

“Harmony or Harm: Unveiling Environmental Justice Disparities in Marginalized Communities”

Prof. Zafar Ahmad Khan*

ABSTRACT

Environmental justice is a multidimensional notion that refers to the equitable sharing of environmental benefits and costs throughout society, with a special emphasis on vulnerable areas. This abstract dives into the complex web of environmental justice inequities that exist in these communities, examining the dynamics of harmony and damage linked within their environmental environments.

Environmental dangers disproportionately affect marginalized communities, which are generally made up of low-income and minority groups. Historical injustices, discriminatory laws, and socioeconomic inequality have all contributed to the geographical concentration of polluting companies, waste disposal facilities, and hazardous sites in these places. As a result, inhabitants are more exposed to air and water pollution, hazardous waste, and other environmental stressors, which exacerbates health risks and reduces overall well-being.

One of the most essential elements of environmental justice is the right to participate in environmental decision-making processes. However, marginalized populations typically face obstacles to effective involvement, such as restricted access to information, language and cultural challenges, and power disparities that silence their voices. This lack of involvement promotes environmental injustices by prioritizing the interests of rich and politically influential organizations over those of underprivileged populations when making choices about land use, pollution control, or resource distribution.

Furthermore, environmental justice inequities link with other types of social inequality, including race, ethnicity, gender, and class, resulting in complex webs of oppression and marginalization. Indigenous populations, for example, sometimes bore the burden of environmental degradation caused by the exploitation of their lands for resource extraction and industrial growth, replicating previous colonial and dispossession patterns. Similarly, climate change-related catastrophes disproportionately affect low-income areas and communities of color, who are more vulnerable and less resilient as a result of structural

*Chair-Professor, Dr. Ambedkar Chair of Legal Studies and Research, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh