Paris Agreement

What is the issue?

Though Paris Agreement is seen as a solution to all environmental problems ,it has its own shortcomings.

How has the climate change agreements evolved over the time?

- The global cooperation in protecting of the planet was at peak between the time of the Stockholm Conference (1972) and the time of the Rio Conference (1992).
- At Stockholm conference, Former PM Indira Gandhi declared poverty as the biggest polluter.
- At Rio Conference, historic consensus arrived leading to the adoption of UNFCC which balanced the right to development of the developing countries and the obligations of the developed countries.
- The developed countries had mandatory targets to cut down the emissions, the developed countries were allowed to increase & financial package was given to environment-friendly technologies in developing countries.
- At Berlin COP held in 1995, the developed countries backed off from their commitments & wanted to impose mandatory cuts on developing countries.
- In the Kyoto Protocol, developed countries were given targets but it was never ratified by the U.S.
- The Copenhagen Accord (2009) abandoned the spirit of the Rio principles & wanted voluntary GHG reduction targets.
- However, developing countries revolted & finally Paris Agreement was born out of Copenhagen and adopted in 2015.

What are the provisions in Paris agreement?

- For the first time it brought all nations into a common front to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change.
- It requires all parties to put forward their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) which is voluntary in nature.
- These targets has to be increased in the following years.
- All the parties are required to report regularly on their emissions and their efforts to implement the reduction targets.

What are the issues with the Paris agreement?

- It repudiated the principles of '**common but differentiated responsibilities**' and '**the polluter must pay**'.
- There are no mandatory obligations for the developed countries to reduce GHGs.
- There is no penalty for not adhering to the targets.
- It only protected the lifestyles of industrialised nations by denying the developing countries their right to development.
- It did not add up to the limit of rise in global temperature 2°C -temperature required to live sustainably.
- Many scientists and environmentalists expressed disappointment when it was adopted, as the national and international actions envisaged under it were far below the optimum levels.
- According to IPCC report, at 1.5°C 70%-90% of coral reefs across the world would die & at 2°C, none would be left.
- Hence, a swift and complete transformative action is required not just from global economy but also from society too.
- It is possible if the world rejects nationalism and parochialism and adopts collaborative responses to the crisis.
- US is taking the first step which is evident from the fact that US President-elect laid out a clean energy and infrastructure plan, a commitment to return to the Paris Agreement, and a goal of net-zero emissions by 2050.

Source: The Hindu

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