

Social inclusivity for climate adaptive approaches for Climate Justice

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Abstract

The impact of climate change has forced the social groups to think for climate adaptation. The uncertain rain patterns have really caused problems for the agrarian societies heavily dependent on rain water. The agriculture sector and the agrarian societies have been facing issues of livelihood, right to food, right to water due to either heavy flood or water scarcity in countries like India. India has already set its goals for achieving climate justice through many policy initiatives and adopting sustainable lifestyle approaches. But looking to the glorious past of India, it cannot be denied that various social groups and indigenous communities have always played remarkable roles in preserving eco-friendly approaches. The present research paper evaluates the scope for social inclusivity and its impacts on strategic planning for climate adaptive approaches particularly based on some selected case studies from India. The paper analyses the impacts of such practices in achieving climate justice. The present paper follows mixed methods of empirical and doctrinal methods. The research conclusion helps in understanding the best practices adopted by some social groups and their impacts. It also tries to analyse how these best practices can be adopted on larger scale.

Introduction

Climate Change has largely affected the socio-economic conditions of the human populations across the world. India having its tropical weather conditions could witness the severe impacts of the climatic conditions on its social life. The impact of climate change is largely disproportionate across the globe. India being tropical country, faces impacts of climate change very severely. In recent pasts, there is increased trend of cyclones and floods resulting into huge economic loss and social disturbance. The remain pattern has also got disturbed. With huge population pressure on the limited land and water resource has made the situation worse in majority parts of India. An analysis by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) suggests that three out of four districts in India are extreme event hotspots, with 40 per cent of the districts exhibiting a swapping trend, i.e., traditionally flood-prone areas are witnessing more frequent and intense droughts and vice-versa.¹ Looking to India's Climate vulnerability condition, it is highly required to take urgent action for climate adaptation, mitigation and resilience. India has traditions to protect natural resource through community participation. The present research focuses on the case studies of such participation through self help groups of women in combating climate change, through climate adaptations with smart agriculture practices. The findings suggest the impacts of inclusivity of tribal women in adopting climate adaptive agriculture practices and their impacts.

¹ <https://www.ceew.in/publications/mapping-climate-change-vulnerability-index-of-india-a-district-level-assessment>

Need for Social Inclusivity to Secure Climate Justice

Social inclusion is defined as the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights.² In reference to the present research, the focus is on the inclusion of the tribal women in adapting and mitigating climate change. In the tribal family set up, women play pivotal role in supporting the family and helping in agriculture. The house hold work, taking care of children and helping family through labour work in agriculture is very normal in Indian tribal households. Moreover, the impacts of climate change largely increase the burden on the women in the family for example in managing house hold affairs with minimum income, water and food management etc. The inclusion of women in climate change adaptation and mitigation is sine quo non. Especially inclusion of tribal women in this process can bring remarkable positive results. The National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) 2008 in India, also recognises that the impact of climate change is different on men and women due to gender relations, roles.³

Research methodology and scope of the study

The present research has followed mixed method of doctrinal and empirical study approach. Certain case studies of women Self-Help Groups, working through smart agriculture practices, have been carried out through case studies from Gujarat have been carried out through empirical methods and doctrinal analysis of Decan Development Society in Telangana. The empirical method has been adopted for the case studies of tribal women's self-help groups of Aravalli district of Gujarat.

The Deccan Development Society [DDS]

This society was established in 1983 Pastapur village, Sangareddy District of State Telangana which works with Sanghams (village level groups) of women mainly poor and dalits. Initially it was established to fight with the challenges of semi-arid environment, dry land with limited water source. At present it has 5000 women members and spread over 75 villages. They started millet-based agriculture practices and farming and present running gene banks. Through these initiatives, they combat the issue of climate change and problems of mal nutrition. Gradually it has evolved into a programme which has three guiding principles: gender justice, environmental-soundness and people's knowledge.⁴ At present they have been taking various initiatives and provide inputs in the policy making at the national and international levels. They have community grain fund, community green fund, community gene fund and collective

² <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/rwss/2016/chapter1.pdf> page 17.

³ Sara Ahmed, Elizabeth Fajber, *Gender and Development*, Vol. 17, No. 1, Climate changes and climate justice (March 2009), pp. 33-50 (18 pages) available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27809205>

⁴ <http://www.ddsindia.com/www/default.asp>

cultivation through land lease etc. The DDS has contributed in environment and livelihood sustainability along with empowering Dalits and poor women. It has remarkably accelerated the socio-economic growth of these women. Simultaneously, it has boosted the millet farming and economic independence of this Dalit women. The members practised ecological farming with crop varieties of more than 10. It also provides platforms to the women to demonstrate and share their knowledge of greens.



Crop Diversity



Women in Farm

Figure: 2

Source: <http://www.ddsindia.com/www/default.asp>

Self-Help Groups in Orissa

The women led Self Help Groups in Orissa have also played remarkable role in securing climate resilience. The Government of Orissa launched Orissa Mission Millet Programme in 2017 for promotion of millets in tribal areas. Initially the Mission was started in 7 districts in 2017 but due to positive response, it was expanded to 19 districts. Currently, Odisha has emerged as one of the forerunners of millets, ensuring the participation of women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in the millet value chain where they are playing a leading role in processing, value addition, and marketing. The initiative not only empowers women entrepreneurs but also promotes the consumption of millets, contributing to a healthier lifestyle in the state.⁵ The new initiatives of opening Millet Shakti Café' at Lok Seva Bhawan in the Khorda district of Bhubaneswar and Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar with the government's support and outlet with the help of Government have been remarkably grown.

Self Help Groups in Gujarat

Government of Gujarat has launched Mission Mangalam in 2010. The aim is to eliminate poverty and empowering rural women. Through this mission rural poor women are organised into Sakhi Mandals i.e self-help groups to earn their livelihood. These Sakhi Mandals are linked to banks for financial assistance and to skill development agencies and industry associates for skill development and market information respectively. Separate officials are also appointed to help implementation of the scheme of Mission Mangalam. In Aravalli districts total eleven such self-help groups in Meghraj Taluka of Aravalli districts were interviewed which

⁵ <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/agriculture/women-shgs-in-odisha-champion-push-for-millets-90913>

specifically work on climate adaptive agriculture. Out of these eleven groups one has been earning through production of turmeric and red chilli and powder made from the same.



Source: Dry arid farming land of Aravalli district, Gujarat

Impacts of social inclusivity in climate adaptive practices and securing climate justice

As per IPCC's sixth assessment report⁶ "Indigenous Peoples have been faced with adaptation challenges for centuries and have developed strategies for resilience in changing environments that can enrich and strengthen current and future adaptation efforts. Valuing Indigenous knowledge and Local knowledge is also important for recognition, a key component of climate justice." Climate justice rests on three principles: distributive justice, procedural justice and recognition. Distributive justice refers to allocation of burdens and benefits among individuals, nations and generations.⁷ The procedural justice emphasises participation in decision making process. The climate vulnerabilities have reduced. Recognition entails basic respect and robust engagement with and fair consideration of diverse cultures and perspectives⁸.

The present case studies of Aravalli districts reveals that the impact of climate change is varied in nature from water availability to crop production and temperature rise. Cumulative impact of all these changes is observed on the culture, lifestyle and economic conditions of the tribal groups during the study. The local government's initiative to provide financial support to self-help groups of women, providing them training and make them participate in the decision-making process by playing lead role in their family's economic conditions, has helped in securing procedural justice.

The study of these Self-Help Groups leads to following observations:

The Women members of Self-Help Groups under study have knowledge about the less water intensive crops (Millets), their health benefits, and high potential in small holding of farms. They have wise planning of livelihood earning through the same. The impact of the inclusion of tribal women through this Self-Help Groups have also helped in reducing poverty in their families.

The poverty is reduced due to shift in the source of livelihood from labour work to smart agriculture practices on small land holding, providing maximum crop output and thus securing

⁶ <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/chapter/chapter-1/#1.3>

⁷ *Ibid*

⁸ *Ibid*

consistent source of income. The problems due to climate vulnerability on socio economic conditions has been reduced. The housing facilities, agriculture output and education of children have been improved. They could afford better health facilities, nutritious food and felt self-reliant without any social and economic pressure. It shows that these Self-Help Groups have been successful in securing climate justice to their lives and families.

Their regular meetings have strengthened the knowledge sharing of the members' experience. They learn good practices from each other and work collectively. Thus, the meetings have helped them to learn more about climate adaptive agricultural practices. The arid land of Aravalli district with reduced rain fall makes the land unfit for paddy or wheat production. Their experience taught these women farmers to adapt farming of less water intensive crops. This has helped them to save available little ground water for their daily needs instead of large usage of it in irrigation. Their economic conditions have improved amidst the deteriorating climatic conditions. Some of the pictures below captured in the Month of April, 2024 reveals extreme climatic conditions in the area. The health and nutrition of the entire family have improved as the women are home managers and take care of providing nutritious food to the family members. They could afford healthy food due to their economic enhancement. They take utmost care of protecting quality of seeds to sustain healthy food.

They share their knowledge through stories among the other tribal women and motivate them to choose organic farming methods for millet crops. In the entire Meghraj Area, there is increase of millet farming which has in fact help them to get relief from changing climatic conditions and their impacts on crop production.

1. They have started preparing various dishes from millets for which the demand is very high in urban areas.
2. The overall health of all families has improved
3. They have started investing in educating the children.
4. The women have shifted to digitization due to purchase of smart phones due to their better financial conditions. Which ultimately help them to connect to Krishi Vigyan Kendra and its farming knowledge sharing programmes.
5. The increase in family income has resulted into purchase of new cattle and business of animal husbandry. The milk cooperatives have also increased in this area. The women have been earning through animal husbandry and milk cooperatives also.
6. They have become self-sufficient in organic fertilizers due to this animal husbandry initiatives. The labour migration has stopped.

Overall financial stability has been achieved through this climate adaptive farming approaches. This has ultimately secured climate justice to these vulnerable families.