands the significance of increasing resilience to the effects of climate change in addition to reducing emissions. Projects aiming at strengthening adaptation capability in sensitive sectors are supported by the National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC). This strategy shows a comprehensive approach to climate action and protects communities from the direct effects of climate change while also improving India's status in international climate negotiations.

As part of its diplomatic strategy, India also seeks to establish alliances with other countries, developed and developing alike, in order to increase the combined force against climate

change. India's dedication to cooperative solutions is demonstrated by programs such as the International Solar Alliance (ISA). India aims to form a coalition of nations committed to developing renewable energy technology and bringing down costs by pushing solar energy on a worldwide scale.

### **Opportunities & Challenges**

India's place in the global climate governance system is a complicated one, full of potential and problems. India, one of the world's largest and fastest-growing economies, must reconcile environmental sustainability with economic growth. The nation's effort to lower carbon intensity is seriously hampered by its reliance on coal for energy generation, which has resulted in a considerable increase in greenhouse gas emissions (Pode, 2010). The difficulty is making the switch to greener, more sustainable energy sources while maintaining economic expansion and energy security. This shift necessitates significant financial outlays for the infrastructure and technologies related to renewable energy, creating an economic challenge that calls for cautious policy creation and execution (Srivastava et al., 2016). However, present India with many chances to become a global leader in climate governance. The nation is committed to reducing climate change, as seen by its ambitious renewable energy ambitions, which include reaching 175 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2022 (Rehman & Hussain, 2018). India can benefit from its sizable and diversified population as a demographic dividend for long-term, sustainable growth. Inclusive and creative policies may help young people become green entrepreneurs, creating a workforce ready to lead the low-carbon economy. The potential is in developing green innovation, integrating economic growth with environmental sustainability, and establishing India as a global centre for sustainable technologies (Mohsin et al., 2022).

India must navigate the complex world climate negotiations diplomatically, where conflicting state interests frequently arise. It is a difficult undertaking to strike a balance between supporting its own developmental requirements and participating in international climate action. The diplomatic environment is shaped by the dynamics of international interactions, differences in country commitment, and geopolitical factors (Sridharan, 2017). India needs to negotiate agreements that promote global responsibility and cooperation in addition to protecting its development objectives. Possibilities include exchanging technological know-how, forming strategic alliances with nations that share similar values, and having productive discussions that spur group action.

Another way that India might affect the global climate governance system is through its evolution. India is able to design its own climate action plan while taking part in global efforts because of the Paris Agreement, which places a strong emphasis on nationally decided contributions. Making sure that these contributions are sufficiently ambitious to have a significant effect on world emissions. Through proactive participation in global forums, India may influence the conversation, promote fairness in the distribution of duties, and emphasize the distinct roles that developed and developing countries have (Dubash & Joseph, 2016). Furthermore, India has a chance to demonstrate leadership by incorporating climate concerns into more general foreign policy goals. A win-win scenario can be produced by coordinating climate goals with economic diplomacy, which can lead to international alliances for

sustainable development (Shukla & Dhar, 2011) This strategy can strengthen India's soft power by showcasing its dedication to environmental stewardship on a global scale and promoting economic cooperation.

### **Future Trajectory**

India's path in international climate governance has been groundbreaking, marked by significant impacts and promising perspectives for the future. India, a country with one of the fastest-growing economies on the planet and a sizable population, has made its position on climate change more and more important in the larger context of environmental sustainability (Hubacek et al., 2007). India's diplomatic approaches to addressing climate challenges have changed over the last ten years, from one of scepticism to constructive participation (Okereke & Coventry, 2016). This change has had a noticeable effect on international forums, where India has been instrumental in drafting international climate agreements. India has had a significant influence on global climate governance, in part because of its dedication to renewable energy. India has set high goals for its capacity to produce renewable energy, realizing how important it is to cut carbon emissions and move towards a more environmentally friendly future. Large-scale solar and wind energy project deployment has not only made India less dependent on fossil fuels, but it has also elevated the nation to the forefront of the renewable energy industry (Kumar & Majid, 2020). This has had an international impact, prompting other countries to reconsider their energy strategies and increase their financial commitment to sustainable alternatives.

India now actively participates in international climate negotiations as part of its evolving diplomatic strategy, which goes beyond domestic measures. India's diplomatic skills are seen in the 2015 Paris Agreement, where the country successfully secured the inclusion of climate justice principles. (Jha, 2022) India ensured that nations with different levels of economic development bore the burden of climate action fairly by speaking out for the interests of poor nations. India's status as a responsible and powerful actor on the international scene has been enhanced by this diplomatic achievement in the field of global climate regulation. Though there are obstacles to overcome, India's prospects for climate governance seem bright. The nation's endeavour to bring its climate goals into line with global ambitions is evidenced by its efforts to improve its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The focus on afforestation, electric car usage, and sustainable urbanization denotes a complete strategy for climate change mitigation (Shukla et al., 2006). Furthermore, India's participation in climate financing initiatives, such as the Green Climate Fund, shows that it is prepared to make a financial contribution to international efforts in addition to looking for funding for its own sustainable development initiatives.

But obstacles still exist, and India's diplomatic tactics will only be successful if these are surmounted. It is still difficult to strike a balance between environmental preservation and economic progress; new laws and technology are needed. India also has to ensure that its climate initiatives are inclusive, that the needs of populations who are vulnerable are met, and that adaptation strategies are promoted. India would need international cooperation to



maintain its development agenda while achieving its climate targets through technology transfer and capacity building.

### Concluding Remarks

India's climate diplomacy is crucial in global efforts to fight against climate change and promote sustainable development. This academic study examines India's historical trajectory, diplomatic strategies, and domestic policies, multilateral alliances, challenges, and opportunities. India's journey from a developing nation to a key player in climate negotiations underscores its commitment to addressing climate change while balancing its developmental aspirations. The country's diplomatic efforts, both bilaterally and multilaterally, have demonstrated its willingness to collaborate with diverse stakeholders to advance common climate goals. However, India faces significant challenges, including reconciling economic growth with environmental sustainability and navigating geopolitical tensions. Yet, these challenges present opportunities for India to showcase innovative solutions and leadership in sustainable development practices. Looking ahead, India's climate diplomacy will continue to influence global climate governance, with the potential to drive ambitious climate action and foster international cooperation. India must utilize its diplomatic strengths, domestic policies, and strategic partnerships to contribute significantly to a sustainable and resilient future for all. India's climate diplomacy journey demonstrates its commitment to addressing global challenges and promoting sustainable, equitable world development through diplomatic prowess and opportunities.

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