



## General Studies-3; Topic: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

### Impact of Climate Change on Vulnerable Communities

#### Introduction

- According to IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, anthropogenic climate change has caused rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere, and biosphere.
- **The report stresses how vulnerable communities that have historically contributed the least to climate change are disproportionately affected.**
- The report stresses on the disproportionate impacts on the most vulnerable communities in Africa, Asia, and Central and South America.

#### Vulnerable communities in India

- In India the most climate vulnerable communities are Dalits, Adivasis, backward castes groups, nomadic and pastoral communities, traditional and small-scale fishers and small and marginal farmers and urban poor.

#### Climate Change in India

- Indian monsoon and rainfall patterns are changing significantly due to climate change.
- Agriculture sector, where 70 per cent of all farmers from the Scheduled Castes work as agricultural labourers dependent on daily or seasonal wages, gets hit first.
- Floods, heat waves, sea levels rise and extreme weather events are increasing.
- **Past experience demonstrates how caste oppressed communities get discriminated during rehabilitation, and recovery from climate onslaughts.**
- During last year Assam floods, the sanitation workers had to work day and night to unclog drains and wash off the sludge in the city.

- According to the Safai Karmachari Andolan, approximately 98 per cent of all workers employed in this kind of work are Dalits and predominantly women.
- Marathwada region of Maharashtra bear the brunt of caste-based oppression, inequalities, and discrimination with recurring droughts in the region for decades.
- In the Indian Sundarbans the health of the Adivasi community is being impacted by the increasing saltwater content as a result of sea level rise.

## Concerns / Challenges

- Dalit and Adivasi communities have fewer adaptation resources to combat the damage from events related to climate change.
- They continue to be deprived of socio-economic and political rights and face systemic discrimination.
- Though India has a **National Climate Action Policy** and all states have state climate action policies, the vulnerabilities of the caste-oppressed communities aren't part of most of these action plans.

## India's Role

- In the COP 27, India spoke about international climate justice and the loss and damage funds that developed countries have to contribute to UNFCCC.

## Way Forward

- The climate action plans need to acknowledge and address caste and climate vulnerability.
- Special protection measures need to be in place during climate event preparedness.
- Along with class, gender, and race, caste needs to be acknowledged as a category by the UNFCCC.
- **India should recognise climate vulnerabilities of caste-oppressed communities and initiate measures to protect them.**
- These efforts should be part of the national and state climate action policies.
- They should also be integrated into disaster and climate risk management plans, climate impact relief assistance programmes, and social protection coverage.
- **There should be separate climate action plans and implementation funds for caste oppressed communities.**
- The climate justice movement in India, mostly led by the urban upper caste must integrate caste justice questions into their campaigns.