

# Environmental Refugees and International Relations

Huma Parveen\*

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## Abstract

*Environmental refugees are far greater in numbers than conflict or war-inflicted refugees but they do not fall into the purview of the definition of refugees. The environmental refugees who are forced to cross the border due to environmental disasters are not eligible for refugee status. Climate change-induced migration or environmental refugees has been a concern for developing nations and has been given negligible attention by the international relations discourse. It brings into the limelight the importance given to nation-states and boundaries in the realm of international relations discourse. Climate change-induced migrants go unnoticed by the scholars of international relations who are glued to the notion of sovereign rights of the nation states and national security issues. Migration has always been linked to economic reasons and less to the aftermath of post-colonial or neo-colonial repercussions.*

**Keywords** – Environmental refugees, climate change, international relations, nation-state, migration

## Environmental refugee – Concept and terminology

The term Environmental Refugees was first coined by Lester Brown in 1970. It came under usage after Essam El-Hinnawi in United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) policy paper published in 1985 defined Environmental refugees as

“those people who have been forced to leave their traditional habitat, temporarily or permanently, because of a marked environmental disruption (natural and/or triggered by people) that jeopardized their existence and/ or seriously affected the quality of their life.” (Liser.eu, n.d.)

The term ‘environmental disruption’ in the definition of Environmental refugees

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\*Ph.D. Research Scholar, MMAJ Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi,  
Email: [humaparveen1914@gmail.com](mailto:humaparveen1914@gmail.com)