

CLIMATE CHANGE AND INDUCED MARGINALIZATION: PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract: The global arena of international relations is placing increasing importance on the subject of climate change. The disruptions in natural weather patterns are giving rise to a wide array of challenges in ecological, sociopolitical, and economic systems. This piece of writing investigates the concept of marginalization brought about by the effects of climate change. The analysis adopts a multi-faceted approach, utilizing the framework of climate justice. The primary focus lies in understanding how climate-induced marginalization impacts a nation's social structure, especially affecting disadvantaged communities. Following that, the conversation delves into making a comparison among different countries, examining their contributions to climate change and the subsequent difficulties they encounter. The article also underscores the insufficiencies in international frameworks aimed at mitigating climate change, underscoring the lack of accountability during their development. Additionally, the problem of climate-induced marginalization is evaluated in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, and suggestions are put forth to effectively tackle this issue.

Keywords: climate marginalisation, social exclusion, responsibility factor, sustainable development, climate justice.

INTRODUCTION

The effects of climate change are manifesting in subtle and drastic ways around the world. Gradually changing weather patterns, rising sea levels, and severe weather events are clear indications of a swiftly evolving climate that demands global attention. As climate change assumes a pivotal role in evaluating and understanding global dynamics, the ongoing shifts in climatic conditions carry far-reaching implications. Concerns related to sustainability and harmonious coexistence within the environment are central to the conversations surrounding climate change. However, there are additional dimensions within

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the socio-political framework that are being influenced by deviations from the established climate norms. This article explores the issue of marginalization brought about by climate change, which becomes increasingly significant as environmental conditions transform. Climate change is playing a role in the progression of marginalization, which is emerging as a notable issue within the context of the liberal global order. The marginalized groups are experiencing heightened levels of exclusion as the global political landscape increasingly aligns with a capitalist societal structure. This trend results in the exacerbation of poverty and the intensification of exclusion, both in socio-economic and political dimensions of public existence.

According to the World Bank (2020), within each nation, specific groups face obstacles that impede their full participation in political, economic, and societal matters. Exclusion is evolving across various dimensions, adopting fresh criteria for exclusion within the present globalized framework. Moreover, pre-existing forms of exclusion are growing more pronounced, leading to multifaceted marginalization within society. Novel indicators are now being utilized in the process of exclusion, particularly concerning environmental exclusion. The close connection between exclusion and development is apparent. Numerous contemporary development endeavors, regardless of whether they originate from public or private sectors, tend to possess an exclusive nature. This situation results in disparities in development for groups lacking access. Within this context, the issue of marginalization intertwined with climate change and the accompanying exclusion holds substantial significance. The impact of climate change and its associated dilemmas is further heightened as it divides the population in its effects. Vulnerable populations are particularly affected by climate change's consequences. As outlined by the UNEP report on climate change (2022), the urgency of addressing the human rights ramifications of climate change is unmistakable: the world's marginalized communities, which are already susceptible to human rights violations, encounter the greatest challenges in adapting to climate change. The repercussions of climate change on health, housing, livelihood, and security disproportionately affect individuals and communities residing in fragile



ecosystems. This article aims to address this reality. The dual burden of exclusion placed upon marginalized communities due to climate change remains an underexplored aspect of climate change discussions. However, this becomes evident as the global system's issues stemming from this matter intensify. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) center on establishing an equitable global order. Improved progress in achieving these goals can serve as benchmarks for development in the modern world. SDGs 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and 13 (Climate Action) can be directly linked to the concerns addressed in this paper. An analysis that connects the attainment of these SDGs through a cross-country examination is conducted herein. The paper embraces concepts of climate justice and endeavors to investigate potential alternatives to address this quandary, highlighting the limitations of current frameworks.

CLIMATE CHANGE AS A MEAN FOR MARGINALISATION: THEORISING ON CLIMATE JUSTICE

The concept of climate-induced marginalization can be correlated with the theoretical notion of climate justice. Central to climate justice is the equitable and impartial availability of climate resources across all segments of society. The emergence of climate change-related hazards has introduced new dimensions to the concept of climate justice in the modern world. Climate justice is advocated for and on behalf of “environmental victims”, defined as those adversely affected by natural or anthropogenic processes mediated by the natural environment, along with constraints on environmental access (Penz 1996).

Discussions encompassing climate and ecological justice have historical roots, but these discussions gained prominence particularly in the wake of globalization and the associated ecological disparities. Traditionally, justice pertained solely to interactions among humans. However, a growing awareness has arisen regarding an additional relational facet to justice struggles – that of our relationship as a species, as human beings, with the broader natural world. Termed “ecological justice” by



Low and Gleeson (1998), this concept links the relationship between human beings as a species with themselves. Human interventions in the environment and the disproportionate repercussions are to be assessed within the framework of justice. The concept of climate justice can be recognized as a sub set of the broader notion of ecological justice discussed in this context. Climate justice builds upon the broader framework of ecological justice, which encompasses the fair and sustainable distribution of environmental resources and burdens (Schlosberg, Collins 2014). Climate justice has emerged as a crucial framework for understanding and addressing the ethical, moral and economic dimensions of climate change. It is a multifaceted concept that seeks to address the unequal distribution of both the burdens and benefits of climate change. It recognizes that the causes and consequences of climate change are not evenly distributed and that marginalized communities often bear the brunt of its impacts. As Caney (2009) assert, climate justice demands fairness in the allocation of resources and responsibilities in the fight against climate change. The responsibility factor is also a major discourse within climate justice paradigm. It stresses on the acknowledgment of historical injustices. Historical emissions from developed countries have disproportionately contributed to the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (Shue 1993). As a result, these countries bear a significant moral responsibility for climate change. The principle of historical responsibility, as articulated by Gardiner (2004), argues that those who have historically contributed more to the problem should take greater responsibility for its solution. Climate justice also emphasizes procedural fairness in decision-making processes related to climate policy. This includes ensuring that vulnerable communities have a voice in shaping climate policies that affect them. Rawls (1999) argues that a just society is one where decisions are made through a fair and transparent process that considers the interests of all, including future generations. This perspective aligns with climate justice's call for inclusive and participatory approaches in climate policymaking. It also promotes the idea of global solidarity. This concept emphasizes the interconnectedness of all human beings and the need for cooperation and support between



nations, especially from developed to developing countries. Pogge (2005) argues that addressing climate change is not only a matter of justice but also a global public good that requires collective action and responsibility. The theoretical framework of climate justice is rooted in principles of fairness, equity, and ethics. It recognizes the historical injustices and unequal burdens of climate change, calls for procedural fairness and inter-generational equity, and promotes global solidarity in the face of this global crisis. As Caney (2009) note, climate justice is not merely a theoretical concept but a moral imperative that demands action at all levels of society and governance. To address the complex challenges of climate change, it is essential to apply the principles of climate justice in both policy and practice, ensuring a just and sustainable future for all.

Climate justice, as a subset of ecological justice, is intricately connected to climate change-induced marginalization. It underscores the fact that climate change disproportionately affects marginalized communities, exacerbating existing inequalities and vulnerabilities. Ecological justice principles, which seek to ensure the equitable distribution of environmental resources and burdens, provide the foundation for climate justice. As climate change intensifies, marginalized groups, often the least responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, bear the brunt of its impacts, including extreme weather events, displacement, food insecurity, and loss of livelihoods (Schlosberg, Collins 2014). Therefore, climate justice calls for not only addressing the root causes of climate change but also addressing the injustices it perpetuates, demanding that mitigation and adaptation strategies prioritize those who are most marginalized, ensuring their voices are heard, and their rights are upheld.

The Brundtland Report (1987) underscores the impact of climate change and ecological deviations on the social and economic exclusion experienced by marginalized communities within mainstream society. For instance, the report notes that “poverty itself pollutes the environment, creating environmental stress in a different way. Those who are poor and hungry will often destroy their immediate environment in order to survive” (Brundtland Report 1987: 28). The report also recognizes that



addressing environmental issues necessitates a broader perspective encompassing the underlying factors of global poverty and international inequality (Brundtland Report 1987: 3), although some radical perspectives may find these observations superficially focused on symptoms rather than root causes. The theoretical framework of climate justice substantiates the arguments connecting the perspective of climate change-induced marginalization. The impact of climate-induced marginalization on vulnerable segments of society can be observed through various levels of analysis. Inequality significantly amplifies the vulnerability of disadvantaged groups to climate disasters and hazards. Typically, individuals with lower incomes reside in the most susceptible regions within a country, often lacking well-developed infrastructure. Given that a substantial number of low-income individuals depend on agriculture, it's highly probable that they inhabit remote and isolated areas closely intertwined with nature. Consequently, these conditions make them particularly susceptible to a range of climate-related hazards.

Disadvantaged groups are inherently more susceptible to the damages inflicted by climate hazards. This relationship is straightforward: the greater the vulnerability to a climate disaster, the greater the likelihood of being adversely affected by it. Another crucial concern pertains to the recovery process following a climate disaster and the associated challenges. This is largely due to their limited initial resources. Depending on a nation's access to medical care, shelter, food, and water might be restricted and available only with disposable income or additional luxuries such as transportation or citizenship. Without disposable income, their capacity to cope with physical infrastructure impacts, individual well-being, and psychological trauma may not be adequately addressed. The loss of income due to work interruption, inability to access work, or other circumstances can also place an immense burden on individuals who have experienced a climate disaster (Adger et al. 2005).

The social ramifications of climate change are as significant as the ecological and meteorological shifts. The impact of climate change on the process of marginalization becomes more pronounced as climate change becomes increasingly commonplace. The communities that are already vulnerable often end



up being the primary victims of marginalization. Noteworthy examples include scheduled castes and tribes in India, indigenous peoples of the Americas, and native tribes in Africa (Hoover et al. 2012; Centre for Social Studies and Culture 2019). The pattern of interaction with marginalized communities reveals a commonality in exclusionary practices. Instances of this phenomenon from various regions are explored in the subsequent sections of this article. A significant concern in this context is the insufficient focus given by policymakers and administrators to the socio-political consequences of climate change (Nightingale 2017). The emphasis tends to primarily revolve around ecological impacts, which further deteriorates the social circumstances of those who are already disadvantaged. Unless policymakers adequately address the issue of marginalization, the challenges arising from the social consequences of climate change will persist. As stated by Skoufias, “while the eyes of the world have been riveted on polar bears, Antarctic penguins, and other endangered inhabitants of the Earth’s shrinking ice caps, relatively few researchers have turned serious attention – until recent years – to quantify the prospective long-term effects of climate change on human welfare” (Skoufias 2012: 2).

A fair approach to climate action is essential for establishing an inclusive social structure. However, it’s apparent from experience that social hierarchies are influencing the marginalization experienced by the vulnerable due to climate impacts (IPCC 2022). The interaction of the administrative class with these vulnerable groups is noticeably indifferent and characterized by exclusion. Amidst the challenges posed by the natural environment, these groups are compelled to confront the issue of marginalization (O’Brien, Leichenko 2000). The process of recovery is inadequately coordinated and planned, lacking proper consideration for the vulnerable. An illustrative example can be found in the case of climate refugees. This is highlighted at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), which emphasizes the significance of addressing this matter. The report of UNHCR (2023) marks “Refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs) and the stateless are on the frontlines of the climate emergency. Many are living in climate ‘hotspots’, where they typically lack the resources to adapt to



an increasingly hostile environment. The climate crisis is a human crisis. It is driving displacement and makes life harder for those already forced to flee”. Differences exist in the approach to risk management and recovery employed by various countries. The more privileged strata of society experience climate change mishaps with relatively minor consequences, receiving careful and considerate treatment from the administrative apparatus. On the other hand, those who are truly affected find themselves marginalized due to limited access to government assistance (Füssel 2007). Instances of mismanagement arise in areas such as compensation distribution, infrastructure reconstruction, and addressing grievances (O’Brien, Leichenko 2000). Cultural and political factors, in conjunction with the social context, contribute to challenges in climate-related disaster management. Suppression experienced by marginalized communities becomes more pronounced due to a collective impact stemming from various indicators. The perspective of marginalization, affecting socially and economically vulnerable segments due to global climate change, necessitates examination through the lens of climate justice.

An investigation into specific relevant concerns illuminates the diverse stance on climate justice. This exploration is undertaken in subsequent section through a cross-national analysis. The assessment encompasses the evaluation of factors such as the realization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) associated with this issue (10 & 13) and identifying the uneven distribution of climate-related hardships among countries. This examination will contribute to a better understanding of the problem of climate-induced marginalization within the global context.

CLIMATE MARGINALISATION: A CROSS COUNTRY ANALYSIS

The matter of climate marginalization necessitates a comprehensive examination involving multiple countries. In matters concerning climate justice, all nations tend to prioritize their own interests. The viewpoints of smaller nations often face



neglect and suppression due to dominant power dynamics. The inability or unwillingness of developed nations contributes to the unequal dispensation of climate justice. Presently, what transpires is an imbalanced allocation of burdens disproportionately onto the vulnerable. The ramifications of this concern should be analysed through a socio-political lens, rather than solely focusing on ecological consequences.

The achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is utilized as a gauge for evaluating progress in development. Among these goals, two (SDGs 10 and 13) can be directly associated with the notion of climate marginalization. Examining the cross-country performance of these specific goals concerning vulnerable populations will offer a comprehensive insight into the intricacies of this issue. There are multiple dimensions through which SDG 10 can be linked to climate change. The impact of climate change and natural disasters on the most impoverished and susceptible groups amplifies pre-existing inequalities both within and among populations. According to UNEP (2020), the challenges encompass a range of issues. Firstly, the exploitation of natural resources has emerged as a prominent catalyst for global inequality, often sparking conflicts on a worldwide level. Secondly, the impact of climate change and disasters disproportionately affects impoverished and vulnerable communities, exacerbating existing inequalities within and among nations. Thirdly, the rise in natural disasters and environmental degradation has triggered a significant increase in global displacement, with approximately 22.5 million individuals compelled to migrate due to climate-induced or weather-related hazards since 2008. This illustrates the alignment of climate change with the concept of inequality, as emphasized by Target 10.3 of SDG. Also, a report released by the World Bank (2020) projected that climate change could lead to a rise in poverty, affecting an extra 68 to 135 million individuals by 2030. The interrelated consequences of these factors are clearly observable in the existing information. By examining climate-induced marginalization across different countries, it becomes possible to assess the population impacted by the ad-



verse outcomes of climate change. It is the most vulnerable segments of society that experience the greatest severity of this problem.

Particularly in the era of globalization, those with low incomes endure the greatest consequences of economic marginalization brought about by climate factors. As per the United Nations Report (2016), the low-income group experiences the most substantial percentage of GDP losses (5.0 per cent), while the high-income group faces comparably lower losses (0.2% of GDP). Research conducted by Cappelli et al. (2021) underscores the influence of climate change on societal inequalities. The empirical examination confirms that those who are economically vulnerable are primarily affected by climate-induced marginalization. The information presented in this study compellingly demonstrates that unequal societies become trapped in a cycle of vulnerability and disaster, where natural calamities further exacerbate income inequality and erode resilience.

The analysis of climate marginalization across different countries reveals another pertinent observation. Climate change hazards are not distributed uniformly across the world. Developing nations, particularly those in the global south, experience a significantly higher degree of climate-induced marginalization when compared to developed countries. According to Sultana, “Because much of the underdeveloped Global South provided the resources that overdeveloped the Global North over centuries through colonialism and then imperialism and neo-colonialism, many countries in the former were left less capable of addressing climate impacts and having reduced or ineffective state capacities” (Sultana 2022: 5). This issue of disparity in addressing climate-related risks is evident in all available climate-economic databases.

Information extracted from the Climate Inequality Report (2023) contains a comparison between emissions and losses. The figure highlights that the upper 10 per cent of the population is accountable for 48 per cent of emissions, yet their incurred losses amount to just 3 per cent. Conversely, for the bottom 50 per cent, emissions constitute 12 per cent, while losses reach 75 per cent in total. The disparity is clearly discernible



here, both in terms of responsibility and the experienced impacts. The data related to achieving Climate Action (SDG 13) also underscores the presence of inequality within the climate justice framework of the modern world. Within SDG 13, a specific objective is to shield the most susceptible populations from the consequences of climate change. However, information from the UNDESA Sustainable Development Goals Report (2020) reveals that despite these intentions, those who are vulnerable remain at significant risk of climate-related hazards. The current international frameworks fail to effectively tackle this concern as a fundamental aspect of climate justice. Achieving SDGs are vital in developmental concerns. But the present scenario is evidently intensifying the climate marginalisation. Insufficient attention is directed toward the issue of exclusion within international climate change mitigation frameworks. These agreements are exacerbating disparities both between countries and within nations when it comes to addressing climate marginalization. The equitable realization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is not a central focus within existing policy frameworks. The element of responsibility for climate change, encompassing factors such as emission rates and other human-induced impacts, is being sidestepped, disregarding the concerns of marginalized communities. The blame for climate emergencies is often placed on the disadvantaged segments of society without due consideration of the actual circumstances they face. The persistent problems within the global system also have reverberations on the climate justice paradigm.

An analysis of climate justice across countries highlights two interconnected issues. Firstly, there is a pronounced divide in perspectives on climate change-induced marginalization among different nations. Irrespective of their contribution to anthropogenic changes, countries are compelled to bear the brunt of climatic adversities. The capacity of low-income nations to recover from climate-related hazards is also a central concern here. Secondly, systemic disparities among a country's population form another dimension. Those who are already vulnerable and marginalized are the first and hardest hit by issues stemming from climate marginalization. These dual challenges are substantiated by existing data. Despite the existence



of SDGs, which explicitly address this concern, the data underscores their inadequacy in achieving these objectives. The impacts of climate change vary across different geographic regions, manifesting as elevated sea levels and the melting of glaciers in low-lying areas of the Pacific, while arid regions in Africa and Asia experience land desiccation and desertification. These diverse vulnerabilities give rise to a spectrum of social challenges, including forced migration, malnutrition, and issues related to sanitation and healthcare, which constitute significant concerns of climate marginalisation.

CONCLUSION

The framework of this paper delves into a significant aspect of climate justice discourse concerning the social ramifications of climate change. The paper concentrates on the marginalization that arises from climate change within the context of the evolving global order. It aims to tackle climate-induced marginalization that is evident among different socioeconomic strata within societies and even within individual countries. Particularly, those who belong to vulnerable segments within each social group are most severely impacted by the consequences of climate change. Their susceptibility and heightened exposure to environmental hazards render them disproportionately affected by the effects of climate change. Through a comparative analysis of climate marginalization across various countries, it becomes evident that climate change-induced stratification has both broad systemic and individual-level implications. The climate justice perspective aimed at addressing environmental hazards faces significant challenges intertwined with socioeconomic patterns. The marginalization experienced by vulnerable societal groups gains heightened importance, particularly in developing nations. This aspect of exclusion requires equal attention alongside addressing the environmental aspects of climate change.

Climate change-induced marginalization arises when disadvantaged populations experience a disproportionate burden of the negative consequences brought about by climate change.



These repercussions materialize as heightened rates of displacement, reduced availability of resources, livelihood disruption, and declining living standards. Resolving this challenge demands countries to acknowledge that climate change transcends being merely an environmental concern; it is a complex issue entwined with social and economic facets. To effectively tackle this concern, it becomes imperative to integrate the principles of Sustainable Development Goals 10 and 13 into climate policy frameworks. This amalgamation offers an optimal approach to devise a comprehensive management strategy for addressing climate-induced marginalization. SDG 10 aims to bridge the gaps between different socioeconomic groups by fostering inclusivity and reducing disparities. To combat climate-induced marginalization in line with this goal, several strategies can be implemented. This includes giving priority to the requirements of marginalized communities within adaptation plans, ensuring that they receive the necessary protection and support to withstand the impacts of climate change. Additionally, as resources like clean water, food, healthcare, and education become scarcer due to climate change, it is imperative to secure guaranteed access to these essentials for vulnerable groups. Empowering marginalized communities is equally significant. Encouraging their active participation in decision-making processes ensures that their distinctive viewpoints and needs are taken into account, fostering a more inclusive and effective response to the challenges posed by climate change. SDG 13 underscores the urgency of addressing climate change's impacts and encourages the global community to adapt to and mitigate its consequences. Effective strategies in line with this goal includes the transition from fossil fuels in order to mitigate climate change and holds the potential to establish sustainable livelihood opportunities within marginalized communities. The construction of climate-resilient infrastructure is of paramount importance. By designing and implementing infrastructure capable of withstanding climate impacts, the vulnerabilities of marginalized populations can be minimized, safeguarding them from the disruptions posed by extreme weather events. Equally essential is climate education. Raising awareness about climate change and its consequences becomes



a cornerstone in this effort, ensuring that marginalized communities are well-informed and equipped to actively engage in sustainable practices that contribute positively to their resilience and well-being. Establishing partnerships is also of utmost importance. Through the cultivation of cooperation among governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sectors, and local communities, there is an opportunity to combine resources and knowledge effectively to combat the challenges of climate-induced marginalization. Furthermore, prioritizing the collection and monitoring of data holds significant value. The establishment of strong mechanisms for comprehensive data collection facilitates the tracking of advancements in climate change adaptation and its effects on marginalized groups. This data-driven strategy empowers the refinement of policies based on informed insights, ensuring that interventions are tailored and adaptable to the changing requirements of vulnerable communities.

The global conversation surrounding climate change necessitates adjustments to align with current requirements. The unequal distribution of responsibility and adversities must be a focal point of concern. It is imperative that the Global North, which significantly contributes to climate-related challenges, demonstrates heightened awareness and embraces the need for reshaping international norms accordingly. Central to this is the theme of diminishing inequality, which holds the potential to mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change and, in turn, curtail the progression of the phenomenon itself. This paper advocates for the initiation of comprehensive discussions on this subject, involving all strata of society through the lens of climate justice. Identifying the factors that exacerbate climate marginalization becomes a priority, and concerted efforts must be undertaken to diminish their influence within societal structures. The path to resolution cannot be uniform on a global scale; rather, it necessitates tailored, country-specific strategies. Every nation possesses its own unique circumstances, demanding distinct approaches to address climate challenges. Employing a multi-level analysis becomes instrumental in devising fitting solutions for each country's context.



Climate, as a shared global resource, imposes a collective responsibility for its prudent management. This principle should guide all deliberations on the matter. Each discourse must be illuminated by the recognition that responsible, contextually sensitive actions are indispensable. By embracing this ethos, a more equitable and sustainable approach to climate change can emerge, transcending borders and fostering a united commitment to preserving our planet for future generations and away from all forms of marginalisation.

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