
Climate Justice

Climate justice is a term used to form global warming as an ethical and political issue, rather than one that's purely environmental or physical in nature. This is done by relating the effects of climate change to the concepts of justice, particularly environmental justice and social justice and by examining issues such as equality, human rights, collective rights and the historical responsibilities for climate change. An important concern related to climate justice is that those who are least responsible for climate change suffer its gravest consequences.

The term climate justice is also used to mean actual legal action on climate change issues. In 2017, a report of the United Nations Environmental Program identified 894 ongoing legal actions worldwide. Climate justice affirms the rights of community's dependent on natural resources for their livelihood and cultures to own and manage the same in a sustainable manner, and is opposed to the commodification of nature and its resources.

Disproportionate impact

Disadvantaged groups will continue to be disproportionately impacted as climate change persists. These groups will be affected due to inequalities that are based on demographic characteristics such as differences in gender, race, ethnicity, age and income. Inequality increases the exposure of disadvantaged groups to the harmful effects of climate change while also increasing their susceptibility to destruction caused by climate change. A problem with destruction is that disadvantaged groups are the last to receive emergency relief and are rarely included in the planning process at local, national and international levels for coping with the impacts of climate change. Communities of color, women, indigenous groups and people of low income all face an increased vulnerability to climate change. The ability of populations to mitigate and adapt to the negative consequences of climate change are shaped by factors such as income, race, class, gender, capital and political representation.

One way to mitigate the disproportionate impacts of climate change to achieve climate justice is to involve disadvantaged groups in the planning and policy making process so that these individuals have a say in their own future. This would also help minority groups have more access to resources to adapt and plan for a changing climate.

Gender and climate justice

Climate change and gender is a way to interpret the disparate impacts of climate change on men and women, based on the social construction of gender roles and relations. Climate change increases gender inequality, reduces woman's ability to be financially independent and has an overall negative impact on the social and political rights of women, especially in economics that they are heavily based on agriculture. In many cases, gender inequality means that women are vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change. This is due to gender roles, particularly in the "developing world", which means that women are often dependent on natural environment for subsistence and income. By further limiting woman's already constrained access to physical, social, political and fiscal resources, climate change often burdens women more than men and can magnify existing gender inequality.

Gender-based differences have also been identified in relation to awareness, causation and response to climate change, and many countries have developed and implemented gender-based climate change strategies and action plan. For example, the government of Mozambique adopted a Gender Environmental and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan in early 2010, being the first government in the world to do so. Analysis of gender in climate change, however is not limited to women it also means not only applying a binary male/female system of analysis on sets of quantitative data, but also structuring discursive construction that shapes power relations connected to climate change.

Socio-economic disparities – climate change and poverty

Climate change disproportionately affects poor and low-income communities around the world. Those in poverty have a higher chance of experiencing the ill-effects of climate change due to increased exposure and vulnerability. Vulnerability represents the degree to which a system is susceptible to or unable to cope with adverse effects of climate change including climate variability and extremes. Climate change's health, economic impacts and human rights impacts exacerbate existing environmental inequalities. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) fourth National Climate Assessment Report found that low-income individuals and communities are more exposed to environmental hazards and pollution and have a harder time recovering from the impacts of climate change, for example, it takes longer for low-income communities to rebuild after natural disasters.

Climate change raises some climate ethics issues, as the least 50 "developed countries" of the world account for an imbalanced 1% contribution to the worldwide emissions of greenhouse gases which are theorized to be attributable to global warming. Climate justice and distributive justice questions are central to climate change policy options. Many of the policy tools often employed to solve environmental problems, such as cost-benefit analysis, usually do not adequately deal with these issues because they often ignore questions of just distribution and the effects on human rights.

Climate change and indigenous people

Climate change disproportionately impacts indigenous people around the world, especially in terms of their health, environment and communities. Indigenous people found in Africa, the Arctic, Asia, Australia, the Caribbean, Latin America, North America and the Pacific have strategies and traditional knowledge to adapt to climate change. The knowledge systems can be beneficial for their own adaptation to climate change as well as applicable to non-indigenous people.

Majority of the world's biological and cultural diversity is located within indigenous territories. There are over 370 million indigenous people found across 90+ countries. Approximately 22% of the planet's land is indigenous territories varying slightly depending on how indigeneity and land usage is determined. Indigenous people have the important role of the main knowledge keepers within their communities, including knowledge relating to the maintenance of socio-ecological systems...

Indigenous people have a myriad of experiences with the effects of climate change because of the varying geographical areas they inhabit across the globe and because of the differences in cultures and livelihoods. Indigenous people have a wide variety of the differences that western science is beginning to include in its research of climate change and its potential solutions. The concepts of ancestral knowledge and traditional practices are increasingly respected and considered in the western scientific research.

Causes of climate injustice

One contentious issue in debates about climate justice is the extent to which capitalism is viewed as the root cause of climate injustice. This question frequently leads to fundamental disagreement between, on one hand liberal and conservative environmental groups and on the other leftist and radical organizations. While the former tend to blame the excesses of neoliberalism for climate change and argue in favour of market-based-reform, the latter view capitalism with its exploitative traits as the underlying central issue.

Political approaches towards climate justice

The 21st century became the time to take serious action towards climate justice because elite groups were unwilling to solve the environmental and social issues for climate justice. At the same time climate justice activists' demands began to increase significantly that it was important to take alternative steps. For example, the Climate Justice Now! Network, which is a network of organizations that advocate for climate justice was formed in 2007 by the UNFCCC. Additionally, in 2010 Bolivian government sponsored "people's world conference on climate change and the right of mother earth" in Cochabamba, which helped connect many climate change activists together. Many political groups also

began to take impressive actions towards climate change: The grassroots campaign of Dine Local citizen group in New Mexico prevented the creation of the Desert Rock coal plant, which would have been the third such polluting monolith in this small, rural community: new coal power plants proposals have been cancelled because the community is against it and therefore has helped keep the climate pollution low. The increase of climate justice political groups helped go against many companies and were successful at lowering pollution.

Resources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climate_justice

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/05/climate-justice/>

https://www.ende-gelaende.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Presentation_english_75dpi.pdf

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0KYSXhiEgSI>