

“Climate Diplomacy in the Contemporary International System: Multilateral Negotiations, Norm Formation, and the Politics of Climate Action”

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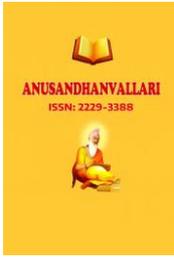
Abstract

Climate change has been the major item of concern in the current dynamic in the international relations. The idea of Climate Diplomacy has changed accordingly to transform the international regulation. Diplomacy is a soft power instrument that has evolved over time as a result of numerous international discussions. An example of international diplomacy among countries is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Meanwhile, there is the witnessed imperfect synergy between science and politics as a result of efforts. The purpose of this paper is to comment on the issue of climate diplomacy as a political practice. This is because such practices have been experienced in multilateral discussions and the formulation of a new norm. This has transformed the global climate action dynamics. In this, this paper will take a conceptual approach as an understanding of how the principles about climate mitigation will be developed, although common but differentiated responsibilities, climate justice, and net zero emissions were initially formed as a result of diplomatic bargaining, rather than as a result of consensus. It can be argued that the international climate negotiations have succeeded in institutionalizing the issue of climate in world governance. Their efficacy has been limited despite, the northsouth split and local domestic politics as well as implementation lapses. The paper assists to explore the changing attribute of climate diplomacy in the modern global system with this broader debates being placed within the frames of multilateralism, global governance and the political boundaries of collective response to climate change.

Keywords: Climate Diplomacy; Global Governance; UNFCCC; Multilateral Negotiations; Climate Politics; International Relations

Introduction

In the past, the issue of climate change has always been considered to be an environmental one. The recent trends however have indicated that as a recent development in the international relations, it has assumed a multidimensional form as a global crisis. It was originally a scientific problem, though at present it is a far more complicated political problem. Climate change has a great impact on the international economic growth, security and cooperation. Being a highly dynamic issue, the multilateral connection is assumed to be the most crucial one regarding its management. It is the case of going beyond the national relations which has led it to form part of the international system. The multilateral cooperation possibilities and constraints have been introduced in the negotiations within UNFCCC. Some agreements like Kyoto protocol and Paris agreement have made national interests that conflict with each other, come together under a common global platform. Although these negotiations too have demonstrated the breadth of the notorious northsouth gap between the developed and developing countries as far as finance, transfer of technology, and sharing of responsibilities are concerned. The



gaps in the diplomatic agreements and practical outcomes are still there in the UNEP reports of 2023. The climate diplomacy has currently transformed into an advanced form of common norms that influence the perceptions of the responsibilities by the states. Such concepts as common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) are the results of the compromising debates, and discussions. The norms not only shape expectations, but also determine behaviour and legitimacy in governing global climatic conditions (Finnemore, M., & Sikkink, K., 1998).

The paper presents the argument in favor of viewing climate diplomacy as a potent instrument of political practices because it is influenced by power relations, institutional limitations and normative shifts. Nevertheless, there is still a weak climate cooperation in the world. By analyzing multilateral politics and climate politics. In this paper, I aim to point out the necessity of working on such negotiations in a large scale practically.

Climate Diplomacy and Multilateral Negotiations

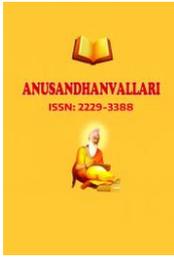
Climate change management was institutionalised in the year 1993 with the introduction of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Climate diplomacy emerged in the picture since the 1990s and it was formed mainly through multilateral talks. Climate change has to be dealt with not unilaterally or bilaterally. Climate diplomacy has offered the central platform of negotiation, which serves as an instrument of effecting global connectivity. It has united different nations with very disparate economic capabilities. These negotiations result in the collective decision-making and coordination (Agreement, P., 2017).

The central issue of climate diplomacy is the reconciliation of nations with varying historical and geographical situations, since climate change is a common global threat with interests set in the country. Nations still find their way to the negotiating table using the sovereignty and development priorities. The historical responsibility played a significant role in treaties such as the Kyoto Protocol to create binding legal cuts. However, the developed and developing nations were involved in huge controversies over this. The key emitters curtailed their involvement on economical competitiveness. Nevertheless, the developing nations did express their national mitigation measures in a global tool that should be reviewed (Bodansky, D., 2010).

However, the 2015 Paris Conference is one of the defining transformative policies in climate regulation across the globe. This is the admission of nationally determined contributions to generate a more liberal approach in the determination of internationally accepted obligations. This makes sense given that political and economic diversity is necessary. Nevertheless, despite its step forward in the study of the critical scholarship on the issue, it is the delegitimizing of responsibility in the character of the promise. This is observed with the gap between ambition and implementation (Keohane, R. O., and Victor, D. G., 2016).

Nevertheless, the most notable faults between the developed and the developing nations are still in existence in the multilateral climatic negotiations. It is not just overall contributions that are divided as these divides continue in climate finance and technology transfer. The disruption of loss and damage is yet to be stopped among the bisecting elements of the cluster of nations. This is indicative of the nature of inequalities in the international system of the nations. The concept of climate action cannot be ever divorced of the concept of development and capacity. Therefore, climate diplomacy transcends technical sense a great deal. It turns out to be very political and being influenced by power relations and rival versions of responsibility (Roberts, J. T., and Parks, B., 2006).

Although the tensions are still present, the multilateral negotiations have continued to integrate climate change in the world governance. Repeat conferences of parties have to some extent managed to keep the political attention on climate change. The conference of parties merely contributed to diffusion of the norms and the development



of the real anticipation of a further interest. However, due to its inability to enforce, it is not that effective but relies on peer pressure. As a result, the multilateral climate change negotiations are a by-product of the achievements and constraints of the modern-day international collaboration.

Norm Formation in Climate Diplomacy

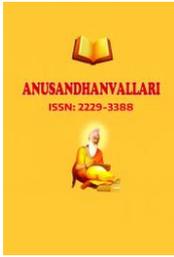
The role of climate diplomacy has been of significance in the establishment of global norms. It has had an impact on the state behaviour exceeding formal negotiation and institutional packaging. It has resulted in the norm formation as a result of the protracted diplomatic bargaining and discussion. These norms are a source of shared vision in which the states express responsibility, legitimacy and acceptable action. It is based on such basis that norms are made even where there are no strong structures of enforcement. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities was one of the most important norms that shaped the global governance at the large scale (Rajamani, L., 2016). It is enshrined in UNFCCC model that has differences on responsibilities that are pegged on historic emission levels and development levels. The CBDR has led to turn into a diplomatic instrument having both sides of cooperation and disagreement. Since the key economies are the key emitters, these norms show how the expectations can be normalised with changing interpretation (Bodansky, D., 2010).

Climate justice has become a normative framework in the recent few decades. The climate justice associates environmental issues with the bigger questions of equity, vulnerability, and intergenerational responsibility. The vulnerable regions of even developing countries have raised the voice of justice based arguments more and more. This has put into the limelight the unequal effects of climate change and immorality in climate action. Such norms have no binding power, but they do influence agendas-setting and narrative of diplomacy in the multilateral forums.

Another global norm of commitment on climate diplomacy is the net-zero emissions. The net-zero targets in the ambition and credibility of the countries differ. Constructivists viewpoint, these commitments are important to how they influence the views of legitimacy and leadership within global climate regulation (Finnemore, M., and Sikkink, K., 1998). Thus, the formation of norms slowly changes the idea of what is acceptable state behaviour in the climate sphere. **The Politics of Climate Action and Power Asymmetries**

Climate action politics and the spread of mutual norms are in permanent competition. The international system is under the influence of the wider scopes of inequality in power relations. The technology capacity and access to financial resources influence the negotiation process of climate and the decision-making process. Developed nations place more focus on mitigation undertakings and market mechanisms. Nevertheless, the developing nations give priority to primarily on adaptation, finance and technology transfer. The disparity in priorities is achieved because of the dissimilar tracks of development and dissimilar abilities to cover the economic expenditures. Consequently, climate diplomacy tends to become a place of the recreation but not alleviation of larger North-South tensions (Roberts, E., & Pelling, M., 2018).

The international climate cooperation is also complicated by the domestic commitments. The government wants to find a balance between the international commitments and domestic economic interest. It is not sufficient to have high-level climate ambitions, yet the process of their implementation is unbalanced because of the national resistance. This disengagement shows the shortcomings of diplomacy when there is no robust political alignment in the country (Keohane, R. O., and Victor, D. G., 2016).



Other powers in climate diplomacy are agenda setting and knowledge production, which is easier to imagine the states that prevail in technical expertise and funds. That in itself is enough to cast doubts on the inclusivity of vulnerable states to have a say in decisions that have direct impacts on them. Thus, climate diplomacy should not be perceived as a detached practice but as a political arena that is defined by conflicting interests and different abilities (Pickering et al., 2017).

Limits and Prospects of Contemporary Climate Diplomacy

Although climate diplomacy has served highly in nationalizing climate change in the national systems of governance, its limitations are becoming very apparent. The recent developments in climate change national pledges may not be adequate enough to meet the stipulated temperature levels. In addition, other questions can be raised about the efficiency of the ongoing diplomatic activity in the context of climate change problems (UNEP, 2023). Nevertheless climate diplomacy has contributed to climatic matters concerns in the view that there are some opportunities of coordination and transparency. With this kind of coordination it is possible to see a clear procedure in the multilateral discourse when speaking about the ambitions. In a more complex case of governance, climate diplomacy has been expanded across national borders to fit the civil society groups.

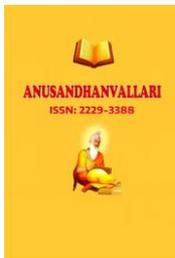
Moreover, climate diplomacy will rely on its ability to respond and adapt to new political and environmental conditions in the future. This supplemental aid will result in the tackling of inequality among countries of the world. Nevertheless, climate change cannot be fully defeated with the help of diplomacy, or its decrease. However, diplomacy is the part that is involved in dealing with this world threat.

Domestic Politics and the Translation of Climate Diplomacy into Action

These relations are mainly based on the international level but the result lies in the domestic policies and activities in the 21st century, the national implementation of policies became the main agenda. The Paris Agreement of the historical period has given the domestic politics a pivotal role in climate diplomacy success or failure. The academic discourse in international relations emphasized the workings of international negotiations and national politics adjacent to each other. This role demands a balance between external obligations and internal constraints and to be able to make a difference between voluntary and involuntary defection (Putnam, R. D., 2017). This is the greatest challenges of global climate governance because of such interactions between the international commitments and domestic politics.

The level at which a nation can meet its global climate treaties is reliant on its national political constructs economic and other aspects. It is against this background that such ambitious measures on climate matters are instituted by diverse governments in different platforms in relation to various domestic-political, economic, social, and other considerations. Strategic organizational frameworks are a challenge. The problem that is being addressed in this paper is the commitment to do something about the issue of climate change and fail to do it at home. The problem has been widely studied in the context of various research on global environmental governance, especially on flexible and voluntary measures of climate questions Falkner, R. (2016) elaborates on the issue.

The political administration is the knot of connection between the foreign action and the national action. The transitions in government leadership contribute to the change of priorities and commitments towards climate.



Even several illustrations indicate that political leadership is abused to increase international acclaim through taking climate-friendly decisions. In contrast to practical domestic support of climate action, it is small. Even scholars have emphasized how symbolic leadership can replace the policy changes with any kind of serious meaning in such political circumstances (Bernstein, S. F., 2001).

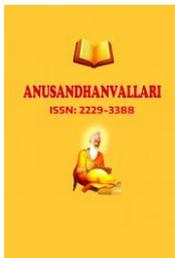
In addition, economic interests have also made domestic implementation of climate commitments to be complicated. Resource extraction and fossil fuel industries are the primary ones that have an impact on the national decisions. In such cases, the climate circulates and the actions are not so violent as the government does not want to. With the employment threat, the industrial competitiveness and energy security are exposed. The literature on the domestic politics of energy indicates that path dependence and the current energy networks generate substantial causes to oppose the quick transitions (Aklin, M., & Urpelainen, J., 2013). In these dynamics, a political compromise in climate action is noted and difficulty in organizing economic structures with climate objectives is also emphasized.

The institutional elites are also endangered by the fragments of the institutional processes in domesticizing climate diplomacy. Various government ministers and bodies even disregard and abolish various climate policies, which complicates coordination. International treaties encourage a co-ordinated approach but the organisation of the domestic institutions lacks the administrative capacity to offer this co-ordination. In the international system, this signals the structural problem of the international system, in which power is distributed over-lapping institutions with no central policing institution (Held et al., 1999). The fragmentation complicates the fulfillment of the international duties of the states and leads to the inequality in the realisation of the obligations in different spheres.

Nevertheless, climate diplomacy can be supported by domestic politics in certain aspects. Climate policy, involvement of civil societies and institutionalised climate governance can assist a state to meet the international commitments through public support. When such cases arise, the international treaties are weaker and more of muscle of the local political system. The implication of this dynamic is that climate diplomacy succeeds when the international expectations and norms are in line with the domestic political incentives (Victor, D. G., 2011).

The convergence of the international and domestic politics creates further questions of accountability in the governance of the climate. There is no other international agreements of the same format except the climate treaties of the world. This is since, without binding laws, climate agreements bind commitments of being transparent, reporting, and peer pressure and avoid domestic legal commitments. Although they might lead to some reputational benefits, such a plan is hardly capable of breaking domestic opposition or policy inertia. This is so since the diffusive form of accountability in climate talks implies that little will be achieved in case of non-compliance. This serves only to underpin the implication that, as it currently exists, climate diplomacy is predominantly played by participation, rather than by compliance, which creates a scenario wherein the determinant variable is now domestic political will (Falkner, 2016).

It is important to go beyond the diplomacy and the global systems to know the domestic politics that will make or hinder the implementation of the climate commitments. The politics of the international climate agreements are inseparably connected with the national, hence climate diplomacy should, thus, be conceived as a multi-layered process that occurs as an outcome of the interaction between the global and the domestic. In order to prevent climate diplomacy being perceived as just wishful thinking, the effort to balance global and domestic in climate diplomacy should be enhanced.



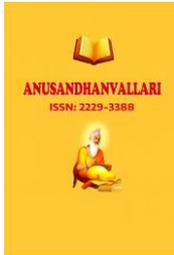
Conclusion

Climate policy is one of the instruments in the new trend of international relations. The increased awareness of danger of climate change must be treated on an urgent basis. The paper seeks to add value to the spirit of climate diplomacy when cooperation and mutual coordination are needed in the efficacy of climate mitigation. The norms formations and power relation growth is the main idea of the paper. Although the international climate negotiations have formalised climate issues and common standards, it still lacks effective implementation because of the differences in capacities and the inefficiency of enforcement tools.

The paper examines the constraints of climate diplomacy that would not be explained solely on an international plane. The home political commitments, the leadership interests, and the economic interests are decisive factors of the translation of the commitments into tangible action. The disparities between the international ambitions and the national implementation underscore the difference in the nature of climate governance. In this way, the domestic politics is a significant factor in determining the world output. Climate diplomacy is not an unsuccessful thing. The paper has pointed out by the argument of the paper is that it is more of an evolving process. It contains some opportunities and constraints of the global governance today. Close connections between international treaties and national reality continue to be principles of successful global climate action. The capacity of the international system to synchronize diplomatic aspiration with domestic execution will be a significant ordeal of climate governance in the twenty-first century as impacts of climate increase.

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