

Global Environmental Governance: A New Discourse of International Politics

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Abstract

In the backdrop of globalization, the preponderant role of the territorial form of government with regard to framing law, regulation has undergone a severe change. External relations among nations today are not only guided by peace and war. Several issues like degradation of environment, threats from terrorism enter into domain of foreign relations. It has been observed that political consensus among nations is often built up for the larger interest of human civilization. But the major setback towards implementing the legal provision is the authoritative role of each nation state over its natural resources and environment. When the environmental tragedy transcending domestic territory, creates an affliction for the whole civilization, it becomes shaped as global agenda in international politics. Globalization opened up a new avenue to the Multi National Corporations (MNCs) and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs). It allowed them to articulate several human grievances, which the national actors were unable to root out. The scope of International Politics today is enlarged by the incorporation of several new discourses. Global environmental politics is such a new one in international politics. The distinctive feature of this new politics has been the influential presence of MNCs and NGOs. As environmental degradation is a type of shared problems, it creates a governance model in the management and conservation of environment. While NGOs seek to lay down a non-institutional form of global authority to effectively reduce environmental woes, MNCs are endeavoured to materialize the model of green governance, in which corporate environmental policies would be smoothly implemented. This study mainly relied upon secondary resources, would explore a new paradigm of environmental governance.

Keywords: Environment, Business, Global, Governance, Politics

Introduction

Any deliberation over global governance today illuminates the role of the transnational actors and intergovernmental organizations. The Governance model of the world politics has been developed in the backdrop of the breakdown of the 'Westphalian order' based on the full sovereign rights of the nation – state. Now it raises eyebrows of the academicians of International Relations, who are fond of the realist literature of international politics. Necessarily, it is not only realist or idealist but most of the positivist thinkers when illustrate international Relations, emphasis on the objective content of political process, in which the state to state interaction ,peace and war were the cardinal features of international politics. Since the last half of the twentieth century, the emergence of the post-positivist approach to International Relations at the theoretical level and of the practical issues like environmental degradation, terrorism, constant resource depletion bound up the whole world community. Nation state and intergovernmental organization like United Nations Organizations, European Union are not the fully competent authority to obliterate the century old human woes. However, at the end of the Stockholm conference on Human Environment in 1972, there was a consensus among the participants for developing the effective environmental conservation strategy. Though this task was traditionally undertook by the domestic government of every nation state, the world today need the collaborating effort and endeavour of all political and social institutions including non authoritative organizations. It means global community must be aware of the environmental crisis like temperature hike, loss of bio diversity, irregular rainfall, and desertification, which are not restricted to any circumscriptions. Basically, the extra territorial impact of these affects resulted in the establishment of the world environment governance, in which the transnational business corporation and non-governmental organization often collaborate with the United Nations Environmental programme, representing the world society in a manner of non-authoritative arrangement of international politics. In this respect, the transnational actors especially the non-governmental Organization went on to boost up the awareness programme for the marginal sections, while the MNCs sought to rollback the command authority from the world green governance.

However, global environmental governance removing the orthodox notion of 'government,' recognized the existence of multiple contenders in the global environmental politics. That is why, global environmental or green governance should not be inevitably understood from the state centric view of international politics, but rather the pluralist approach to international politics could effectively substantiate the necessity for constituting the environmental governance at the global level. Accordingly, a network of the non authoritative social actors influences every nation-state in framing up environmental policies, agenda and delegates the national government at the global environmental summit.

II. A Conceptual Framework

The nation-state traditionally, has been the key actor in international relations. Every traditional theory of International Relations considers it as the final policy maker in world politics. Territory and sovereignty of the nation states privilege them to deal with external issues and to establish themselves as constituent unit of international relations. In the backdrop of globalization, political 'hegemony' of the state is being constantly depreciated. At the theoretical level, the incompetence of the positivist approach, to resolve the current global issues due to its obscurity in finding the level of power politics beyond state structure and process, rendered the disenchantment among the academicians of International politics. As a result, new dimensions of world politics came out of the effort of post modern thinkers. Their standpoint of analysis is politics. It refers to the fact that subjective interpretation of politics is required for the modification of the discipline. Today, the relations between nations are connected to innumerable transnational actors or non-state actors namely inter governmental organization (UNO, EU), Non Governmental organization and Multinational Corporation. Every scholar must concentrate on the role of these transnational organizations as their effort in inserting core human values like development, participation to the discourse of International Relations significantly transforms the nature of global interaction. However, in the twenty- first century, an alternative approach is necessary to deal with the common issues which equally affect the global community. It ranges from development, prosperity to the sustainable uses of material and natural resources in pursuit of survival of the whole global society. It is well known to the students of international politics that excessive force of a state in terms of its defence and financial capability is no more the guiding principle of power politics as several soft issues like environmental degradation, human rights violation, deprivation, climate change are considered to be the driving agenda in the present century of international politics.

Globalization was defined as being the catalyst in the development of the global governance because it on the one hand, weakened the national boundary for the sake of economic integration of domestic market with the global financial structure and expressed the lack of rules and standards for establishing a world government .So the uniformity in the market rules and internationalization of the domestic and local issues are two derivatives of globalization which result in the constitution of a global governance. Further, while globalization in course of external relations of the states reduces the potency of the virtual border in order to ease access to local resources, it accelerates 'the world wide interconnectedness in all aspect of contemporary social life'. However, the practitioners of international relations in an effort to resolve the contention between the domestic autonomy of the nation state and internationalization of every environmental, social, political issue entailed the mechanism like global governance to the discourse of global politics (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2014:17).

Since the beginning of the twenty –first century, the need for setting up the global environmental governance has been recurring at every forum of the intergovernmental organization. As the members of every inter governmental organization like UNO, NATO, Arab League, have their sovereign territory, these organizations in many instances, have failed to reach the consensus for establishing environmental regime. This view is endorsed by the unwillingness among the developed and developing nation against the implementation or execution of many environmental protocol.

III. Methodology

The Study is explorative in nature. The time span selected for the instant research is post liberalization, globalisation and privatization period. i.e. 1991 and onwards to till date i.e. the study is undertaken at the backdrop of introduction of LPG Model in India vis-a-vis introduction of open economy . The instant research is based on secondary date base as has been gathered by the authors keeping in mind the topic of research and results of literature review in the respective domain. The data has been collected from different websites, books, journals, newspapers etc the details of which has been incorporated in the Reference section. That information which appeared to be more dependable and authenticate has been taken into consideration in the article.

The article is the outcome of study undertaken in the relevant field only at an initial stage. The study can be further improved by undertaking future research taking into consideration the results obtained so far by the authors. It is pertinent to mention that the selection of the topic is based on the fact that Environment is considered to be one of the important pillars now-a-days towards achieving sustainability. Besides that there has been a growing importance towards environment especially in the period understudy.

IV. A Brief Historical Backdrop

Early initiative in reforming the traditional international relations was launched by an intergovernmental organization namely the United Nations through its United Nations Environment Programme in the 1990s. Since the last half of the twentieth century, it is unanimously considered that for removing the hazards sprang from environmental degradation, the World needs a host of new actors, which have non-authoritative character and emphasis on the sustainable development of the world population. In fact, the institutional arrangement to set up environmental governance was commenced with the adoption of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). While the economic integration of the globe and growing competition among the developing countries to swell their GDP growth were largely responsible for long time environmental degradation, the UNO seeking a common future of the world population and their sustainable development laid a flock of rules and standards which would monitor the environmental activities of the member states (Baylis, Smith & Owens, 2008: 353).

The emergence of global environmental governance was the outcome of several environmental conferences in the post Stockholm period. In this regard, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held 1992 in the Rio-De-Janeiro of Brazil. It manifested the need for a governance system to obliterate the environmental woes. That is why, the conference clarified that the peace, security and development in traditional term were no more the leading agenda of international relations. Basically, the Agenda 21 of the Rio declaration emphasises on a comprehensive guiding principle which assists the UNO, national government and other world group to their coordinating effort for preventing the ill effect of environmental crisis (Elliott, 1998:130). However, the Rio conference disclosed the fact that for the survival of the Earth and its environment the effort of all stakeholders are to be considered in a perfect manner. In this paragraph we are trying to point out the major environmental hazards including impacts out of these crises and formation of global environmental regimes against the concerns. It is described in table 1 below.

Table-1: ENVIRONMENTAL REGIMES FOR REMOVING DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS

Number of Environmental Hazards	Impact	Formation of Environmental Regimes against particular concerns
Global warming	Climate change and excessive emission of green house gasses	Kyoto Protocol (1997)
Ozone layer depletion	Increase in sun's ultraviolet radiation	Montreal Protocol (1987)
Loss of bio-diversity	Loss of habitat or ecology of environment	Convention held but no global mechanism yet
Desertification	Loss of the biological productivity of land	Convention held for combating desertification but no global regime yet

Source: self compiled by the authors

As the United Nations led environmental conferences played the significant role in the formation of environmental governance, The 1992 Rio conference is the pioneer negotiation because since that period, the non-governmental organizations and Multinational Corporations have been regularly participating in the subsequent environmental negotiations. It resulted in the consolidation of their claim for global environmental governance. While Non- Governmental organizations depends on a network of environment groups and often establish solidarity among the independent environmental groups, the corporate industries work out several strategies with which they can respond to the present need for forming environment friendly industrial project. To materialize their effort, the MNCS seek joint partnership with the state with regard to sustainable development of the world community (Elliott, 1998:133). An account of the environmental conferences and their agenda is described in table 2 below.

Table-2: LIST OF TABLE ENVIRONMENTAL CONFERENCE AND THEIR AGENDA

No	United Nations Environmental Conference	Host country	Year	Agenda
I	The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment	Stockholm	1972	Ecosystem integrity, biological diversity, human health
Ii	The United Nations Conference on environment and development (known as Rio Declaration)	Rio-de-Janairo, Brazil	1992	Sustainable development of the world community
iii	World Summit on Sustainable development (Johannes burg Summit)	Johannesburg	2002	Voluntary, multi-stakeholder, international, national local level partnership for sustainable development
Iv	The United Nations Conference on sustainable development (Rio + 20)	Brazil	2012	Uses of 'green economy' n sustainable development

Source: self compiled by the authors.

V. Who are the Major Players of Global Environmental Policies?

It is quite correct that nation – state is yet the main actor of international politics. Before 1990s, many non – governmental organizations were formed based on local ecological and environmental issues. For instance, we can refer to NGOs which were remained as a local pressure group in the late nineteen and early twentieth century not only in the European society but also in the colonial ones. UK's The Royal society for the protection of Birds (1891), the National Wildlife Federation (1936) are two examples. Moreover, in the early post –colonial era, innumerable NGOs were formed but they articulated issuer related to the underdevelopment of the third world country. Their whole agenda consists of poverty alleviation, the loss of local ecology and degradation of local environment' (Elliott, 1998:133).

However, the significant change in global environmental politics was occurred with the emergence of the 'third generation NGOs'. The Friend of Earth (FOE), the Greenpeace International, Asia pacific peoples Environment Network belong to this category. Since the last half of the twentieth century, the number of environmental risks has been extended in the backdrop of the growing corporate interest in the environmental resources. The Non Governmental organizations of this period, in pursuit of global environmental governance have built joint partnership with the state and often with the corporal industries. The nature of NGOs activities largely depends on their motivation. Today many NGOs of the developing countries, establish a network of organization to speed up local level environmental movement. Apart from this, NGOs participation in the successive environmental negotiation makes them as one of the contenders for environ mental protection (Elliott, 1998: 134).

Multinational Corporation is another type of transnational organizations. As they are mostly profit making group, Their business related activities are mostly responsible for environmental calamities. When the environmental conferences set their agenda for the sustainable development of the world community and resource, the leading MNCs are in constant effort to engage themselves with the transnational networks and non – profit organization. In this respect the world Business Council for sustainable Development and the international chamber of commerce have launched several environment friendly business policies and often allotted funds for the environmental organization. The larger goad if the prominent MNS amidst building environmental awareness, activism, movement, is to promote commercial benefit (Betsill, 2014: 178). The types and the role of the transnational actors in environmental politics are described in table 3 below.

Table-3: TYPES OF TRANS NATIONAL ACTOR AND THEIR ROLE

NO	Types of Trans National Actor	Role in global Environmental Governance
(i)	Inter Governmental Organization or Supra National Organization (UNO, EU)	Environmental negation and conferences
(ii)	Non Governmental Organization (FOE,WWF)	Partnership with the state and other environ mental organization, delegation to the environmental conferences.
(iii)	Multi National Corporations	Network building, lobbying with the domestic government and influencing the policy formation during environmental negotiation.

Source: self compiled by the authors

VI. Role of Non-Governmental Organization in Global Green Governance

Global Green governance is a type of mechanism with which the non-governmental organization became the powerful actors in leading to the creation of global green public sphere. Inevitably, the role of the NGOs is not merely restricted to the participation in environmental conferences, as many of these are organized under the host of any inter governmental organization like United Nations state (UNO) in many instances, the invincible political authority of the nation –states minimizes the functions of the global environmental regimes. It necessarily, undermined the effort of the institutional arrangements in removing global environmental woes. The transnational actors especially the NGOs, since the last half of the twentieth century, had proposed that ‘non – institutional forms of organization’ could effectively respond to present needs of the environment (Kutting, 2011).

Though it is unanimously considered that green nongovernmental organization have been operating as a type of pressure group but it often misleads us because the role of NGOs will be largely determined by the parameter within which they perform. As globalization laid several new possibilities for the social

actors to reorganize and articulated their demand, many green NGOs were in the effort to radicalize their demand. More surprisingly, they often ruled out the partnership strategy with the states. Here we can refer to the environmental agenda of the leading world NGOs, Friends of Earth (FOE). It is described as the emancipator NGO as FOE puts forth participatory democracy in order to increase environmental activism at the grass root level. In this regard, NGOs like Friends of Earth (FOE), Greenpeace instead of collaborating with a particular Nation state, rely upon the network formation among the local, regional and global environmental groups. Instead of any authoritative arrangement in resolving the environmental and ecological crisis, Friends of Earth ensures full autonomy of its affiliated regional groups. The flexible nature of the intra-organization of the FOE as the former can independently set its agenda considering the needs of the local environment in which it operates. Environmental NGOs today, consider the whole environment as the global civil society in which they delegated to the nation state at the world conferences held on environmental and sustainable developmental issues. However, when the NGOs work as global pressure group, they prolong negotiation with the national actor that is state as well as the intergovernmental organization like European Union, United Nations. The aim of long time negotiation and participation at the environmental conferences is to expedite the institutional process and establish mechanisms under the jurisdiction of the intergovernmental organization for reducing the green house gas emission, minimising the production of Chloro-fluoro –carbon and other risks. The fact cannot be denied today that unless a strong political orientation, the NGOs would not have succeeded in their claim for establishing global environmental governance. The Greenpeace International though has a highly centralized structure, sets its agenda exclusively on the environmental issues. When it organizes environmental campaign, direct mass mobilization camp, the main intent of this organization is to alter ‘state centric system of environmental governance’. As a result, many ‘social movements and networks of non-state actors’ in this respect mainly work in a constant competition with the nation states and intergovernmental organization (Elliott, 1998 :132).

Non-Governmental Organizations, when lead to the social, environmental movements at the local level, they emphasis on the social, human and ecological values as the constituting elements of international politics, NGOs, for serving this end encourage environmental activism at the grass root level. Their effort benefits the peripheral sections, which are on the skirt in the global governance. But when economic integration of globe was initiated, no resource of the margin was unutilized. As in the second paragraph of this section, we have mentioned that the nature of the NGOs depends on the parameter; it is the fact that NGOs, which are unwilling for being involved in the process of environmental activism, endeavour to enlarge joint partnership with the state for collectively addressing environmental concerns (Doyle & Eachern, 2014: 154).

The World Wide Fund for Nature instead of direct action at the local level for resolving environmental risks collaborates with the government, financial institutions and other transnational corporations. Its purpose is to assist the national government as well as intergovernmental organization in launching the framework for effective environmental governance. Another NGO, International Union for the conservation of Nature seeks solidarity among the global actors for mitigating the present environmental crisis. In this regard, NGOs consider the subjective participation of the world community is meaningful way to the establishment of global green governance. It is the world mechanism to boost up consensus among every contender at least with respect to environment and the 'sustainable development' of the society at large (Doyle & Eachern, 2014).

VII. The Role of Multinational Corporations in Environmental Governance

Generally, we consider Multi-national Corporations as commercial organization. They are largely criticised for their contribution to environmental pollution globally. It is quite correct that in pursuit of business interest, MNCs have destroyed the local livelihood and polluted the environment. The fact must be noted that they are 'the largest users of raw materials globally and the top 500 MNCs generate more than half the greenhouse gas emissions produced globally' (Elliott, 1998: 123). In the developing countries, they constantly encourage pesticide sell, and significantly control the agriculture land use pattern by increasing the cultivation of profitable export crops. It resulted in the reduction in the fertility of cultivated land and in health crisis, particularly at the rural area of the developing nations. Multinational corporation, which have Japanese origin, were responsible for the deforestation in South East Asia, while the weak government of the third world countries for enlarging their GDP, depend on the investment by the financially powerful world MNCs, the latter causes the destruction of local ecology, weakening the rules and standards for preventing the environment hazards came out of their activities with regard to production, transportation of the commodity.

Multinational corporations not only influence the domestic government of a country with which they are associated but exert their control over many inter government organizations, when these groups deliberate over the establishment of global environmental regimes. We can cite the major activities of the USCFC producers and user industries. In the past, when the global environmental regimes step up pressure over its member states for reducing green house gas emission, the production of CFC, the countries, which are the home of powerful MNCs first object to the implementation of the programme. It reminds us the activities of the MNCs of the United States during the Montreal protocol and the Kyoto protocol negotiation. As the top US MNCs were unwilling against the enforcement of any regulation over ozone depletion substances and over the green house gas emission, the whole agenda of both negotiations were not implemented and surprisingly, United States did not ratify the Kyoto protocol. Another instance is

biodiversity negotiation. Multi National Corporations which have biotechnology industry, utilize genetically rich regions of the south Asia and south-East Asian nations. While biotechnology industries most of the time, use local knowledge and genetic resources for accruing commercial benefits, they do not provide adequate compensation and often no little compensation to indigenous community of the region (Elliott, 1998 : 125).

There has been a broader consensus among the powerful MNCs that an institutional arrangement of their own needs to respond to the global environmental disasters could substantiate their claim for free environmental governance based on voluntary engagement of the actors. In 1978, MNCs formed commission on the Environment under the stewardship of the International Chamber of commerce. The tusk of the commission is to bring out –‘environmental policies for industry.’ It recommends over the environmental policies or measure framed by the intergovernmental organization. Expressing that collective measure of the intergovernmental organization and MNCs for securing environment friendly business profit, International Cumber of commerce in 1984 with the assistance of the United Nation Environment program, organized world Industrial Convention on Environment and Management (WTCEMI). The subsequent conference was held in 1991to work out business environment policies in respond to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) (Elliott, 1998: 126).

The growing environmental awareness at the local level and a number of environment related causalities led to the rectification in the behaviour and activities of corporate agencies. The MNCs now seek for the abolition of binding regulation over their activities as they consider that self regulation and voluntary codes of conduct are quite suitable for fulfilling their environmental accountability to the world community. In fact, since the last half of the twentieth century, MNCs have been trying to build moral faith among the world community in their environmental credentials. It is worthwhile to speak that after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held, the MNCs became eager to form the ‘global green governance’ in which ‘command and control regimes’ with regard to prevention of environmental concerns would defunct and opportunity for green investment would be swelled. In this regard, the International Chamber of Commerce in 1990 brought out the ‘Business Charter for sustainable Development. The aim of this Charter is to appraise the fact that today, corporate business interest and sound corporate environmental policies substitute one another. As a result, MNCs build a close association with the environmental programme launched by UNCED. MNCs through their Business council for sustainable Development participate in many programmes, held with regard to the sustainable development of the environment and the world community .The purpose of their growing concern for the sustainability of the environment is to increase the uses of green technology worldwide.

VIII. Conclusion

Our study over the nature and the mode of operation of the global environmental governance triggers some new features of international environmental politics. In the post Stockholm era, the environmental activism at the grass root level and the regular participation of the transnational actor in successive environmental negotiations led to the formation of 'global governance'. Today it is unanimously viewed that the global governance minimizes the state centralism. However, the constituent units of the environmental governance do not have similar interest. While the NGOs participation in the environmental politics bring an extensive opportunity for the grass root organization and movement, the MNCs over the last decade of the present century, intend to burgeon their investment in green technology. So economically, MNCs effort for setting up a green public sphere free from commanding authority of the state would result in the abolition of the control mechanism. If the control mechanism for preventing environmental risk and international rules and standards are adequately strengthened, the transnational organizations especially the MNCs would not have dared to compromise with local lively hood and ecology. It is surprising that when environmental negotiations took place, the UN member states of the third world, instead of protesting in a concerted way against discriminatory provision of the environmental regime, raise concern after the environmental agreement has been over. In fact, the development agenda of the third world nations is in constant conflict with the sustainable development of the world community. As a result, The United Nations in its successive environmental negotiations since the 1990s, seek the voluntary engagement of all stake holder for the successful implementation of the environmental declaration but most often the developed countries mainly united state which is the home of the world top MNCs does not ratify the agreement. However, the mechanism of global governance can assist the Nation state and inter governmental organization but direct action by the transnational organizational over the environment is undesirable as international relations are yet being free from the evil impact of power politics.

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