Policy Proposal To Control Climate Change

Posted on September 25, 2019

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Climate Change, Fossil Fuels, and Political Resistance

Climate change is one of the gravest problems the world is facing. It has raised awareness among the people about world climate. It has also caused scholars of different disciplines, from environmental science to philosophy, to study it thoroughly. Climate change, generally referred to as global warming, is the increase in the average surface temperature of the earth. Scientific studies have shown that this change occurs due to the burning of fossil fuels. Burning fossil fuels releases carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and other harmful gases into the atmosphere, which form a blanket around the earth. This causes heat to be trapped in the atmosphere, causing changes in the ecosystem, such as the melting of glaciers, rising sea levels, and unusual weather changes. The following paper details the policy proposals that are required to control climate change.

There are various opinions about climate change. Some believe that climate is changing and poses a serious threat to all living beings. Others state that climate change is not real and the earth is going through a phase of global warming as it did during the ice ages. However, there is a large consensus in the scientific community that climate change is genuine and happening due to human activities. Surprisingly, one of the human activities that contributes largely to climate change is global capitalism.

This is being caused by business elites who get their wealth from such projects that somehow rely on utilizing fossil fuels (Klein). Many efforts to respond to climate change are being hampered by the growth of markets and industries and the fierce competition they face. Most of these industries are run by fossil fuels, and efforts to limit the usage of fossil fuels can adversely affect their businesses. Thus, the influence of capitalists on the politics of the environment has resulted in failed negotiations on the part of countries to control climate change and take moral responsibility for it.

Ethical Responsibility and the Failure of Existing Policies

Apart from the danger to the environment, climate change also poses an ethical challenge for all human beings. One must take into account that one’s activities are leading to drastic changes across

the globe and endangering ecosystems. This is not only harming the existing generations but may also exploit the future of those to come. Human beings tend to give priority to their short-term interests and often ignore the consequences of their decisions in the future. Perhaps this is the reason why many policies on climate change have failed. We have allowed high levels of emissions to satisfy our own needs, disregarding the future. Such actions are not only biased but also unethical. To solve the dilemma of climate change, one must take into consideration one's relation to nature, virtue and welfare, and the right of all species to live in a safe environment (Gardiner). Climate change can never be solved if our actions today endanger future generations or facilitate the extinction of species. Public policies about climate change must focus on these critical issues, as they are detrimental to upholding our ethics and values in this world.

However, the rejection of these ethics is what is preventing us from taking up some serious questions. Ethics always helps to identify problems and explains how one can frame methods to overcome these problems. This prevents society from facing moral drawbacks. The ethical dilemma of climate change is intense because the past generations have created it, and future generations will face its severe consequences while the moral obligation to control it falls upon the shoulders of the present generation (Gardiner). The ethics of climate change policies should include equal responsibilities of the past and present generations to minimize the dangers of climate change and exempt developing nations from the burden of reducing fossil fuel emissions while rich nations keep on relying on fossil fuel industries to grow and expand their businesses.

Many policies have been suggested to counter climate change. Most of these policies and initiatives have failed due to a lack of national consensus and the inability to perform up to the desired level. Many countries, notably the USA, withdrew from some initiatives if they seemed to slow down their markets and industries. Thus, the time has come to devise new policy proposals which can give us the desired results.

Emission Limits, Technology, and Research Policy

As the emission of greenhouse gases is primarily responsible for climate change, a limit must be set on the emission of these gases. The international community must decide what level of greenhouse gases can rise in the atmosphere until they become unacceptable and dangerous. Afterwards, it must be decided how much reduction should be made in the release of greenhouse gases, which do not form a blanket around the surface of the earth.

Apart from this, governments across the globe can formulate certain economic policies. Countries can change the price of products and services, which can influence the choice of consumers, individuals and businesses. For example, grants can be given to industries which employ environmentally friendly technology. Similarly, heavy taxes can be imposed on goods and services, which can release harmful gases into the atmosphere. Similarly, governments can also start sponsored programs of plantations across the cities and offer rewards for citizens who take part in them. This will not only cause

awareness among the local public, especially in the Third World, but also be a productive step towards countering climate change.

Likewise, governments should also work on research and development policies regarding climate change. Only such technologies that are compliant with climate norms and ethics must be introduced. Any technological venture which maximizes the risk of climate change must never be introduced in general. Research must be conducted by firms and industries about emissions reduction and what role they can play in contributing towards this reduction.

Policy Feasibility, Government Action, and Economic Criticism

The above-discussed policies are feasible in countering climate change if they are implemented with the fervour needed to deal with this problem. Governments can play a huge role in directing climate policies towards the greater good. If the above-mentioned economic policies are implemented, they can keep industries in check of their actions. They will be rewarded if they comply with environmental policies and be held accountable if they do not. In such cases, many industries may revise their strategies towards environment-friendly actions for the sake of rewards or in fear of punishment. Similarly, rewards for citizens if they contribute to environment-friendly activities will also rally support for a good cause. This can lead to efficient use of energy.

Such initiatives can also be taken a few steps further. For example, the government can subsidize transport industries to produce vehicles powered by fuel-friendly sources such as electricity. This can reduce the use of fossil fuels to run vehicles and cause less damage to the atmosphere. Industries play a large role in environmental politics. As discussed above, many industries and businesses view climate policies with scepticism. They believe that such policies may harm their business and drive back potential consumers. However, in a world which is slowly perishing away due to human activities, such materialism can only lead to disaster in the future.

If governments satisfy businesses by offering them grants and rewards in return for their environment-friendly actions, then business elites would work efficiently for a great cause. Similarly, governments can also take measures to shut down those industries which resist these economic benefits for fear of facing losses. For example, if some industries or businesses do not switch their reliance from fossil fuels to environment-friendly fuels, then the state can hold them accountable. This will not only form the writ of the state but also serve as a realization that our actions are leading to our destruction. This has been done by many countries, such as Canada, which has banned many coal-fuelled industries to control climate change.

The policy mentioned above and the steps to be taken may not be fully sufficient to solve an issue as grave as climate change. Criticism can arise as some may argue that these economic policies present a dreamlike solution which may be difficult to achieve in reality. In most cases, governments and the

business sector work hand in hand with each other. They often formulate policies that facilitate each other, often disregarding the welfare of the larger community. Business enterprises never want to lose their consumers, and they want to satisfy their investors as well. This often leads to the neglect of climate initiatives because they may lead to losses. Moreover, many countries are not advanced enough to replace fossil fuels with environment-friendly fuels, thus involuntarily contributing to climate change.

Developed and Developing Countries in Climate Governance

Such countries will take time to reach the developmental level required to take an active part in climate change control. Nevertheless, it is up to the developed world to take charge as they have contributed the most towards this menace through the growth of their industries and technological achievements. Every country is as sovereign outside its territory as it is inside. The states and governments must give liberty to markets and business enterprises to operate but must set some rules. Countering climate change is not the sole responsibility of one individual or a group of individuals. It is an ethical war to preserve what has been bestowed upon us and protect those who are to come in the future. It is welfare work, not just for one society or community, but for all those who live on the face of the earth. This is what needs to be realized by governments and markets who simply wish to materialize their profits and keep the machinery of capitalism running.

Following this, governments ought to take the steps mentioned above, and markets must learn to comply with them. What good will any business do if it is losing its potential global consumers or investors due to melting glaciers, persistent floods, and hurricanes? Such intense weather changes are bound to affect everyone and everything. Instead of facing huge losses in the wake of a major climatic event, countries and the businesses they run need to be practical and prudent enough to realize that their actions today will have consequences for tomorrow. They will be either at a loss or at a profit. Thus, one should act today based on tomorrow’s results.

Conclusion

The denial of climate change will not change the fact that it is real and has occurred due to certain human activities. If those human activities are not supervised and controlled, then the world will become a hot ball of unethical and immoral self-interests, which have no regard for others, their needs, and their welfare.

Works Cited

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