



Climate change narrative

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(Mains GS 3 : Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.)

Context:

A recent report released by the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) named as “Assessment of Climate Change over the Indian Region” revealed that India has warmed up 0.7° C during 1901-2018.

Increasing temperature:

- The 2010-2019 decade was the hottest showing an increase in mean temperature of 0.36° C higher than average.
- Assessment by the MoES shows that India may experience a 4.4° C rise by the end of this century.
- Greenhouse gas emission steadily increases despite lower activities during covid times.
- Prolonged heat waves are becoming detrimental to public health and becoming life threatening.

Rise in extreme events:

- In the last decade, India has witnessed some very severe climate events which hamper growth and cause mass destruction of life and property.
- Super-cyclone “Cyclone Amphan” that hit India in 2020 was cost more than USD13 billion.

- Country also witnessed severe flooding during “June-October Monsoon Flooding” that cost USD10 billion and around 1,600 lives.
- This June-October Monsoon Flooding was India’s heaviest monsoon rain in the last 25 years and the world’s seventh costliest.
- India also suffered from two more cyclones in 2021 named Cyclone Tauktae hitting the west coast and Cyclone Yaas from the east.

Increasing displacement:

- According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, India’s Internally Displaced Populations (IDPs) are increasing due to damaging climate events.
- Kedarnath floods and rising precipitation every year leads to deserting homes by people in Uttarakhand.
- Reports suggested that upto 2050, rainfall is expected to rise by 6% and temperature by 1.6° C.
- Further coastal erosion due to climate change induced sea-level rise, land erosion and natural disasters such as tropical cyclones between 1990-2016 increase problem manifold
- Figures expected to be increased upto 3.6 million out of 170 million living in coastal areas were displaced between 2008-2018.

Droughts in deccan plateau:

- India’s Deccan plateau has seen severe droughts which lead to families deserting homes from Maharashtra and Karnataka (the heart of the Deccan Plateau) due to acute water crisis.
- Case study: Hatkarwadi village in Beed district of Maharashtra State had only 10-15 families remaining where previous population count of 2,000 people.

India's engagement:

- India ranked at 10th position in the global Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2021 released in Germany recently.
- This is the second year in a row that India has remained in the top 10 position in the list of countries to have adopted substantial measures to mitigate climate change.
- India worked with COP21 by signing the Paris Agreement to limit global warming.
- India submitted its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) with a goal of reducing emissions intensity of GDP by 33%-35% and increasing green energy resources (non-fossil-oil based) to 40% of installed electric power capacity by 2030.
- In 2015, India along with France formed the International Solar Alliance (ISA) which is a coalition of about 120 countries with solar rich resources.

- ISA aims at mobilising USD1 trillion in investments for the deployment of solar energy at affordable prices by 2030.
- These global alliances and leading policies seem to be merely big promises with little implementation.

Achieving targets:

- Experts view that India is not fully compliant with the Paris Agreement's long-term temperature goal of the NDCs.
- According to India's carbon emission trajectory, the country is en route to achieve barely half of the pledged carbon sink by 2030.
- Thus to achieve the Paris Agreement's NDC target, India is required to produce 25 million-30 million hectares of forest cover by 2030.

The utility of COP26:

- The Glasgow COP26 offers India a great opportunity to reflect on the years since the Paris Agreement and update NDCs to successfully meet the set targets.
- India is expected to be the most populated country by 2027, overtaking China, contributing significantly to the global climate through its consumption pattern.
- India is in a unique position to have a significant influence on global climate impact in the new decade.

Conclusion:

- India believes that climate actions must be nationally determined with having UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement at the core of decision-making.
- By leading in climate goals, India will not only save itself from further climate disasters but also be a leader in the path to climate change prevention.