

Climate change is really about equity and sharing economic growth between nations and between people

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We must first acknowledge the prisoner's dilemma's situation that arises when the question comes of economic growth between the developed and the developing nations. I take the liberty of using a mathematical tool in this essay, which is a game theory. For both developed and developing nations have a choice between low emissions as well as high emissions. For a developed country, which is already in a high emission stage, will choose high emissions since there is a need to maintain the growth in midst of the competition with other emerging countries. On the developing country's end, growth is a necessity to plunge the poverty stricken population out of their low standard of living. Growth attained by higher emissions is just more conveniently available so they choose high emissions. Therefore both players end up in a sub optimal condition (which economists call as Nash equilibrium) where both emit high emissions and the concerned environmentalists count days till earth is no longer a place to live.

What is interesting in this condition is that just like any game theory problem, the optimal condition is low emissions by both nations, which occurs due to collusion or cooperation. But this situation doesn't arise because we consider develop and developing countries as two different players, competing against one another.

So all the above analysis boils down to the fact that to achieve an optimal level, both developed and developing nations must make a choice to bring down emissions. And to achieve this level, both developed and developing countries must collude. This brings us down to the agenda of equity.

Equity implies equal responsibility towards a common cause. It does not matter how rich or poor a country is, the responsibility towards our own planet falls on everyone's shoulder. The developing nations are still not contributing to the carbon emissions as much as the developed states. But it should not imply the fact that we should increase our emissions just for development. The belief that development can only occur with more pollution, or damage to environment is very misleading. For the developing nations, it is relatively easier to switch to infrastructure that is more environment friendly.

Which brings us to the role of developed nations. Bearing the equal responsibility in mind, it becomes their duty to assist and help the developing nations in achieving economic growth. Hence climate change is really about equity, and sharing economic growth. It is not the case that

developed nations absolutely can not bring down their emissions. It is just a tough decision to take. But it is this decision that has to be made by the individuals as well as the nation together. Growth in infrastructure can be achieved by cleaner technologies.

“Even though Climate change is a serious problem that deserves attention; society’s immediate behavior has an extremely low probability of leading to catastrophic consequences. The science and economics of climate change is quite clear that emissions over the next few decades will lead to only mild consequences.”

The above statement by the economist Robert Mendelssohn emphasizes the fact that emissions don’t have immediate consequences, and hence the economic growth policies adopted to cure this situation should see the picture of the longer run.

In this longer run, that is, the future, the issue of Climate change can only be tackled by making compromises and sharing economic growth. For the bigger picture of the choices we make today, most certainly affect our future. Resources are running out and development is accelerating. If this keeps on, then one day we will face a full stop. Also when that full stop arises, if every developmental process relies only on non renewable resources then many nations will cease to survive. Making our growth based renewable resources not only tackles our problem of scarcity but also of reducing pollution. Of course this shift will take time, and therefore starting from now, choices need to be made towards cleaner technologies. The developed nations that can already afford them must help in transferring it to those nations that require development. Or rather these developing nations don’t make the same mistakes as the developed nations did.

Climate Change affects everyone. It has been seen to bring more catastrophes to tropical or Mediterranean nations that are developing. And even though nations like India act as carbon sinks to all the carbon put in the atmosphere by developed nations, it constantly faces droughts, or excessive rain or rising sea levels. Hence it becomes a duty of the developed nations to help all such nations to battle out global warming without hindering economic growth.