

Outline the main features of the kyoto protocol. how effective has it been in dea...



The paper "Kyoto Protocol in the Context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change" is a brilliant example of a term paper on environmental studies. Kyoto Protocol Introduction Kyoto Protocol is a very pivotal agreement that comes under the purview of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The most pivotal aspect of the Kyoto Protocol is that it stipulates targets for minimizing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, to 37 countries that are industrialized. There is a basic difference between the convention and the Protocol. The former merely motivates the concerned countries to tackle the menace of GHG emissions, while the latter has made the regions to give a firm commitment to addressing this issue. (1)

The Protocol is fully aware of the fact that, globally, a major chunk of the GHG emissions are attributable to the enhanced commercial and industrial operations of the advanced countries. Hence, it (Protocol) placed a substantial part of the onus of minimizing the emissions, on those countries.

(1) The Kyoto Protocol came into effect in the year 2005. As per the Protocol, the actual emission levels of all the countries in question would be scrupulously monitored. These zones are necessitated to maintain an accurate record of those levels. In addition, the countries have to compulsorily submit the various reports, at regular time intervals. As a matter of fact, the Protocol is also having a system of compliance making sure that all the parties are indeed adhering to the stipulations of the Kyoto Protocol. (1)

China and India have also signed the Kyoto Protocol, but these regions are not bound to initiate measures for bringing down the GHG emission levels.

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This is so because, both these countries have been categorized as being the developing ones, and they are not found to be major contributors to global greenhouse emissions. (2)

China is almost on the verge of going ahead of the US, in terms of the emissions of the GHG. But there is a tremendous difference between the population of both the nations (USA and China). Also, most of the industrial activities going on in the Chinese region are directly related to meeting the demand from the advanced Western countries. By taking full advantage of this loophole, the developed west tactfully outsourced a major portion of its emissions to India and China. In fact, the contents discussed in this paragraph denote the major drawback of the Kyoto Protocol. (2)

Pros and cons of the Kyoto Protocol

It needs to be candidly admitted that, notwithstanding the noble objective propelling the Kyoto Protocol, it has not been successful in addressing the related issues. The most prominent shortcoming of the Protocol is that there is simply no way in which it can penalize the countries that are not adhering to the norms for minimizing GHG emissions. The countries that are signatories to the Protocol are not at all obligated to initiate concrete steps for bringing down the levels (of emissions). They are necessitated to only submit the reports about both the current emission levels, and also the related policies for the future. (3)

Despite the points mentioned in the preceding paragraph, there is one positive aspect of the Kyoto Protocol. The guiding principle behind the Protocol is one that is in the long-term interests of the global community. It is of utmost importance that the CHG emissions have to be minimized, for the

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well-being of all life forms on this planet. This Protocol also emphasizes the necessity of seeking alternative energy sources - a very vital issue! At least, it (Protocol) has been successful in bringing the attention of all the denizens of the World, to the seriousness of all those issues. (3)

Another major factor that is impeding many countries from attempting to do anything noteworthy, in this connection, is the aspect of cost. Almost all the initiatives that are aimed at bringing a drop in the GHG levels incur huge costs. And it is the common citizen of the countries who have to bear the burden, in the form of taxes. In addition, there are many parties, which strongly opine that the targets set by the Protocol are extremely low. They add that, they (targets) are insufficient to be bringing about any positive difference in the state of affairs. (3)

#### Failure of the Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol would be expiring with the end of the year 2012, but it has failed to bring about any substantial decline in the Greenhouse Gas emission levels. And unfortunately, the Protocol is also not focusing much on the aspect of various regions' necessity to coping with the climatic changes. In light of all that, there is now a strong opinion emanating from diverse quarters of the Globe that, the Kyoto Protocol has to carry out a thorough introspection. Highly significant changes need to be made to the originally framed norms and guidelines! (4)

As a matter of fact, even common people can play their part by opting for only those products that are greenhouse friendly. People should also be meticulous about small and yet vital things of everyday life, such as reducing the temperature of the fridge by one degree. Even these apparently small

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acts do contribute their bit towards the cause of minimized emissions. And they should also be meticulous about conservation of energy. (4)

Even though the Kyoto Protocol has not been successful in attaining its primary objective of minimizing GHG emissions, on a global basis, yet, this write-up can be concluded on an optimistic note. It can be hoped that before the current duration of the Protocol lapses, the concerned parties would be drastically altering the related aspects of it (Protocol).

The topic in question is an exhaustive one that needs volumes of writings to cover all its vital points. It is just not possible to be encompassing all those (points) in a brief write-up such as this one. Yet, a sincere attempt has been made to highlight the most relevant of all the aspects.