

Climate Change and Migration

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Abstract

The article highlights the interlinkages between climate change and migration. Climate change-induced disaster destroys all scope of rehabilitation and rebuilding and leaves communities shattered. The coastal areas are most exposed to natural hazards. The coastal landscape and the topography of a country make people vulnerable to disasters. The lack of disaster alertness and management work is a matter of serious concern since climate change-induced disasters have had a devastating impact on many lives. There have been uncountable catastrophes that have impacted scores of people and led to social and economic changes. Scores of people either get displaced internally or cross the border for refuge. However, climate change-induced refugees are not recognized by the UN protocol 1951 and hence they are not given refugee status which leads to further vulnerability and exploitation of the group.

Keywords – Climate change, migration, environmental refugees, south asia,

Introduction

Mass migration has been a trend to overcome the impact of sudden and immediate environmental crisis. South Asia is no exception to this phenomenon. A lot of people are forced to migrate due to extreme weather and climate change. The densely populated countries of South Asia are highly dependent on the 'Himalayan mountain glaciers for freshwater which are highly susceptible to melting as a result of rising temperatures'. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) mentions that the most critical effects of climate change will be migration of millions of people due to shoreline erosion, coastal flooding and severe drought. In 2005, the UN Universities report had cautioned that there might be 50 million environmental refugees by 2010 (Boano, Zetter and Morris, 2008). According to an estimate by Greenpeace report released in 2008, there would be 125 million people homeless, including 75 million from Bangladesh alone, by the end of this century (Rajan, 2008). The coastal region of Bangladesh is renowned worldwide for its vulnerability to Climate change. It is because of this that the country is claimed to be at the highest risk in South Asia and was ranked sixth in the 2011 UN World Risk Index. (Vaid and Maini, 2013)