



Climate Change: Impact on Children

Why in News

A recent analysis, based on **Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN)** index, has shown the impact of climate change on children across the world.

- The analysis was done by [Save the Children International](#), a **child rights** non-profit organisation.

Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative

- ND-GAIN is **part of the Climate Change Adaptation Program of the University of Notre Dame's Environmental Change initiative (ND-ECI)**.
- **ND-GAIN's Country Index** shows which countries are best prepared to deal with global changes brought about by overcrowding, resource-constraints and climate disruption.
- The Country Index uses **20 years** of data to **rank more than 180 countries** annually based on their vulnerability and, uniquely, how ready they are to adapt.
 - **Vulnerability is considered in six life-supporting sectors** - food, water, health, ecosystem service, human habitat and infrastructure.
 - Overall **readiness is measured by considering three components** - economic readiness, governance readiness and social readiness.
- According to the scores for **2018, India ranked 122** and is the **48th most vulnerable country** and the **70th least ready country**.

Key Points

- **From the Analysis:**
 - **Countries with Highest Climate Risk:**
 - **Sub-Saharan Africa** has **35 of the 45 countries** globally at highest climate risk.
 - [Climate risk](#) can be defined as a combination of hazard exposure, sensitivity to impact, and adaptive capacity.
 - **Chad, Somalia, Central African Republic, Eritrea and Democratic Republic of the Congo** are the **least capable of adapting to the impact of climate change**.
 - **Around 490 million children** under the age of 18 in 35 African countries are at the **highest risk of suffering** the impact of climate change.
 - **Situation in South Asian Region:**
 - Of the **750 million** children in **45 countries** likely to be most affected by climate risk, 210 million are in three South Asian nations — **Pakistan, Bangladesh and**

Afghanistan.

◦ Impact of Climate Change on Children:

- **Floods, droughts, hurricanes and other extreme weather events** will have a deep impact on vulnerable children and their families.
 - Malaria and dengue fever already plague children in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
 - Increasing extreme weather events can lead to new health risks while the health system is already limited.
 - **Around 9.8 million people were displaced due to the disasters** caused by climate change during the **first half of 2020**.
 - Most of them were in South and South-East Asia and the Horn of Africa, confirmed the World Meteorological Organisation in its flagship State of the [Global Climate report](#).
- Children will be **impacted by food shortages, diseases and other health threats, water scarcity, or be at risk from rising water levels** - or a combination of these factors.
- There is enough evidence that establishes the **impact of “climate crisis on food production”**. Hence, this will lead to **local food scarcity and price hikes**.
 - Climate change can disrupt food availability, reduce access to food, and affect food quality.
- Children of the poorest households will be the most-affected. In fact, there has been scientific evidence of the **link between obesity, under-nutrition and climate change**.

▪ India's Scenario:

◦ Findings from 2020 PwC Report:

- **Disadvantaged and vulnerable populations (including children), indigenous people and local communities dependent on agricultural or coastal livelihoods are at a disproportionately higher risk of adverse consequences** due to climate change.
 - Children bear the brunt of climate change as it affects their fundamental rights of survival, protection, development and participation.
- Other **potential effects of climate change on children** are orphanhood, trafficking, child labour, loss of education and development opportunities, separation from family, homelessness, begging, trauma, emotional disruption, illnesses, etc.

◦ India's Performance in Other Related Indices:

• [Climate Change Performance Index](#):

- India **ranked 10th** in CCPI 2021, released by Germanwatch, the New Climate Institute and the Climate Action Network.

• [World Risk Index 2020](#): India has ranked 89th among 181 countries on the WRI 2020 and is fourth-most-at-risk in South Asia, after Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

- It is released by the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS), Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft and the University of Stuttgart in Germany.

• [Assessment of Climate Change over the Indian Region: MoES](#):

- It is India's first-ever national forecast on the impact of global warming on the subcontinent in the coming century, published by the Ministry of Earth

Sciences (MoES).

- **National Climate Vulnerability Assessment Report:** Released by the Department of Science and Technology, it identified Jharkhand, Mizoram, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, and West Bengal as states highly vulnerable to climate change.

▪ **Some of the Indian Initiatives to Fight Climate Change:**

- Shift from **Bharat Stage-IV (BS-IV) to Bharat Stage-VI (BS-VI) emission** norms,
- [National Clean Air Programme \(NCAP\)](#),
- [UJALA scheme](#),
- [National Action Plan on Climate Change \(NAPCC\)](#), etc.

Way Forward

- Scale up **adaptive and shock-responsive social protection systems** - such as grants for pregnant mothers and children - to address the increasing impacts of climate change on children and their families.
- More countries **need to work towards their commitment in the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)** to ensure every child is protected from poverty, for example by providing universal child benefits to improve children's well-being and build resilience.

Source: DTE

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