



Climate Change

Global Climate Change and its effects on Mental and Social Health

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General Note



Article is recommended to print as color version in recycled paper. *Save Plants, Save Climate.*

Climate change has emerged as one of the most devastating threat to entire mankind. Recent events have emphatically demonstrated our growing vulnerability to climate change.¹ Effects of the climate change are multifaceted and it has severe impact on almost all the aspects of human life like health, nutrition, economics and trade and many more.

Health as per World Health Organization (WHO) is defined as state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not only absence of disease or infirmity.² Most of the efforts are being taken to address physical health aspects which in a way is the most important, but it is also essential to address mental as well as social aspects. Physical health impacts of climate change are being studied in details throughout the world. Physical hazards due to climate change are now well known, but the mental and social health hazards of climate change has to studied in details. Climate change has increased frequency as well as intensity of

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natural disasters like floods, tsunamis, hurricanes, typhoons in various parts of the world. These kind of natural disasters not only have impact on the physical health but also on the mental and social health of the victims. Post traumatic stress disorders, depression, anxiety can be attributed to natural disasters due to climate change. Social structure is also totally collapsed at many instances due to natural disasters leading to deterioration of the social health. As per predictions, many areas at the sea level will submerge due to climate changes. In such high prone areas people are under tremendous stress about their future generations. This stress will lead to mental disorders like depression, anxiety disorders. The bad mental health always leads to bad physical as well as social health. Many of the world's largest and fastest-growing cities are located on the coast and therefore vulnerable to sea-level rise. Coastal mega cities are exposed to the more frequent severe windstorms; the heavy rains often result in intense, and sometimes lethal, flash floods. Many waterborne and vector-borne infectious diseases are strongly influenced by climatic conditions, and several are common within cities.³ More speculatively, global environmental changes may favour the emergence of new infectious diseases, which may spread faster within and between cities due to travel links and higher rates of person-to-person contact.^{4,5} These cities which are the backbone of economies of many countries in the world will be affected adversely due to climate change. It will tremendously disrupt the economies of such countries leading to many mental and social health issues. It has been also observed that food grain production has reduced considerably in many parts of the world due to climate change. Lack of food will lead to poor nutritional status impacting physical and mental health. It will also affect social health due to improper distribution of food depending on the purchasing power leading to disruption of social structure of the society. Those who will not afford to buy costly food will try to get by any antisocial ways.

To conclude with, climate change has impact on all human aspects and health is not an exception. It is essential for the health policy planners and administrators to consider climate change as a major public health problem in the near future.⁵ Most essentially every aspect of the health physical, mental as well as social should be addressed effectively to reduce the impact of climate change on human health.

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