# Does India have a Right to Burn Fossil Fuels?

## What is the issue?

With a lot of debate on India's dependence on coal, the Government of India has for the first time made a commitment to achieve the net zero target by 2070.

## Why was India hesistant to commit to net zero target earlier?

- India has neither historically emitted nor currently emits carbon anywhere close to what the global North has or does in per capita terms.
- India's per capita emissions is lower than the global average.
- It stressed for a higher and fairer share in the global carbon budget.
- There were arguments that since India was colonised, it has a right to burn and stopping the country from doing that is injustice.

## What are the injustices in terms of a carbon budget?

- Global injustice in terms of a carbon budget happens at the level of the nation-states , between the rich and the poor within nations and between humans and non-human species.
- The Global South is not only made primarily responsible for climate change, but also has to bear the effect of climate change because of its tropical climate and high population density along the coastal lines.
- For development, the countries in the global South need not increase their share in the global carbon budget.

## What major areas have to be focused for development?

- **Cleaner forms of energy** - The economic development requires energy and coal is favoured on account of its cost, reliability and domestic availability.
- But recent data show that the levelised cost of electricity from renewable energy sources like solar, hydro and onshore wind is already less than fossil fuel-based electricity generation.
- The frontier renewable energy technologies have managed to address the question of variability of sources with technological progress.
- Also, India is among the largest importers of coal in the world, whereas it

has no scarcity of solar energy.

- **Development model** – The two significant issues under discussion in the post-colonial development were control over technology and choice of techniques to address the issue of surplus labour.
- The abundance of renewable natural resources in the tropical climate can give India a head start in this competitive world of technology.
- South-South collaborations can help India avoid the usual patterns of trade between the North and the South, where the former controls technology and the latter merely provides inputs.
- The high-employment path that the green energy provides may help address the issue of surplus labour while providing decentralised access to clean energy to the poor and the marginalized.
- It simultaneously addresses the issues of employment, technology, energy poverty and self-reliance.

## What is the path ahead?

- Global North needs to pay for the energy transition in the South.
- Creating an independent, greener path to development may give the South the moral high ground to force the North to come to the table, like South Africa did at Glasgow.
- The need of the hour is a global progressive agenda that wants working people of the world as a whole against the global ruling elite in its aggressive and dangerous model of competitive emissions.
- The transition to economic growth coupled with increased efficiency f renewable resources can aid India in achieving its gal of inclusive growth and sustainable development.

### Reference


1. https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/does-india-have-a-right-to-burn-fossil-fuels/article37430653.ece



SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering