

Chapter 18

The Unequal Burden: Climate Change and Vulnerable Populations

Sini John

Christ Academy Institute of Law, Bengaluru, India

Surima Singh

Christ Academy Institute of Law, Bengaluru, India

ABSTRACT

Climate change disproportionately affects vulnerable people, exacerbates inequalities and threatens human rights. In this chapter the author has explored the complex interplay between climate change and human rights, focusing on rights to life, health, food, water, shelter and culture highlighting the challenges faced by Indigenous peoples, women, children and poor people on climate change adaptation. The chapter discusses the role of international instruments such as the UNFCCC and human rights treaties in addressing these issues and explores the need to create stronger legal safeguards, greater public participation and focus on stronger groups to build a just and equitable future.

INTRODUCTION

Evidently, climate change – the phenomenon widespread worldwide – goes far beyond solely the environmental issue affecting human societies and their basic rights. When temperatures go up, seas rise and the weather goes as haywire the ramifications seen on human beings become diverse and extensive. These climatic

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-6069-9.ch018

Copyright © 2025, IGI Global. Copying or distributing in print or electronic forms without written permission of IGI Global is prohibited.

changes distort people's existence, uproot them, and increase existing gaps in the society since different groups are affected differently.

It should be noted that there has been improvement in the last couple of years with acknowledge of climate change as a crucial human rights issue. Climate change and its impact are against human rights where people's rights to life, health, food, water, housing, and an adequate standard of living are interfered with. The sociology between climate change and human rights points more to this that there is need to address climate change holistically with human rights consideration.¹

Despite growing recognition of the human rights dimensions of climate change, translating awareness into concrete action faces significant hurdles. The international climate change regime, while encompassing numerous conventions, can be slow and cumbersome. Reaching consensus on ambitious mitigation strategies often gets bogged down in political negotiations and competing national interests. This lack of swift action allows the climate crisis to worsen, further jeopardizing human rights.

Adding to this challenge is the issue of accountability. The human rights framework, while robust in outlining obligations, often lacks clear mechanisms to enforce them. While states have a legal duty to protect their citizens' rights, holding them accountable for inaction on climate change remains difficult. This lack of clear enforcement mechanisms creates a situation where lip service is paid to human rights, but concrete action lags.

However, there are strong advocates for a human rights-based approach to climate action. Human rights bodies at the international level, environmental NGOs, and the climate activism community all support this approach. It focuses on states and other obligation bearers' roles and responsibilities in fulfilling human rights in relation to climate change. This shift in perspective emphasizes the need for concrete action and strengthens arguments for holding states accountable for inaction.

That is why this chapter is intended to discover more nuances of the connection between climate change and human rights from the international perspective. In this paper, using the principles of international law, relevant conventions, and analyzed cases, it is planned to reveal how the global community addresses this crucial interrelation.² The chapter will also explore the obstacles and prospects of improving the use of human rights paradigm to climate change mitigation, population shelters, and their sustainable developments with stronger arguments for more suitable and just measures for vulnerable groups.³

20 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-unequal-burden-climate-change-and-vulnerable-populations/358273

Related Content

Examining the Role of CRM in Designing and Managing Effective Loyalty Programs to Enhance Repeat Business

R. Rejitha and G. Jayalakshmi (2025). *Multidisciplinary Approaches to AI, Data, and Innovation for a Smarter World* (pp. 1-20).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/examining-the-role-of-crm-in-designing-and-managing-effective-loyalty-programs-to-enhance-repeat-business/376586

Functional Food Innovation for the Treatment of Metabolic Syndrome

Sufiati Bintanah, Yuliana Noor Setiawati Ulvie, Hapsari Sulistya Kusuma, Firdananda Fikri Jauharany and Hersanti Sulistyningrum (2023). *Food Sustainability, Environmental Awareness, and Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies for Developing Countries* (pp. 21-40).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/functional-food-innovation-for-the-treatment-of-metabolic-syndrome/319449

Geographic Information System (GIS) Modeling Analysis and the Effects of Spatial Distribution and Environmental Factors on Breast Cancer Incidence

Akram Gasmelseed and Ali H. Alharbi (2019). *Advanced Methodologies and Technologies in Engineering and Environmental Science* (pp. 320-333).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/geographic-information-system-gis-modeling-analysis-and-the-effects-of-spatial-distribution-and-environmental-factors-on-breast-cancer-incidence/211881

Consumer Cooperation in Sustainability: The Green Gap in an Emerging Market

Njabulo Mkhize and Debbie Ellis (2018). *Promoting Global Environmental Sustainability and Cooperation* (pp. 112-135).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/consumer-cooperation-in-sustainability/205736

Impact of Synthetic Dyes on Human Health and Environment

Ruchi Srivastava and Irfan Rashid Sofi (2020). *Impact of Textile Dyes on Public Health and the Environment* (pp. 146-161).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/impact-of-synthetic-dyes-on-human-health-and-environment/240901