

The top greenhouse gas emitter in the world

[Environment](#), [Nature](#)



Taking China and US as examples we notice that:

- 1) China burns more coal in its power plants and produces more goods in its factories, thus it emits more pollutants into the air and dumps more effluents into the water, and in effect the economy moves.
- 2) United States has grown richer in recent decades. Thus being sufficiently rich, it can afford to take steps in limiting pollution, thereby reducing the environmental damage.

In US, the cars have catalytic converters that reduce fog and the government has imposed a limit on the emission of pollutants from the plants. As a country's per capita income rises, the initial effect is environmental damage but when a country becomes sufficiently rich, it can afford to take steps to protect the environment. (Grumman & Obsolete, 2009) What does this have to do with International Trade? Trade liberalizing is often supported on the grounds that it will be promoting economic growth.

Economic growth as a result will increase the per capita income which may lead to environmental damage initially but later, the country may take steps to improve the environmental quality. However, the rise in per capita income, improving or worsening the environmental quality can be well understood by observing which side of the environmental Kuznets curve the economy will lay. However the environmental Kuznets curve does not imply that globalization is good for the environment. It fairly gives an idea that a world level globalization has indeed harmed the environment, so far.

International initiatives to combat greenhouse effect and climate change

To combat greenhouse effect and climate change, many conferences and treaties have been conducted between various nations of the world. Some of these are: The Earth Summit/ROI Summit/ ROI Conference- This is also known as The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development which was held in ROI De Jeanine from June 3 to June 14, 1992. Many issues relating to environmental protection was first discussed here wherein 178 governments and 2400 representatives of non- governmental organizations participated.

It resulted in the following documents: ROI Declaration on Environment and people Agenda Convention on Biological Diversity Forest Principles Framework Convention on Climate Change In 2012, it is again held in ROI from June 20th to 2nd, commonly called ROI+20 or ROI Summit 2012. The Kyoto Protocol- This is an agreement made under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Nations that ratify this protocol entrust to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases. It consists of more than 160 countries globally.

China has been the biggest single beneficiary of globalization, whose export led economy has experienced enormous growth since 1980. Meanwhile the single biggest environmental issue has been climate change. Before the government of China introduced several economic growth reforms in 1979, the average annual real GAP growth rate estimated by the Congressional Research Service stood at 5. 3%, from 1960-1978. An 2010, the annual growth rate was estimated at 10. 4%. China faced a steep incline and decline in its GAP growth rate due to global recession in 2008, which stood at 9. %

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drop compared to 14. % during 2012 (Agency). Due to the structural reforms, China's economy is set to grow 7. 6 percent in 2013, beating the government's 7. 5 percent target. (Angina, 2012). Due to such economic growth, it is clearly seen that China alone is a major emitter of greenhouse gases, which is raising the earth's average temperature. China's boom is closely associated with a huge increase in its emission of carbon dioxide. On the other hand, United States has already faced a situation of being the largest emitter of greenhouse gas in 2007.

From 1980 to 2012; United States ranks three out of 187 countries in Human Development Index that rose by 0. 4% annually (from 0. 843 to 0. 937 till date.). Thus, United States has become sufficiently rich such that now the realization of taking steps to protect the environment dawns on them. The five environmental policies that President Obama has put in place to protect US environment and promote clean energy are (Price, 2008) : Creating the first-ever standard to limit greenhouse gases from new fossil-fuel-fired power plants, a source of carbon pollution.

Establishing the first fuel efficiency standards for heavy-duty trucks, preventing 270 million metric tons of greenhouse gases from polluting the air. Putting into place the first-ever national standard for mercury and toxic air pollution from power plants, preventing up to 130, 000 cases of asthma symptoms every year. Approving the nation's first offshore wind farm, that will generate clean electricity and power to 200, 000 homes. Approving renewable energy projects, including 16 utility scale solar projects which are first ever on public lands.

However as years went by, and China began to develop at a rapid pace, the carbon dioxide emission began to rise, being almost equal to United States in 2006(5817 million tones of CA) and overtaking it in 2007(6194 million tones). In 2006, United States greenhouse gas emissions decreased from 5992 million tones to 5915 million tones. However, the US carbon dioxide emission rose by 1.6% in 2007 following the bursting of the housing bubble in the mid 2007 when US entered a severe recession. This clearly shows how pollution is closely related to economic success.

From 2008 onwards, the carbon dioxide level emitted by United States begins to reduce and in 2009, President Obama sets a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the range of 17% below the 2005 levels. This is clearly understood by Sunsets explanation: As a country gets sufficiently rich, it can afford to take action to protect the environment. However, China is still in the stage of progression of being sufficiently rich, in comparison to its population (satisfying the needs of its entire people).

Thus China continues to emit a high level of carbon dioxide in 2009, about 7205 million tones while United States is seen to reduce its emission to around 5427 million tones. Currently, China emits 48 % more CA than the USA and is responsible for a quarter of the world's emission.

Conclusion

China ranks as the top greenhouse gas emitter in the world while United States is in the second position. However China is responsible for a quarter of the world's emission.

The main problem here is not globalization but China's economic success, which has to some extent come as a result of globalization. The foreign trade due to globalization makes producers have an access to larger, international markets. This access means that the economy benefits from international division of labor. Not only this, Domestic producer's produce more efficiently due to their international factorization and the pressure coming from foreign companies. Thus consumers enjoy a wider variety of domestic and imported goods at lower prices.

Empirical evidence suggests that globalization has significantly boosted economic growth in East Asian economies such as China. This economic growth, has down the line affected the environment adversely. Despite Environmental concerns, it's difficult to argue that China's growth, which has raised a millions of people out of direpoverty, is a bad thing. However, emission of carbon dioxide affects the future climate for all entries, thus being an international negative externally it is an important subject of international negotiation.