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Indian climate diplomacy: A soft power tool

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Abstract

Climate change is currently a significant issue in international relations in today's world, as it impacts development, security, the economy, global cooperation, and public health. From this perspective, the significance of India's climate diplomacy as a key soft power instrument for its country's mission to build its international image, advance its developmental interests and play a role in international climate governance has come to the fore. The principles of climate justice, equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and sustainable development are the core tenets of India's climate diplomacy. Rather than climate action being an environmental issue, India has leveraged it as a diplomacy tool to position itself as a responsible, cooperative and solution-oriented global player. The International Solar Alliance, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, Mission LiFE and India's involvement in the G20 climate agenda are but a few examples of how India's commitment to renewable energy, disaster resilience, civilizational values and Global South concerns come together. Other home-grown initiatives like the expansion of renewable energy, the planning of green hydrogen, rooftop solar schemes and climate policy transformation further bolster India's international credibility. The study demonstrates that India's climate diplomacy is not only about reducing emissions but also a policy of enlightenment with moral leadership, institutional collaboration, ideas of sustainable lifestyle and development partnership. In this way, Indian climate diplomacy can be seen as a contemporary soft power in the new order of the world.

Keywords: Indian climate diplomacy, soft power, climate justice, sustainable development, International Solar Alliance, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, Mission LiFE, G20 climate agenda, Global South, renewable energy

Introduction

Climate change has become one of the greatest threats faced by the world in the 21st century. This is not just a matter of the environment anymore, it's a development, security, economic, health, energy policy and international relations question. Global warming, frequent floods, droughts, cyclones, heat waves, melting glaciers and ecological imbalance have compelled the states to redefine their foreign policy priorities. Climate diplomacy has emerged as a crucial element of global politics in this new global environment. The use of climate negotiations, renewable energy partnerships, green technology,

climate finances and sustainable development pledges is now being adopted by countries to make themselves look good and have more clout in the international arena. The subject “Indian Climate Diplomacy: A Soft Power Tool” is of immense importance in the context of India having increasingly adopted climate action as not just a policy tool, but a diplomatic tool as well. The thrust of India's climate diplomacy is the co-movement of environmental protection and development (Bodansky, 2010). India, as a developing nation, having a large population, growing economy and huge energy requirements has always been insisting for the principles of equity, climate justice and common but differentiated responsibilities to govern the climate responsibility. This implies that the developed countries, who have the highest responsibility for GHG emissions in the past, should be more responsible in financing, technology and support in developing countries. Meanwhile, India has been attempting to demonstrate that development and climate responsibility don't clash.

The essence of India's Climate Diplomacy is that it creates influence by attracting, guiding, leading by example, cooperating and disseminating ideas, not by pressure or force. Soft power is the ability of a nation to influence other nations by its values, culture, policies and institutions. By using the language of Justice, Sustainability, Renewable Energy and Civilizational wisdom in the climate field, India is shaping its image internationally. India has come across as a solution-provider in global climate governance rather than a victim of climate change, a developing country asking for help (Atteridge et al., 2012). One of the most significant aspects of India's climate diplomacy is its focus on climate justice. India continues to put forth the argument that the issue of climate change cannot be divorced from the issue of poverty reduction or energy access or economic development.

Low-cost electricity, infrastructure, housing, transport and jobs for millions of people in developing countries are still on the agenda. Hence, any climate policy which does not take developmental inequality into account is unfair. The updated NDC has India's emission intensity of GDP to achieve 45 per cent reduction by 2030 from 2005 levels and the share of non-fossil fuel-based energy sources in India's installed electric power capicity to reach around 50 per cent by 2030. This demonstrates India's efforts to achieve climate responsibility along with development. India has also taken climate diplomacy into Institutional Leadership by setting up a body like the International Solar Alliance (Dubash, 2013). The International Solar Alliance (ISA) was launched by India and France at COP21 (Paris 2015) for the promotion of solar energy, particularly in countries with high solar potential in the developing world. This is a step forward towards making India a leader in renewable energy diplomacy. It enables India to reach out to Asian, African, Latin American and small island nations in search of low cost and clean energy options. Solar diplomacy is India's representation as a partner of the Global South and a nation that can provide practical solutions to the global climate challenges. (Agarwal & Narain, 1991).

Another key aspect of Indian climate diplomacy is “disaster resilience.” The frequency and intensity of natural disasters have risen as a result of the climate change and the developing countries are more vulnerable due to the lack of financial resources and weak infrastructure. The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure was initiated in 2019 by the Government of India at UN Climate Action

Summit. The goal of this project is to make infrastructure systems more resilient to climate and disaster threat and risk. This platform has been a testament to India's commitment to climate diplomacy, not just in the context of emission reduction, but also in adaptation, resilience, and protecting vulnerable communities. The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure speaks of India's responsibility as a global player to share knowledge and forge partnerships for survival. The cultural and civilizational aspect of climate diplomacy also plays a significant role in India (Dubash & Joseph, 2016). The vision behind Mission LiFE – Lifestyle for Environment is India's attempt to link climate action with personal lifestyle and traditional values and responsible consumption. India has been encouraging people to think that climate change is not only a technological challenge or a policy change, but also a shift in lifestyles, patterns of consumption and social attitudes. The official Indian stance associates LiFE with a sustainable lifestyle that is in line with the traditions and values of conservation and moderation. This sets Indian climate diplomacy with a distinct soft power hue as it entails the adoption of Indian civilizational values like harmony with nature, simplicity, ecological responsibility and restraint at global level.

India's assumption of the leadership of G20 in 2023 added to its climate diplomacy efforts as well. In the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration, the “Green Development Pact for a Sustainable Future” highlighted the importance of sustainable lifestyles, inclusive growth, climate action and environmental policy for development. Through the G20 platform, India tried to bridge the gap between developed and developing countries. It put the concerns of the Global South at the heart of discussions around climate action and called for greater support for climate action by finance, technology transfer and capacity building. This diplomatic strategy enabled India to emerge as a voice of developing countries and a peace maker in the international climate governance negotiations. So, climate diplomacy is not just about emissions reduction or even climate conferences in India. A more comprehensive foreign policy approach aimed at winning trust from the world, improving India's leadership position, safeguarding developmental interests and offering an alternative sustainable development paradigm. India's climate diplomacy is a mix of moral arguments, institutional efforts, domestic successes, and cultural norms (Xavier & Nachiappan, 2024).

It provides a chance to India to improve its international image in a different way to coercive power. In this regard, climate diplomacy is a successful soft power instrument for India. The study of Indian Climate Diplomacy as Soft Power Tool has been important because it sheds light on how the Environment has been incorporated into India's identity in the international arena. India's contribution to the climate negotiations reflects how diplomacy has evolved beyond military pacts and trade deals today. A country's impact is also defined by its capacity today to respond to global challenges, create cooperative institutions and provide ethical leadership. In this new understanding of climate diplomacy, sustainability, justice and partnership are tools of power in India. Hence, for India, climate diplomacy should be seen as a strategic, moral and developmental tool that will increase India's leverage in the new world order (Atteridge et al., 2012).

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Conceptual Framework: Climate Diplomacy and Soft Power

Three important concepts climate change, diplomacy and soft power have been used to develop the conceptual framework of "Indian Climate Diplomacy: A Soft Power Tool". Climate change is a pivotal topic in international politics as it impacts on the environment as well as the economy, development, public health, food security, water security, migration, energy policy and international peace. Climate change is the change of climate patterns over a long period of time, according to the United Nations, and there is a point after the 1800's where human activities, particularly the use of fossil fuels, are the primary cause of climate change. Hence, climate change is no longer regarded as a scientific or ecological challenge, but increasingly as a diplomatic or political matter, one that needs to be addressed cooperatively between states, international organizations, civil society, technology institutions and financial entities. Climate diplomacy is the process of using diplomacy, negotiations, partnerships and international institutions to tackle climate change and its associated climate risks (Shidore & Busby, 2019). It covers United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) climate negotiations, climate agreements such as the Paris Agreement, climate finance, technology transfer, renewable energy cooperation, adaptation planning and international cooperation on strengthening disaster resilience. Climate diplomacy is also about applying climate action as a foreign policy tool. Climate Diplomacy in this way does not only involve emissions reductions, but also peace, stability, prosperity and multilateral cooperation. Climate Diplomacy is an approach to climate action through diplomacy, aiming to build the international climate regime and mitigate the threats climate change poses to peace, stability and prosperity. Therefore, climate diplomacy is linked to international relations (IR) and the environment (Dubash & Joseph, 2016).

While closely linked, climate diplomacy is not the same as environmental diplomacy. Environmental diplomacy is a wider concept as it includes international forestry, biodiversity, water, pollution, ocean, waste management and ecological protection discussions. Climate diplomacy is a more specific type of environmental diplomacy, addressing primarily climate change, carbon emissions, energy transition, climate adaptation, mitigation and climate justice. Diplo defines environmental diplomacy as "communication and negotiation between states and international actors to solve common environmental problems. Climate diplomacy can thus be considered as a specialized type of environmental diplomacy, where climate change becomes the primary focus of foreign policy and international governance. Soft power is the second big idea of this framework. Soft power was developed as an important concept in international relations by Joseph S. Nye. Nye says soft power is a country's ability to attract rather than compel or bribe. In short, hard power is "armed power" or economic pressure or sanctions or direct control, and soft power is "cultural power" or ideas or values or institutions or moral power" or development assistance or international credibility. If other countries look up to a country's policies, values, institutions, and/or leadership style, that country gains influence without resorting to force (Keohane & Nye, 1977). Soft power is therefore based on legitimacy, trust and attraction. Soft power gains particular significance when it comes to climate diplomacy, as climate change can only be tackled through soft measures since military pressure does not save the day. It

requires trust, cooperation, persuasion, shared responsibility and international legitimacy. A country can boost its soft power by demonstrating responsible climate action, helping vulnerable countries, establishing useful international institutions, supporting the use of renewable energy, sharing technology, advocating for climate justice and providing ethical leadership. Climate diplomacy then starts to enter the ‘soft power' sector when the use of climate action as a diplomatic instrument serves to enhance the country's image, promote partnerships and strengthen its ‘moral leverage' in international affairs.

Climate diplomacy is a soft power instrument as India's image as a responsible developing nation is enhanced, reflecting development, equity and environmental responsibility (Dubash, 2013). India's situation is contrasting from many developed countries due to the fact that India has a lot of developmental requirements such as poverty reduction, access to electricity, expansion of infrastructure and industry. Meanwhile, India has made tangible progress on renewable energy, climate commitments, international climate cooperation. India's revised NDC pledges to cut emissions intensity of its GDP by 45 percent by 2030, from the 2005 level; to have approximately 50 percent cumulative electric power installed capacity capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030. This demonstrates India's climate diplomacy's effort to reconcile its climate responsibility with its development. Climate justice is an integral part of the conceptual framework of Indian climate diplomacy. Climate justice is about recognizing the responsibility for climate change in the context of past emissions, development inequity and the vulnerability of the poor. The developed countries industrialized earlier and consumed a lot of fossil fuels for developing their economies. Developing countries, including India, say they should not be denied the right to development because of a crisis that was caused primarily by those of the earlier industrial days. Hence, India's climate diplomacy is focussed on equity and justice and supporting poor and vulnerable communities. In the official NDC statement, India has made a connection between climate action and sustainable lives, climate justice, particularly for the poor and vulnerable who are effected by climate change. This provides India with moral legitimacy in the developing countries and adds to the voice of Global South (Dubash & Joseph, 2016).

Institutional soft power is another crucial factor in this set-up. India is not just about the issue of climate justice, it is also developing international forums to promote climate action. One of the greatest examples of this is the International Solar Alliance. It was initiated by India and France at COP21 in Paris, 2015 with the aim of encouraging the use of solar energy, particularly in developing nations. ISA is a global intergovernmental organisation committed to speeding up the deployment of solar energy for energy access, energy security and sustainable development. This project is a means for India to connect with nations in Asia, Africa, Latin America and small island states through the power of the sun. This will improve India's reputation as a country that offers real-world solutions to the climate crisis. Likewise, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure in India is another soft power in the realm of the climate. CDRI was announced by India at the UN Climate Action Summit in 2019, which will encourage infrastructure resilience to climate and disaster risks, both new and

existing (Agarwal & Narain, 1991). CDRI is a multi-stakeholder partnership model with members from the governments, UN agencies, multilateral development banks, the private sector and academic institutions, as described by the United Nations Sustainable Development platform. This initiative demonstrates India's climate diplomacy, which is not just about emissions reduction but also adaptation, resilience, and protection against climate disasters. India's strengthening position as a co-operative and responsible global actor is through providing this platforms.

Soft power is also part of the framework, along with cultural and civilizational soft power. Harmony with nature, sustainable living, responsible consumption and moderation are some of the key concepts that are often invoked in India's climate diplomacy. This is what you can see in Mission LiFE Lifestyle for Environment. Mission LiFE brings climate action to the everyday actions of people and instills a sense of responsibility towards the use of resources instead of wasteful consumption. India's official stance links sustainable lifestyle to climate justice and sustainable long-term climate action. That is what makes India's climate diplomacy unique as it brings forth the message of climate action not just as a technology or financial issue, but also one of values, culture and lifestyle. In this manner, India is leveraging its civilizational identity as a ‘soft power asset'. The conceptual structure can be explained in 5 interrelated aspects (Nye, 2004). Firstly, normative dimension, India reference ideas such as climate justice, equity and sustainable development. Second, institutional dimension, India's creation of international platforms like ISA and CDRI. Third, developmental dimension, India's connection between climate action and energy access, poverty reduction and infrastructure development. Fourth, Cultural dimension involves shifting lifestyles and making ecological values a priority in India with Mission LiFE. Finally, the 5th dimension, that of diplomacy, in which India voices the concerns of the global south in the global climate negotiations. These dimensions provide a holistic understanding of the nature of Indian climate diplomacy as a soft power instrument.

Hence the conceptual approach of this study is that the climate diplomacy in India is not only an environmental policy but it is also a strategic diplomatic instrument. It contributes to the development of a favorable image of India internationally, enhances India's role in developing nations, provides India with a moral headspace in climate change negotiations and establishes new patterns of global cooperation. India's climate diplomacy is based on soft power, ‘attraction and cooperation’ and legitimacy, not pressure and coercion. In this context, climate diplomacy turns into a contemporary soft power strategy for India to exert change on global climate governance and safeguard its developmental interests (Shidore & Busby, 2019).

India’s Climate Diplomacy: Historical Background

India's climate diplomacy has now evolved from a reactive development-focused approach to a more active leadership-oriented global climate action. In the beginning, India’s climate diplomacy was mainly focused on protecting the development rights of poor and developing countries. It later progressed to become a leader in the field of renewable energy, climate justice, disaster resilience and Global South leadership, and sustainable lifestyle diplomacy. Thus, the historical evolution of India's climate diplomacy reveals an obvious shift – from just being an equity negotiator to a climate

institution builder and climate solution provider. India's climate diplomacy has its origins in the country's post-colonial development trajectory. Once India gained independence, the most important issue was to reduce poverty, ensure food security, industrial development, employment creation and access to energy. For this reason, India always insisted that protecting the environment should not be used as a means of limitation to the economic development of the developing countries. The concept of Indian climate thinking was rooted in the idea that in the past rich industrialised countries have utilized fossil fuels to develop whereas the developing countries are still requiring energy for social and economic improvements (Keohane & Nye, 1977). This thinking was later adopted in India's diplomacy in international climate negotiations.

This key event was the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, leading to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The UNFCCC agreed that climate protection should be based on equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities: all countries have responsibility for climate protection but the responsibility is greater in developed countries due to their higher economic potential and historical emissions. This is the crux of India's climate diplomacy. It provided India with a robust legal and moral justification to claim that developed countries need to take the lead in emission cut and also need to finance and transfer technology to the developing countries.

The era of the Kyoto Protocol had a profound impact on India's climate diplomacy during the 1990s and early 2000s. The Kyoto Protocol set specific emission reduction targets on the developed countries and economies in transition, but did not impose the same kind of binding emission reduction targets on the developing countries, such as India (Dubash, 2013). This was done on the principle that the developed countries had to reduce their emissions first as they had contributed more to the build-up of greenhouse gases, as was India's case. India's climate diplomacy was more on the defensive side in this stage. It preserved national development space, ensured energy security and opposed pressures from developed countries to impose identical emission reduction obligations.

But India's stance was not just one of inaction. India had argued that the action on climate change should be intertwined with development justice. India stressed taking into account per-capita emission, historical responsibility, poverty and energy access in determining the climate responsibilities. This helped to make India a significant voice of the developing world. During this period, India's presence reinforced its position as a voice of the Global South as many developing countries had similar concerns about climate funding, technology transfer and the unequal burden. The next significant step came with the launch of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) by the Government of India in 2008. This was a much needed domestic achievement, as it demonstrated that India was addressing international negotiations as well as establishing national policy mechanisms for action on climate change. The National Action Plan had 8 national missions and it emphasized on solar energy, energy efficiency, sustainable habitat, water, Himalayan ecosystem, Green India, sustainable agriculture and strategic knowledge on climate change. This was a shift in India's climate diplomacy – India started to link international climate justice with climate governance in India. It also helped to build India's credibility in global climate talks (Shidore & Busby, 2019).

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Another historical milestone was the Paris Agreement of 2015. The Paris Agreement was not like the Kyoto Protocol, which set different targets for different countries, but was a universal agreement for all countries to make their own climate commitments under the Agreement. COP21 adopted the Paris Agreement in Paris on 12 December 2015 and it has come into force on 4 November 2016. In 2015, India presented its first climate pledges such as reducing the emission intensity of GDP by 33-35 percent from 2005 level and installing approximately 40 percent of the total electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel based energy resources by 2030. On India's Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary, 2 October 2016, India ratified the Paris Agreement, thereby imparting symbolic moral and civilizational dimension to India's climate diplomacy. The Paris climate change period was the time when India went from being only a negotiating partner to becoming a leader in the negotiations. India did not just make climate pledges but also initiated significant international efforts (Xavier & Nachiappan, 2024). At COP21, Paris, 2015, India and France initiated International Solar Alliance, to promote solar energy and more particularly in the countries of the South. This effort was one of the most visible in India's climate diplomacy reaching out as soft power. ISA helped India to establish its leadership in renewable energy and to be a partner of countries that are rich in solar energy in Asia, Africa, Latin America and island countries.

India's climate diplomacy has since broadened in the subsequent year 2015 with the concept of climate resilience. The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure was announced by India at UN Climate Action Summit in 2019. This was done to enhance the resilience of climate and disaster risk to infrastructure systems. Historically significant in that India's climate diplomacy shifted away from emission reduction and renewable energy. It started to involve adaptation, disaster management, protection and assistance to vulnerable countries in infrastructure. This reinforced India's reputation as a nation with a practical understanding of Global South (UN) climate issues. Another key advancement in India's climate diplomacy has been the emergence of lifestyle-based climate diplomacy. India has popularized the concept of Mission LiFE – Lifestyle for Environment, a campaign that has combined climate action with sustainable lifestyle, responsible consumption and conservation and moderation, the traditional values of India. The National Mission on Sustainable Living (LiFE) is one of the initiatives included in India's updated NDC with a thrust on “promoting a healthy and sustainable way of living” for addressing climate change. This infused a civilizational dimension to India's climate diplomacy. India started to say that climate change can't be addressed just technically and financially; there's a need for a change in human behavior and consumption pattern.

India's climate diplomacy was also enhanced by the revised climate commitments. India has raised its NDC for 2021–2030 to achieve a 45 percent absolute reduction in emissions intensity of its GDP from the 2005 level, and to have around 50 percent of the installed capacity of electric power generation coming from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030. This amendment mirrored India's efforts to reconcile climate action with development. It demonstrated that India was developing as a responsible climate actor and that principle of developed countries providing support to developing countries through finance and technology remains intact. The evolution of India's climate diplomacy

continued over the years, with this country's Presidency at the G20 in 2023 further consolidating its position. The Green Development Pact for a Sustainable Future was also part of the New Delhi Leaders' Declaration, highlighting environmentally sustainable and inclusive economic growth in a balanced manner. India, via the G20 platform, sought to link climate action and development with the energy transition and the concerns of the Global South and poverty reduction. The stage highlights that India was no longer reacting to global climate agendas, but creating them (Dubash & Joseph, 2016).

India has further increased its climate action in the new round. India's NDC for the 2031-2035 targets further extends its previous commitments and serves as an expression of India's climate action as continuous, credible and development-oriented. India's targets for 2015 set the groundwork and important targets for emission intensity reduction and non-fossil power capacity were met early, the official statement says. This shows the current stage of India's Climate Diplomacy, domestic performance building up international credibility. So, it is fair to say that the evolution of Indian climate diplomacy can be traced back to four major stages. The equity and the development phase was the first phase and India advocated the rights of the developing countries. The second one was the Kyoto and negotiation phase, in which India highlighted the historical responsibility and difference in obligations. The third phase was the Paris and institutional leadership phase, where India started to launch global initiatives like the International Solar Alliance. The fourth phase is the soft power and leadership of the Global South phase, in which India will showcase itself as a responsible global leader in climate justice, renewable energy, disaster resilience, Mission LiFE and Global South leadership in the G20 (Agarwal & Narain, 1991).

Hence, the climate diplomacy of India has not come out of nowhere. The product of a long historical process influenced by development needs, international negotiations, climate justice, domestic policy reforms and global leadership ambitions. India was first using climate diplomacy to safeguard its developmental space, but later it evolved climate diplomacy as a soft power instrument. India today has the opportunity to develop its moral authority, foster solidarity among Global South countries, develop renewable energy collaboration, and demonstrate an alternative sustainable development paradigm in global politics (Nye, 2004).

International Solar Alliance (ISA): At the Soft Power Level

One of the most significant initiatives of India's climate diplomacy as a soft power approach is the International Solar Alliance (ISA). It was started by India and France in 2015 with the Paris Climate Conference (COP21). The primary purpose of ISA is to encourage cooperation on solar energy between countries, particularly among the countries in the sun rich region. It aims to lower the cost, availability, and adoption of solar energy to help countries get rid of the reliance on fossil fuels and transition to clean and sustainable energy. The International Solar Alliance is a testament to India's soft power since it gives India the chance to affect the world through cooperation, partnership, and problem solving rather than pressure and military force. Soft power is the capacity of a country to draw and persuade people in its ideas, values, culture, policies and institutions. In this context, ISA

contributes to the image of India as a responsible global citizen who is dedicated to climate action, renewable energy and sustainable development. This is how India is seen as a developing nation which calls for climate justice, but also as a nation with practical solutions to global climate crisis (Dubash, 2013).

ISA is significant because solar energy is directly related to the needs of the developing countries. There are numerous countries in Asia, Africa, Latin American and small island regions that have sufficient solar resources, but lack the technology, finance and institutional capability to make optimal use of solar. India's efforts to foster cooperation between these countries through the International Solar Alliance involve promoting solar initiatives, finance, technology transfer and capacity development. This provides India with a positive image in the eyes of the other countries of the Global South. The ISA also enhances India's role as a leader in the field of renewable energy diplomacy. In the past, the developed world had the advantage of more technology and resources, and thus tended to dominate the international climate discussions. ISA provided an opportunity for India to build a separate platform for the developing countries to also be an active player in the global clean energy transition. This changes India’s role from a passive participant in climate negotiations to an active agenda-setter in global climate governance. India is no longer merely seen as a country that is asserting its development rights, but is also emerging as a country that is creating institutions for climate solutions (Keohane & Nye, 1977).

There is another important aspect of ISA being a soft power, which is its linkage with India's foreign policy goals related to climate change. India is encouraging cooperation in the field of solar power, which will further strengthen ties with various countries. It provides opportunities for technical cooperation, training, investment, research and development. This type of collaboration fosters trust and goodwill. ISA has a different mechanism from hard power in creating influence, which is made by the process of mutual benefit and mutual development. The International Solar Alliance will also help India showcase its voice of the Global South. India has consistently made the case for climate action to be equitable and development-centric. It should not be a choice between economic development and environmental protection for poor and developing countries. Solar energy is one of the solutions that can help achieve multiple benefits such as energy access, energy for rural electrification, job creation and climate protection simultaneously. ISA demonstrates that clean energy can be a means of inclusive development in India. ISA is also of a symbolic value. It has its headquarters in India and thus India's institutional presence in global climate governance. This is important, as there are very few international organizations based in India. ISA in India bolsters India's diplomatic credentials and elevates its profile in the renewable energy cooperation arena. It further demonstrates India's ability to develop and spearhead international institutions (Shidore & Busby, 2019).

ISA contributes to India's three important goals from the climate diplomacy angle – climate responsibility, development cooperation and international leadership. Firstly, it demonstrates India's commitment to climate action. Second, it enables developing countries to make a transition to energy.

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Third, it creates a global platform to promote solar energy and thereby enhancing India's diplomatic footprint. These three components render ISA a very effective soft power tool. International Solar Alliance is also associated with India's concept of climate justice. Historically the developed countries have been responsible for more of the emissions of greenhouse gasses, and the developing countries are feeling the effects of the climate change. ISA is a way of demonstrating to India that climate justice is not merely a moral claim, but also a form of concrete action and collaboration. India contributes to solar-rich countries in developing clean energy and thus embodied equitable climate action.

Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure

The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) is a significant global effort initiated by India to build resilience of infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks. The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi announced it at the UN Climate Action Summit in 2019. The underlying aim of CDRI is to ensure that roads, bridges, power systems, communication networks, hospitals, schools, airports, ports, water systems and other public infrastructure are planned, built and maintained in a way that allows them to withstand disasters like floods, cyclones, earthquakes, landslides, heatwaves and extreme events associated with climate change. CDRI is vital as the occurrence and severity of disasters have been rising in many countries due to climate change. Loss of infrastructure is a major cause of damage after a disaster, along with the disaster itself. For instance, if roads are damaged, relief supplies are not able to reach affected areas. Hospitals and water supply systems are very vulnerable to the loss of electricity systems (Hallegatte et al., 2019). In the event of a breakdown, rescue operations are difficult. Thus, the concept of disaster-resilient infrastructure is directly related to human security, economic stability and sustainable development. The CDRI is an inter-sectoral global partnership. It involves national governments, international organizations, multilateral development banks, private sector and academic institutions. CDRI is a partnership convened by Government of India and supported by UNDRR under the umbrella of the United Nations Sustainable Development platform in 2019 to build infrastructure resilience to climate and disaster risks. Many actors are involved in CDRI, and this makes it different from a normal government programme, as it involves bringing many actors together to share knowledge, funding, technology, research and best practices.

CDRI is a good case of India's soft power in the realm of climate diplomacy. It helps India to project itself as a responsible and solution based actor in the world. It is not cooperation, technical support, knowledge sharing, and institutional leadership that are tools to exert pressure on other countries; it is cooperation and building goodwill. That's why, CDRI becomes a soft power tool. It facilitates India to attract, partner and trust in the international space by strengthening India's influence rather than through actions of force and coercion. CDRI also expands the definition of climate diplomacy. Many climate debates are dominated by the issue of carbon emissions, renewables and mitigation. But India's CDRI programme demonstrates that adaptation and resilience must be part of climate diplomacy too. Even though they are responsible for very little of the historical greenhouse gas emissions, developing countries, small island states and climate-vulnerable regions do tend to be more severely affected by

disasters. India's resilient infrastructure resonates with the needs of vulnerable countries and ties climate action with practical needs.

According to the official CDRI website, the coalition's mission is to "strengthen the resilience of infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks" and its members have access to "world-class expertise, funding, technical support, research, innovative solutions and international best practices. CDRI currently boasts 70 members and 183 projects on its official site, and the project has grown into a major international platform. This growth will boost India's reputation as a nation that can develop and drive international institutions. CDRI is particularly relevant to the "Global South." Frequent flooding, storms, coastal erosion, droughts and other climate-related disasters are exacting repeated infrastructure losses on many developing countries. Such losses impede development and drive poverty. Resilient infrastructure is a basic requirement to life and development for these countries. India through CDRI shows itself as a partner of the vulnerable countries and as a supporter of the concept of development-oriented climate action, which is inclusive. Diplomatically, CDRI contributes to India's many goals. In the first place, it has enhanced India's leadership in global climate governance. Second, it assists developing countries with the climate disaster. Thirdly, it enhances the image of India as a responsible power. Fourth, it links between India's domestic experience on disaster management and international cooperation. Fifth, it provides India with a further space for voice regarding the Global South's concerns (Xavier & Nachiappan, 2024).

CDRI also helps bolster India's other climate initiatives like the International Solar Alliance and Mission LiFE. The International Solar Alliance has centers on renewable energy and clean energy, Mission LiFE is about sustainable lifestyle and responsible consumption, and CDRI is about infrastructure resilience and disaster preparedness. These are all examples of the fact that India's climate diplomacy is not confined to one field. It covers mitigation, adaptation, resilience, lifestyle change and sustainable development. Another perspective on CDRI is the relationship between infrastructure and economic development. Infrastructure is the backbone of any modern economy. Everyday life and economic activities are supported by roads, railways, electricity, water supply, digital networks, schools and hospitals. Disasters can cause significant economic losses and long recovery times when buildings and structures are damaged. Thus, resilient infrastructure contributes to minimizing disaster losses and safeguarding public investments and long-term development. This is because CDRI is not just an environmental action, but a development and economic security action as well (Nye, 2004).

Mission LiFE and Civilizational Soft Power

Mission LiFE Lifestyle for Environment is one of the most unique initiatives of India's climate diplomacy. It not only discusses the nature of climate action as a policy matter, technology and international agreements, but also as a human behaviour, social responsibility and cultural values. LiFE was first introduced by the Honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi while addressing COP26 in Glasgow on 1st November 2021 as a call for "mindful and deliberate utilisation" rather than "mindless and destructive consumption." It is a movement whose core value is to create awareness

about environment protection among the people, communities and institutions in such a way that they adopt environment friendly lifestyles. Mission LiFE is significant in the Indian climate diplomacy because it introduces a new perspective on climate action, shifting the focus from merely states and industries to the common people. The main focus areas of most climate policies are emission targets, the promotion of renewable energy, carbon markets, climate finance, technological innovation. Mission LiFE builds on that with the contention that the climate crisis is also associated with consumption patterns. With overconsumption, a wasteful lifestyle, the use of single use plastic, excessive use of energy, water wastage and the throwaway culture being the major causes of environmental pressure (Atteridge et al., 2012) the overall conclusion of the project is that the issue of waste is of major concern. Thus, Mission LiFE advocates the concept of climate change mitigation through individual yet collective lifestyle changes that encompass energy saving, water saving, waste minimization, prevention of one use plastic, sustainable food habits and responsible use of resources. The problem areas mentioned in the official Mission LiFE platform are save energy, save water, reduce waste, reduce e-waste, adopt sustainable food systems, say no to single use plastic and adopt healthy lifestyles. Mission LiFE turns into soft power as the nation can influence the world with the power of values, ideas and moral appeal without force or pressure. Joseph Nye's definition of soft power is the capacity to achieve desired ends by attracting rather than coercing or paying. This is why Mission LiFE enhances India's soft power as it portrays India as a country that gives an ethical and practical climate message to the world. But India is not merely demanding climate finance and protecting its development rights, it is also providing a lifestyle-based model of sustainability that can also be embraced by societies around the world (Nye, 2004).

Civilizational soft power refers to adopting and using the historical heritage, cultural values, philosophy and social practices of the country to gain international attraction and moral influence. For Mission LiFE, India's contemporary approach to climate action becomes a part of its age-old culture of harmony with nature. As per the official website of Mission LiFE, Indian culture and living traditions are sustainable in their nature and conserving natural resources and living in harmony with Nature are highlighted in ancient Indian wisdom. This allows Mission LiFE to imbibe a civilizational ethos as it links climate diplomacy with Indian values like moderation, restraint, respecting nature, responsible use of resources etc.

Mission LiFE is also important as it questions the current growth paradigm, which is consumption based. The current development of industry is often associated with increased consumption, consumption habits and carbon emissions. The idea of Mission LiFE is to offer an alternative: development should not be about wasteful consumption and progress should not be assessed solely in terms of material accumulation. It states that there is a need for sustainable, balanced and nature respecting real development. This message enables India to showcase its ability to not just provide technology and policy but also the moral dimension to global climate action. A key aspect of Mission LiFE is also the link with climate justice. India has long emphasized that any efforts for climate action must be equitable towards developing countries and the poor. Mission LiFE backs this with a focus on

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consumption behaviour instead of emission from production. Generally, developed countries tend to have bigger per-capita consumption and carbon footprints. India introduces the question of unequal consumption into climate diplomacy, with a focus on lifestyle change. This underlines the moral case for India, which is that the responsibility for climate action should not lie exclusively with the poor and developing countries, but also require shifts in the consumption habits of rich countries.

People-centric is another strong focus of Mission LiFE. It acknowledges that climate change is not something that is solely the responsibility of governments. The law, policies and technologies are needed, however, not without the involvement of the public. The Mission LiFE framework aims at transforming citizens to 'Pro-Planet People', those who make a mindful choice to be green in their daily activities. This is a democratic and participatory climate action, because it is people-oriented. It provides an opportunity for ordinary citizens to participate in environmental protection and makes the responsibility to protect the environment a social movement. Mission LiFE is built upon three interlinked shifts: change in demand, change in supply and change in policy. To stimulate demand for environment friendly products and practices, individuals are first encouraged. Second, industries and markets are expected to adjust to this new demand by making their products and services more sustainable. Third, governments may enact policies to enable the Sustainable Consumption and Production. The three phases of Mission LiFE are described in the Mission LiFE brochure as shifts in demand, supply and policy. This is more than a slogan: Mission LiFE becomes a platform for behaviour change, a platform for markets, a platform for governance. Mission LiFE, from the foreign policy point of view, boosts India's reputation as a responsible global citizen. This enables India to speak in a universal, simple and culturally appropriate language. All developed and developing nations can comprehend the significance of water conservation, minimizing wastage, conserving energy and preventing harmful utilization. This universal appeal imparts diplomacy to India. It is also a way for India to be seen as a link between state-of-the-art climate science and traditional ecological knowledge. Mission LiFE also supports the various climate diplomacy efforts of India. International Solar Alliance is about renewable energy and clean power. The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure is a group dedicated to adaptation and resilient infrastructure. Mission LiFE has a focus on lifestyle, behaviour and sustainable consumption. These efforts demonstrate India's multidimensional approach to climate diplomacy. Mitigation, adaptation, resilience, equity and cultural values. Mission LiFE provides a moral and civilizational backing to India's Climate diplomacy (Dubash, 2013).

India’s Role in G20 Climate Agenda

However, India's contribution to the G20 climate agenda is particularly notable during its own G20 Presidency in 2023, as it integrated climate action and development with energy security and the Global South's concerns. The theme of India's G20 Presidency “One Earth, One Family, One Future” was reflecting the fact that climate change is an environmental crisis and a common challenge to all humankind, which is linked to human survival, economic stability and sustainable development. When the New Delhi Leaders' Declaration included climate and environment under the umbrella of a “Green Development Pact for a Sustainable Future,” it was clear that India was attempting to integrate climate

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action with the broader concept of development, rather than the environment. The most significant one that India has made to the G20 climate agenda has been the idea of integrating development with climate responsibility. Developed countries tend to be more concerned with emission reduction targets, while developed countries are concerned about the impact of strict climate policies on their development opportunities. India attempted to fill this gap by saying climate action should be "environmentally responsible, economically practical and socially inclusive". Therefore, there should be no conflict in the climate agenda between the fight against poverty and the protection of the environment. India brought the concept of employment and economic growth to the fore through the Green Development Pact with the protection of the ecosystem and climate action. The Press Information Bureau called the pact a "roadmap that will make production eco-friendly, consumption climate-conscious" (IPCC, 2023).

In the other field, promoting Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) at the G20 level was another big part of India's responsibilities. India has taken the G20 agenda to the world to make this message more heard - that climate change can only be addressed by technology, government policies or international agreements. In addition it calls for shifts in lifestyle and consumption habits. The concept of sustainable lifestyles was an integral part of the New Delhi Declaration and was mentioned in the G20 High-Level Principles on Lifestyles for Sustainable Development. In this regard, it was crucial for the Indian climate diplomacy as LiFE was an image of India's civilizational soft power. It introduces Indian concepts of 'Maitri' (moderation), 'Sustainable Consumption' and 'Harmony with nature' as viable solutions for the global climate crisis. India was also a significant leader in promoting the cause of clean and just energy transitions. The New Delhi Declaration pledged to promote accelerated clean, sustainable, just, affordable and inclusive energy transitions, taking into account the various national contexts of developing countries. It was significant due to India's focus on the fact that there are different ways of transitioning to energy. While developed countries can have more financial and technological resources, developing countries still require affordable energy to drive their growth, industrialization and poverty alleviation. So India emphasized the importance of the energy transition being just and inclusive, rather than one-sided or externally imposed (Dubash, 2013). One of India's biggest successes as a leader of the G20 climate agenda was the commitment to triple the global renewable energy capacity by 2030. This was a significant climate-related pledge as renewable energy plays a pivotal role in mitigating the reliance on fossil fuels and realizing long-term climate targets. In India's case, support for this agenda was matched by its own renewable energy diplomacy, for example in the form of the International Solar Alliance. India's desire for climate justice as well as its role in promoting practical solutions to climate change in the form of renewable energy expanded its credibility as a leader at the G20 level. Climate finance is also one of the most important issues of developing countries that India has raised in this context. There is a massive need for investment in renewable energy, adaptation, disaster resilience, green infrastructure and technology for climate action. Unfortunately, developing countries do not always have the financial resources to make this transition. India, in the G20, underscored the need for adequate finance, technology transfer and

capacity building by international financial institutions and developed countries to support developing countries. This enhanced India's role as a voice of the Global South, as a lot of developing and vulnerable states have the same concern (Xavier & Nachiappan, 2024).

India's presence was also closely linked to the 'Global South' leadership in the G20 climate agenda. India sought to place a stop to the climate talks being a forum for only developed countries. It highlighted the needs of developing countries, small island states, climate-vulnerable societies and developing economies. This was evident from the repeated focus on India on equity, differentiated responsibilities, sustainable development and affordable finance. In doing so, India would establish a role as a link between the developed world and the developing world. This second leg stance is crucial to India's soft power as it builds trust and diplomatic goodwill among countries, who feel under-represented in global climate governance. India also broadened the definition of climate action to incorporate resilience and adaptation to the G20 agenda. Climate change is not only about emission cuts; it is also about safeguarding people and infrastructure against the impact of floods, cyclones, droughts, heatwaves etc. extreme events (Dubash, 2013). This is in line with India's overall climate diplomacy, particularly the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. In highlighting resilience, India demonstrated that climate governance cannot only tackle carbon reduction targets in the long-term but should also consider the immediate pain of vulnerable people.

India's G20 climate responsibility was of immense significance from the soft power angle as it allowed India to emerge as responsible, balanced and solution-oriented global power. The G20 climate agenda was not only used to protect India's interest; it was also used to advance other concepts like green development, sustainable lifestyles, climate justice, expansion of renewable energy and inclusive energy transition. These thoughts enhanced the moral and diplomatic clout of India, attracting both developed and developing countries.

G20 climate commitments in India, though, showcased the boundaries of global consensus. The G20 leaders agreed to further promote clean energy and facilitate expansion of renewable energy, without coming to a final decision on a complete fossil fuel phaseout. Among the findings of the declaration, it noted that the declaration adopted a "cautious" stance on phasing out fossil fuels, reflecting the remaining deep political and economic divisions in climate diplomacy among the world's economies. This constraint highlights the importance of India's role, as well as the necessity of fostering consensus among countries with varying energy interests (Xavier & Nachiappan, 2024).

- **Related Judicial Cases**

1. **M.K. Ranjitsinh & Others v. Union of India & Others, 2024**

This is the one most directly related to your paper. In M.K. Ranjitsinh & Others v. Union of India & Others, Supreme Court of India has held that the right to be free from the adverse effects of climate change is derived from Article 14 of the Indian Constitution along with Article 21 of the constitution. The case was about balancing the conservation of the Great Indian Bustard with India's renewable energy pledges. The theme of this case is helpful as it illustrates that the issue of climate change effects

in India is now linked not just to policy and diplomacy, but also to constitutional rights and environmental justice.

2. **Ashok Kumar v. Union of India (1971)**

The M C Mehta line of cases is central to the Indian environmental jurisprudence. These cases included topics like industrial pollution, hazardous industries, air pollution, Ganga pollution and vehicular pollution. They contributed to the enlargement of the scope of Article 21, when they linked the right to life to the right to the environment. This case line will be applicable to your paper as it highlights the importance of the image of India abroad when the Indian courts and institutions also promote environmental protection.

3. **Natraj v. Union of India, 1997**

In the case of Vellore Citizens Welfare Forum v. Union of India, the Supreme Court has introduced significant concepts in environment like the polluter pays principle, the precautionary principle and the principle of sustainable development. This is a good case for your paper as it also proves that India's climate diplomacy talks about balancing development and environmental protection. The case is consistent with the concept that it is not possible to achieve economic development without addressing ecological harm.

4. **State of Punjab vs. Dalbir Singh, 2001**

The Supreme Court in Subhash Kumar v. State of Bihar ruled that the right to enjoy pollution free water and atmosphere is a part of the ‘Right to life' under Article 21 of the Constitution. This case can be connected with the domestic origin of the climate diplomacy in India. It reveals that environmental quality is a component of human dignity/life. This reinforces the notion that climate change is a human rights issue as well as an ecological issue.

5. **V. Kirankumar Reddy and others v. Union of India, 1998**

This case gave a boost to polluter pays' principle in the Indian environment law. The Supreme Court has said that polluting industries could be made to pay for the environmental restoration and compensation. This case is valuable because it illustrates the notion of environmental responsibility being legally and monetarily responsible. This principle can be linked to historical responsibility and climate justice in the context of climate diplomacy.

6. **Narmada Bachao Andolan v. Union of India, 2000**

This case is relevant to the debate over the conflicts between development, displacement and environmental protection. The Supreme Court noted that if the mitigation, rehabilitation and ecological protection is taken into consideration, environmental changes cannot be termed as “unavoidable”. The case is used with caution as it does not specifically focus on climate diplomacy but instead provides an insight into India's overall development-environment balancing approach.

➢ Related Constitutional Articles

- **Article 14 Right to Equality**

Article 14 is pertinent because Climate change has differential impacts on humans. The impacts of climate change are often more severe for vulnerable groups and women, and for poor communities

and farmers, especially for those in coastal areas. In M.K. Ranjitsinh, the Supreme Court linked climate change to Article 14 as the disparity in climate vulnerability would impact on equality before law and equal protection of law.

- **Article 22 Right to Equality**

The most vital constitutional provision dealing with environmental and climate rights in India is Article 21. Article 21 has been interpreted to mean the right to a clean environment, pollution-free air and water, health and dignity. In climate-related arguments, Article 21 is used as an argument for protection from climate change being related to the right to life.

- **Article 48A – Protection and Improvement of Environment**

Article 48A mandates the State to "promote the conservation and enhancement of the environment and protection of forests and wildlife. It offers a constitutional ground for domestic climate action, environmental protection, biodiversity protection, forest conservation and environmental policy. This article can be cited in your paper as India's Climate Diplomacy has a constitutional base at home.

- **Article 51A(g) Fundamental Duty of citizens is also linked to this.**

According to Article 51A(g) citizens have a duty to safeguard and enhance the environment, including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife. The article is also of great value to the Mission LiFE part due to the fact that Mission LiFE also has the theme citizen behaviour, sustainable lifestyle, environmental responsibility. The words "implement" and "amendment" have been added.

- **Article 253 Power to Implement International Agreements**

Article 253 gives Parliament the power to make laws for implementing international treaties and agreements. It is helpful in discussing the role of India in international climate treaties like the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement. It demonstrates the connection between international commitments and domestic legal action, as prescribed in the constitution.

➢ **Related International Articles and Provisions**

1. **UNFCCC Article 3**

The principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities is especially relevant as recognised under UNFCCC Article 3. This is the essence of India's climate diplomacy. Based on this principle, India has made the case for developed countries to be more responsible in the past and to offer financial and technological assistance to developing countries.

2. **UNFCCC Article 4**

The commitments of parties are covered by UNFCCC Article 4. It is pertinent to India's case for climate responsibilities to take national situations, development needs and country-specific responsibilities into account. This article echoes India's stance on climate action being fair and development-aware.

3. **Paris Agreement Article 2**

The Paris Agreement article 2 is important because it establishes the general goals of the Paris Agreement, such as the objective of reducing the global temperature rise, enhancing adaptation, and

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increasing coherence of finance flows for low-emission and climate-resilient development. This article can be utilized to tie India's climate diplomacy to the international climate governance.

4. **Paris Agreement Article 4**

The focus of Article 4 is Nationally Determined Contributions. It has an immediate bearing on India's new climate pledges, such as emissions intensity cuts and non-fossil power targets. This article sheds light on how India communicates its home-grown climate action in the global context of climate responsibility.

5. **Paris Agreement Article 6**

Article 6 addresses cooperation and cooperation options, such as carbon markets. It can be helpful to talk about climate diplomacy, technology cooperation, green investment and international cooperation

6. **Paris Agreement Article 9**

The climate finance is applicable to Article 9. Because India continuously insists on developed countries to provide sufficient finance for developing countries in terms of mitigation, adaptation and clean energy transition. This article contributes to the argument made by India for its leadership in the Global South.

7. **Paris Agreement Article 10**

Article 10 on Technology development and transfer. The centrality of this is relevant in view of India's climate diplomacy, which includes access to low cost green technology, renewable energy cooperation, capacity building for developing countries.

Domestic Climate Action and International Image

Domestic climate action refers to policies, programmes, laws, targets and actions that a country takes domestically to cut climate change, to adapt to climate risks and to achieve sustainable development. Domestic climate action for India covers renewable energy initiatives, promotion of solar energy, development of green hydrogen, energy efficiency, climate action infrastructure, forest protection, sustainable lifestyle campaigns, and long-term, low carbon development planning. These actions are highly relevant as the reputation of a country in climate diplomacy is not only shaped by its contributions in global forums, but also by what it does at home. The Indian internal climate action has now emerged as an important pillar of India's climate international image. India has emerged as a developing country that is attempting to achieve an equilibrium between economic development, poverty alleviation, energy access and environmental protection. This balance is important as India still has a large population with growing energy demand, and has made several big strides towards the clean energy transition (Dubash and Joseph, 2016). India's updated NDC includes a target of 45 per cent reduction in emissions intensity of its GDP by 2030 from 2005 levels and 50 per cent cumulative non-fossil fuel-based electricity generation capacity by 2030. India's domestic climate action is one of its most promising attributes; its ability to develop non-fossil and renewable energy capacity. India has been on a fast trajectory of solar, wind and hydro and other non-fossil fuels. In the context of climate change, this expansion gives India more credibility as renewable energy is definitely associated with coal and fossil fuel reduction. The government has confirmed that India has reached

50 per cent cumulative installation of electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources in June 2025, five years ahead of the deadline of 2030. This accomplishment also enhances India's global reputation as it demonstrates that India is not just making promises, but also making tangible progress (Shidore & Busby, 2019).

Another significant contribution to India's national climate policy is the National Action Plan on Climate Change. It was started in 2008, which established eight national missions on solar energy, energy efficiency, sustainable habitat, water, Himalayan ecosystem, Green India, sustainable agriculture and strategic knowledge on climate change. This plan provided India with a domestic climate policy plan which was structured and would prove that India took climate governance seriously while asserting the rights to development of the developing countries. The promotion of solar energy at the household level is also seen in India's climate action. PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana 2024 encourages the installation of rooftop solar panels for households and seeks to increase the availability of solar power for the common man. According to the official data, the scheme has distributed solar energy to 10 lakh solarised households by March 2025 and the applications received were 47.3 lakh. Such a programme boosts India's image as it signals community and household-level climate actions as well, in addition to industrial and diplomatic levels (Government of India, 2025). The other large project is the National Green Hydrogen Mission. Green hydrogen is regarded as potential "game-changer" in sectors that are hard to decarbonize like industry, transport, refining, steel, and fertilizers. In January 2023, the Government of India announced the approval of the National Green Hydrogen Mission, which aims to generate 5 million metric tonnes (MMT) of GHY by 2030 and includes an allocation of ₹19,744 crore. The effort will enhance India's foreign perception of its readiness to meet the challenges of low carbon technology and energy security in the future.

India has also focused on mechanisms for climate action that are based on markets and policies. It, for instance, led to the Energy Conservation Amendment, which gave the government the legal backing to implement a carbon credit trading scheme and mandate for some consumers to contribute a portion of their energy consumption from non-fossil sources. This demonstrates that India is taking steps to establish its own emission reduction and energy efficiency and clean production institutions. It furthers India's climate image as international climate diplomacy is increasingly concerned with tangible policy tools and not just lofty rhetoric. Indian climate action story of adaptation and resilience also influences its image in the house. India is a country that has to deal with floods, droughts, cyclones, heatwaves, glacial risks and water stress. Thus, preparedness to climate risks is also part of India's climate policy, apart from mitigation or emission reduction. The government's approach to climate change is to be prepared for climate risks and to mitigate the challenges by expanding the use of clean energy, implementing low carbon technologies and implementing policy changes (Nye, 2004). This will enable India to reach out to other developing nations which are also highly vulnerable to climate change. Domestic action and global image are very much linked. Domestic achievements are the key to India's arguments being stronger at international fora when it comes to climate justice, global south leadership, renewable energy, sustainable lifestyle, etc. India's expansion into renewable energy, non-

fossil capacity, rooftop solar programmes and climate missions provide political leverage. They contribute to the image of India as a responsible power that is prepared to act, rather than criticize the developed nations.

Home climate action also boosts India's soft power. The understated power is based on attraction, trust and credibility. When India is moving towards clean energy and yet others are bent on development, it is considered by others as a practical development model for developing nations. A climate model that integrates climate action with poverty reduction and energy access and economic development is appealing to the Global South. That is what makes India's internal policies contribute to its voice of the developing countries in global climate negotiations. But some of the challenges for India's international image are there too. India's energy demand and the requirement for cheap electricity is a reason why the country continues to rely heavily on coal. Increased renewable energy generation, but energy transition needs grid modernization, energy storage, finance, technology and institutional coordination. Hence, the picture of India's climate is complex yet robust. It is praised for its achievements in renewable energy development and climate justice but is also being closely monitored due to its continued reliance on fossil fuels (Xavier & Nachiappan 2024).

Conclusion

Climate diplomacy has emerged as an important soft power tool in modern world politics and Indian climate diplomacy has grown as a significant tool. It symbolizes India's efforts towards sustainable development, equity, and cooperation with the world. India's climate stance is based on the principles of fairness, inclusiveness and development in climate action. India is a developing nation which has high energy requirement and socio-economic obligations and has always emphasized that a climate framework should consider historical emissions and every country's vulnerability, while taking into account the fact that some nations have developed earlier than the other and are not equal. India has emerged as a leader in renewable energy cooperation through initiatives like the International Solar Alliance. India's Climate Diplomacy has been raised from mitigation to adaptation and resilience by the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. Mission LiFE has brought the people-centric and civilizational dimension to the climate policy of India by bringing together climate action with responsible living, moderation and harmony with nature. India's G20 Presidency also bolstered its global climate diplomacy by advancing the green development, sustainable lifestyles, just transition towards climate change and issues concerning the Global South. The domestic climate action has also significantly helped India to enhance its international image. The expansion of renewable energy, fresh climate pledges, rooftop solar projects, green hydrogen and climate policy reforms demonstrate that India is doing more than just making diplomatic statements, it's also doing something at the national level. Such internal measures are a reflection of Indian's climate leadership at the global level. There are, however, gaps in India's climate diplomacy, particularly in its ongoing reliance on the use of coal, increased demand for energy, the importance of climate funding, technology transfer and institutional capacity. In spite of these difficulties, India's foreign policy on climate has managed to establish a positive image of it as a responsible, balanced and solution-oriented power. Hence, Indian climate

diplomacy is not only an environmental policy but also a strategic, moral and development policy tool, which can boost India's soft power and its role in global governance.

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