

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACT ON MARGINAL COMMUNITIES IN INDIA

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Abstract

Change is inevitable in natural setting as well as in human societies because of many reasons and it has become global problem and affecting globally. However, need and greed of capitalism has devastated natural environment which is ultimately reaction it in various forms like flood, drought, cyclone and earthquakes which is taking thousand of life of innocent people throughout the world but ultimately the victims of these changes are marginalized groups in the world. India does not leave in isolation and getting equally affected like other underdeveloped countries. This paper attempts to understand how poor and marginalized are becoming most vulnerable victims of these climate changes at global level. It is fact that nature on its own does not discriminate but human being has inbuilt character of discrimination and exploitation of other individuals and groups through artificial social rules such as caste, gender, religion, region etc.

Introduction

The issue I have selected deals with climate change and marginalized sections of Indian society, it is known that there is complex set of relationship between nature and human societies since man came into being. If, environment in given situation is favorable the process of development has been more dynamic otherwise when it is adverse it becomes liability to human life so that the importance of favorable environment is immense. It is true that due to the man made processes of development such as industrialization and urbanization the environmental condition in which overall weather is considered conducive has become issue of debate and discussion in recent times because it is affecting the life of living things and human as well and making more vulnerable to the marginalized. The countries in the world are now categorized as developed developing and underdeveloped on the basis of availability of rich natural resources, technological development, and competent human resource. In this paper attempt is made to understand complex process of climate change which is entirely controlled by its own law of functioning and its impact on marginal sections of Indian society who are deliberately put under threat by social constructions.

The nature has its own laws to operate its system and it does not discriminate on the ground of caste, class, gender and religion. However, manmade social realities such as caste, religion, and gender are social construct which are discriminatory in nature becomes impediment in getting access to natural recourses and ultimately it makes major section vulnerable and marginalised. The nature of social reality in India is precarious. The concept of marginal has many attached dimensions to understand it so that it is subjective in nature. Though the concept of marginality has been understood in different context in different countries. India has unique pattern of geographical reality and social reality unlike other countries in the world. It is well known that the Geographical conditions in India are also peculiar in terms of its weather pattern, ecology, and regional disparity and topography which has inbuilt pattern of favoure and discrimination so that the impact of climate change on different section will not be uniform. The farmers in environmentally adverse areas will be more victims of ecological adversities i.e farming in western Maharashtra is more productive than farming in Marathwada region of Maharashtra because the fertility of land and weather pattern consequently it affect social and economic life of people in the particular region which also affect the affordability of people to get access to the technology and services ultimately regional disparity in income affect social, economic and political life of people. So that it is fact, the politics in Maharashtra is dominated by western Maharashtra people, they decide the policy for the state and naturally they try to pull the resources and services to their region. The dominant cultural pattern of the western Maharashtra is also imposed on other parts of state, stating that Pune is cultural capital of Maharashtra. According to Usta Patnaik (2007) the poverty in India is big issue and has not been dealt with serious attempt to eradicate it, Many economic and social indicators suggest that not only is the level of absolute poverty in India high, there has also been an adverse impact of neoliberal policies on poverty. And yet, the poverty estimates by the Planning Commission and many individual academics, both using a method that renders irrelevant the question of a nutrition norm, show low levels as well as decline in poverty over the 1990s and beyond. Article proves that both comparisons over time of the all-India and state-level estimates of poverty as well as any comparison at a point in time of poverty levels across states, obtained by this method, are invalid. As poor are always so vulnerable to get access to resources they become victim of climate change immediately and so that proper attention and protection should be provided by state is missing in state agenda of protection.

Amidst of the disparities and discrimination the scientist in the sciences warning that “Earth's lower atmosphere is becoming warmer and moister as a result of human emitted green house gasses”. As a result heavy rainfall and snowfall events (which increase the risk of flooding) and heat waves are generally becoming more frequent recently. If emission continue on their present trajectory without either technological or regulatory abetment then the warming likely to increase in some type of extreme weather events. These and other changes will have serious impact on human societies and the natural world.

Is Climate Change Natural or Man made

Though the nature has its own law of operation and function which operate physical world. There are dedicated disciplines such as geography, oceanography, climatology and environmental science attempt to understand intricate issues of climate change but differ on common methodology and ignore the social dimensions of climate change vulnerability and impacts, and their implications for adaptation. However, there is no discipline which can claim that it has complete understanding of the law of the nature. In spite of this scientist at global and local level dedicate their life to understand complicated and mysterious relationship between man and nature. In recent development in science and technology has in some extent made it possible to predict the nature of weather and natural calamities but still it is in infancy.

There is scientist and institutions that have been making effort to promote the use of science to benefit society and to inform through critical debate about climate change. **Ralph J. Cicerone and Paul Nurse(2010)**claim that “human's are changing Earth's climate” Greenhouse gases such as Carbon dioxide absorb heat emitted from Earth's surface suggest, the increase in the atmospheric concentration of these gases causes Earth to warm by trapping more of this heat. Human activities especially the burning of fossil fuels since the start of Indias rail revolution have increased atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration by about 40 per cent with more the half the increase occurring since 1970. Since 1900 the global average surface temperature has increased about 0.8 Celsius.

Critique of Causes and Consequence of Climate Change

As Mahatma Gandhi has rightly pointed out that mother earth can satisfied the needs not greed of human being is need to be taken seriously. However, many changes are taking place around the world since industrial revolution. The pattern of human life have greatly impacted and changed by the processes of development such as Capitalism, urbanization, market economy and globalization. The quality of human life has been increased, pattern of food

consumption has changed, leisure activities are changed and the role of mass media has made it possible through the popular culture.

The changes in the land use pattern in recent times for forest, commercial farming, and urbanization leading to both warming and cooling effects locally by changing the reflectivity of the Earth's surface. However, the pattern of land use in India is highly skewed and it gives us idea of unequal distribution of land, it has been presented in table no 1.

Table 1. Source of livelihood and Land use Pattern in India

Indicators	ST	SC	OBC	Others	All
Self Employed in Agriculture-2012 (%)	39.5	27.8	47.9	50.4	44.7
Land owned-2003(%)	77.6	82.5	89.5	88.3	86.2
Landless-2003(%)	22.4	17.5	10.5	11.7	14
Marginal Farmers-2003(%)	53.7	67.7	53.7	53.7	56
Average Landsize- 2003(hectare)(%)	0.76	0.42	1.20	1.38	1.07
Average land size for Marginal - 2003(Hectare)	0.22	0.13	0.24	0.33	0.25

Source: National Sample Survey Organization 2002-03, 2011-12

India is country of villages but the changes such as industrial revolution which have impacted world have impacted Indian society. The percentage of urban population has been increasing since independence. However, large chunk of Indian population earn their livelihood from agriculture. The Emission of pollutants other than green house gasses some industrial and agricultural practices (green revolution) emit pollutants that produce aerosols. Some aerosols also affects the formation of clouds it will have adverse effect on Indian society because most of the agricultural land is dependent on monsoon and almost more than 70 per cent population is directly and indirectly solely dependent on agriculture and allied activities for their livelihood. Therefore the problem of climate change cannot be perceived in isolation because it has great adverse impact on large population of this country. Table no 1 provides population share in Rural and Urban Areas of India.

Table no 2. Population share in Rural and Urban Areas of India.

Social Groups	Rural	Urban	Total
Scheduled Castes	56.5	43.5	100
Scheduled Tribes	85.7	14.3	100
Others	50.9	49.1	100
All	54.8	45.2	100

Source: Census of India 2011

This suggests that the rational to integrate social dimensions into climate change policy is need of hour. There is also need to adopt vigorous and mitigating measures of climate change is projected to further exacerbate vulnerability place of human health and security at risk and impede sustainable development because the impact of climate change will increasingly “affect the daily lives of peoples everywhere in terms of employment, livelihood, health, housing, water, food security and nutrition and the realization of gender equality and other human rights”. The impact are expected to hit those who living in poverty the hardest, partly due to their more prevalent dependency on the vary natural resources affected by climate change and also because they have less capacity to protect themselves, adapt to the changes.

Table no.3 Marginal groups and Poverty in India

Social Groups	Total	Rural	Urban
Scheduled Castes	54.4	61.6	23.3
Scheduled Tribes	19.7	23.8	15.8
Other Backward Classes	14.5	18.2	8.7
Others	10.7	16.5	6.0
All	17.3	24.2	9.1

Source: National Sample Survey Organization Survey 2011-12

Table 3 shows the recent number of social group wise poverty numbers in India. Most poor are from Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Castes groups, compared with Other Backward Classes and other caste system is reflected in poverty. Due to the poverty many children from Scheduled Tribe are underweight, malnutrition is very high and maternal mortality is also high. As compare to others social groups SC/ST have less access to civic amenities such as drinking water, latrine, electricity, and housing.

Indian Society and Nature of Exclusion

Indian society is product of much historical process of its own and outside. The nature of Indian society has great impact of Aryan advent, emergence of protestant religion, entry of no Indic religion in Indian continent and Colonialism few to be noted. As every society need dynamic system of stratification or division of labour among its member to sustain and function its social order. As a result it exists in all types of society's i.e Tribal Society, Rural Society, Urban Society. The bases of social stratification in all type of societies are class, gender and age. However, in Indian society caste was and in some extent is base of social stratification or division of labour. Caste being ascribed status has limitation to make stratification dynamic, but social mobility is blocked in Indian society through caste. Each caste has its own occupation and you cannot change it. Each occupation has been attached with the notion of purity and impurity and ultimately superior status is maintained by upper caste and lower castes are excluded from taking up high ranking occupation. According to Dr.B.R.Ambedkar (1917) Caste is a system of graded inequality, it is not simply system of division of labour but it is system of division of labourers therefore the lower chunk of labourforce is from former Sudra and untouchable category. They are becoming more vulnerable due to their traditional status of being Sudra.

Second important marginal group in Indian society is women whom education was rejected by religious ideology. There are gender disparities in education, employment and social privileges. The gender discrimination need to be eradicated. The crime against women shows the status and respect of women in Indian society. Third Marginal and neglected section which is most vulnerable is De-notified and Nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes. Traditionally they were not part of neither mainstream or isolated people like tribes. These tribes during colonial period were retained in jails for long time through the enactment of Criminal Tribes Act 1872. These people are most marginalized even after independence. Their livelihood is destroyed and most of them earn their livelihood by begging in cities in India.

Conclusion and Suggestion

It is obvious that the nature or climate does not discriminate on the ground of caste, class, gender, religion and age. However, in social life discrimination on the basis of social construct exist in all societies. Eventually, older or new weaker groups and section emerges and they become more vulnerable during natural calamities and adverse climate change. It can be concluded that as follow, though the climate change is global phenomena and created by some greedy capitalist and market economy is affecting the livelihood and chances of well being of poor in Indian society. It is challenge before the state and civil society that the Protection and security of the rights of marginalized groups during climate change.

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