

Some Crimes: By-Product Of The Effects Of Climate Change

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Abstract: The increase in the earth's atmospheric and oceanic temperatures due to increase in green house gases resulting from pollution is global warming. Carbon dioxide, methane, water vapor and certain other gases causes the green house effect. They are aggravated due to human activities such as burning fossil fuels, deforestation and so on. Climate change is a serious problem worldwide and the IPCC (Inter Governmental Panel on Climate Change) also made a statement that humans are mainly responsible. If such factors continue to operate climate change will result in severe problems and also in the death and extinction of humans. There has been a debate in recent times whether climate change has any relation to crimes. There appears to be a possible strong connection between climate change and crimes. This article discusses about how both climate and crime are interrelated and how they have increased. The need of the hour is to discuss why such crimes are taking place and the laws that govern such crimes.

I. INTRODUCTION:

India is also one of the large emitters of green house gases and is possibly one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change. The country is experiencing the impacts of climate change including water stress, heat waves, drought, flooding and so on with negative consequences of health and livelihood. Such conditions provide fertile ground for crimes in any country. Due to impacts of climate change, like drought for example – the agriculture would be affected. This would create food insecurity as well as economic problems. This will make people fight over food and lead to crimes. Syria is a perfect example.. The country has been facing severe drought for the past five to six years and this has resulted in agricultural failures. The non- state actors or the terror group operating in Syria i.e. I.S.I.S is providing people job and adequate money for them to live. They also attract support of local people and crime is given birth. Such people join the terror organizations and commit acts of crime. Climate change has become a serious issue globally and now it is also linked with terrorism which leads to crime. To control such events of crime we need to understand the impacts of climate change which results in crimes. Climate related crimes have become an issue which needs to be addressed. To counter such crimes the need of the hour to see whether there exist any laws in relation to crime and climate change.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. *Climate change creates resource scarcity and inequitable resource distribution and this leads to conflicts. Is this end product crime?*

Climate change does not necessarily lead to terrorism or create terror groups. But climate and crime are linked. For example, extreme climates can lead to decline in farming or agriculture. This can force farmers to take to extreme steps. It can lead to fragility. So when is a shortage or deficit of natural resources due to climate change, it can result in the birth of crime.

2. *Whether climate change is a crime against humanity?*

The past decade has made us think and understand the relationships between climate change and crime. Presently the United Nations, the European Union, the G7 and many other states have classified climate change as a crime and threat to global security. However, they are not that simple. The impacts of climate change do not directly lead to conflict. But it can act as catalyst for threat. It can combine with other existing pressures in a particular nation and can multiply the likelihood of crime. This research paper addresses the question of how the impacts of climate change are a contributing factor in the rise and growth of global crimes.

III. IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE:

Agriculture- High-input, high-output agriculture will be negatively affected even as demands for food and other agricultural products rise because of an increasing population and expectations for an improved standard of living. Millions of subsistence and smallholder farmers will experience hardship and hunger though being less able to predict climate conditions. To a certain extent, trade may compensate for these deficits.¹

Water - Glacier melt may yield more runoff in the short term but less in the medium and long terms. More severe storms (especially cyclones) will cause more damage to infrastructure and livelihoods. It will increase salt water intrusion in storm surges. Changes in the timing and amount of monsoon rains will make the production of food and other agricultural products more uncertain, so that, even in good-weather years, farmers will be more likely to make decisions leading to lower-productivity.

Exacerbation of Inequality: The welfare of those who are affected by climate change and who have limited means to adapt may act as a force that can change governments, strain public budgets, and foster unrest. About one-third of Indians are extremely poor, and 60 percent depend upon agriculture for their livelihoods.

¹ The future of food and agriculture, available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6583e.pdf>, (Visited on June 6, 2018)

Energy: As India searches for additional sources of energy to meet rising demand, climate change mitigation efforts may constrain its use of indigenous and imported coal, oil, and gas, while development of nuclear energy will be slow at best and likely to encounter opposition.

Migration: India for example receives immigrants from a number of countries particularly from Bangladesh. Under climate change conditions, there may be more immigrants from other countries as well. , Such migration may exacerbate tension between the two countries as well as putting a strain on the governments. ²

Adaptive capacity: It basically means the capacity of a particular system where the environment is changing to adapt according the circumstances. In a country like India for example the adaptive capacity is not strong. If the adaptive capacity is not strong, it faces situations such as deaths and damages from heat, flood, and conflicts over natural resources and assets. Such condition ultimately makes crime easy to operate.

IV. CRIMES AND ITS RELATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE:

In the year 2015 a report was released “A new climate for Peace” by the G7 foreign ministries sanctioned by the United Nations. It listed seven factors that pose a serious threat to society.

Local resource competition – as pressure on the natural resources tends to increase, there seems to be a competition which causes instability. This results in a violent dispute in absence of effective dispute resolution mechanism.

Extreme weather events and disaster - will increase the fragility challenges as well as peoples grievances and vulnerability especially in a conflict affected area or situation.

Livelihood, insecurity and migration - human insecurity tends to increase when people who depend on natural resources have limited sources available. This pushes people to migrate from one place to another.

Volatile food prices and provision - climate change impacts on food production and disrupts it causing increasing market prices, increasing risk of protests and civil conflict.

Transboundary water management- competition over water will increase and put pressure on government structures as the quality and quantity of water will be impacted by climate change.

Sea level rise and degradation - the low lying areas will be submerged leading to social disruption, displacements, migration and disagreements over maritime boundaries will increase.

Unintended effects of climate policies – there are always negative impacts due to such impacts of climate change.

² Joint Global Change Research Institute and Battelle Memorial Institute, Pacific Northwest Division, “India: The Impact of Climate Change to 2030 A Commissioned Research Report”, page no – 3, 4(2009).

Most of these risks are closely linked to food, water, and energy security, natural resources and ecosystems. They are therefore not isolated from each other and are affected by the same drivers and pressures such as climate change, increasing population and resource demand, mismanagement of resources, and environmental degradation. All such factors have given birth to crime and easily both crime and climate changes have a relation.³

V. CASE STUDIES:

The lake Chad Basin in Nigeria is home to approximately 38 million people from diverse ethnic background. The human development in this region is among the lowest in world. The literacy rates are around 30 percent. The people living in this area mostly depend on natural resources for their livelihood. This area is largely climate sensitive agricultural activities. Due to climate change, the waterline has been impacted from 1963 to 2001 in Chad basin. There has been environmental degradation as well as impacting the basin. In the year 2009 it was reported that the Boko Haram, a terrorist group attacked the region and flow of foreign direct investment was impacted. This led to instability in the region and the transportation process was affected due to the terror groups. Moreover, agricultural yields have declined due to farmers' fears of attacks by Boko Haram. Fisheries value chains were also impacted, as Boko Haram is using the lake's wetlands for shelter to launch attacks. Both livestock and fish processors suffer from restricted and unpredictable access to markets. Lake Chad has been a primary source for the people of Nigeria for irrigation, agriculture. But the climate change has impacted the region and variations in water levels between dry and rainy season have occurred naturally. The over use of water and variations in water level the temperature in region has also increased and unreliable rainfall has caused the Lake Chad to shrink by 90 percent. Hence crime has also increased.⁴

VI. SUGGESTIONS:

The policy makers need to play a proactive role in reducing the impacts of climate change. At present, many peace building activities, interventions and strategies to counter violent extremism largely do not take climate change into account. This risks creating new challenges in the future, making interventions more prone to failure, and failing to realize synergies and co-benefits. For example, UNDP has started to implement the initiative "Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa", which aims at combating violent extremism by improving livelihood security, building judiciary capacity and rule of law, and enhancing

³ A new climate for peace, available at: <https://www.newclimateforpeace.org/>, (Visited on June 6, 2018).

⁴ Katharina Nett, Lukas Ruttinger, "Insurgency, Terrorism and Organized Crime in a Warming Climate – Analyzing the Links between Climate Change and Non-State Armed Groups", page no – 10 (2016)

community resilience (UNDP 2016). The initiative does not, however, refer to environmental degradation or climate risks at any point.⁵

A climate-sensitive approach to peace building that takes the potential impacts of climate change into consideration has the potential to achieve more sustainable development results.

Strengthening governance and local institutions – a lot of communities are lacking in this and due to climate change there have been adverse impacts and such impacts are not taken into account seriously by such states which results in crime and terror.

Natural Resource management – The mismanagement of natural resources also leads to crime and economic crisis to people. Further the United Nations has been working and the UNFCCC – United Nations framework convention on climate change is working since 1992 to bring about a positive change and reduce the impacts of climate change. Since then a lot of summits have been held and recently the Paris agreement have also recommended changes to reduce climate change impacts.

VII. CONCLUSION:

Climate change has been a serious issue over the years and it has been linked to crime. To reduce such impacts we need to have a collective effort from everyone. All the countries need to participate and bring a change that would help us reduce the negative impacts of climate change and bring an end to crimes, terrorism. Creating sustainable livelihoods is both important to adapting to climate change and to preventing the rise and growth of terror groups. Peace building, climate change adaptation and development impacts could be achieved by focusing on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture and fisheries, and taking specific account of the risks and opportunities associated with migration. If we act now only then can we bring a change that would ultimately benefit the coming future generations. The challenge is to meet the resource deficits and inequitable resource distribution due to climate change. This can be done only by interventions leading to framing policies at the national and international level

⁵ Prevention and responding to violent extremism in Africa, available at: <http://www.africa.undp.org/content/rba/en/home/library/reports/preventing-and-responding-to-violent-extremism-in-africa--a-deve.html>, (Visited on June 6, 2018).