Do Educational Levels Influence the Environmental Quality? The Role of Renewable and Non-Renewable Energy Demand in Selected BRICS Countries with New Policy Perspective

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Abstract: Using panel data for selected BRICS countries (Brazil, India, China and South Africa) for 1990-2015, the study empirically evaluates the role of primary (low) and secondary (high) education levels in curbing carbon emissions (e.g. environmental quality) along with incorporating the changes in the pattern of energy consumption based on renewable and non-renewable energy consumption (comprising total energy consumption), real economic growth, urbanization and economic globalization as additional determinants in per capita CO_2 emission function. Using random effect and system GMM techniques, the study reveals that primary education and non-renewable energy consumption along with total energy consumption, economic growth and globalization contribute to rising carbon emissions, whereas secondary education, urbanization and renewable energy consumption contribute to improving environmental quality via reducing carbon emissions. From a policy perspective, it suggests that policymakers and governments should put more efforts in promoting investment on higher education levels and expand green cities-driven urbanization, incentivize the society for a

massive switch from adoption of non-renewable energy to renewable energy for economic activities in order to achieve sustainable environmental quality for emerging economies.

Key Words: Education levels, renewable energy, non-renewable, carbon emissions, BRICS economies

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