

# Psychological Perspective on Climate Change: A Global Challenge

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**Abstract :** We cannot refute the fact that few changes are not good for us and progressive change in climate conditions worldwide is disturbing the mankind in substantially destructive ways. Physical and mental conditions of people are likely to be unified and interlinked. Changes in climate can affect not only physical but also the mental health of people. Researches indicate increase in temperature may increase the level of aggression in people hence people engage in unlawful acts more in summers than in winters. Incessant droughts due to changes in climate conditions are accountable for many psychological problems like distress, impair mental health and suicidal tendencies in farmers. As frequency of adversity due to climate changes are increasing, increase in many psychological problems also tends to increase in people. People who face these changes are prone to posttraumatic stress disorders, depression and adjustment disorders. Drastic changes in climate may also lead people to migrate which become a foremost cause for them to be stressful and anxious.

**IndexTerms - Change, Psychological Perspective, Global Challenge**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Global temperature constantly increasing over a period of time which is one of the critical challenges World is struggling with due to climate change. A variety of human activities are contributing for the same. Over the last few decades average global temperature has raised by 0.5° C due to anthropogenic emission. There are indications through projection that it will raise by 2.4-5.8°C in upcoming years. Gradual augment in temperature alone is liable to troubling people's stable life through numerous natural calamities such as melting of ice caps, submerging of coastal areas, floods and droughts. In developing countries like India, plights due to Global warming are more severe. Issue of climate change needs a serious attention because many severe diseases like vector borne are result of it. Probability of injuries and even death is also high due to extreme weather conditions such as flood and cyclones. Risk of various infectious illnesses and spread of water-borne disease due to flood and coastal water warming are also high. Hazardous effect on soil fertility and destruction of crops are also outcomes of unbalanced climate change. All these factors are responsible for awful physical health and mental health of people.

### Outcomes of Climate Change and Mental Health

- Global Warming and Mental Health

Increase in temperature is the common effect of global warming which has a direct relationship with aggressive behavior of human species. Research shows that rate of criminal activities increases during summers which validate the connection between human aggression and temperature. Gradual increase in the temperature due to global warming indicates the gradual increase in aggressive behavior of people over the time. It is also been observed that heat waves are connected with the many mental and behavioral and mood disorders. Physical and mental exhaustion is the common result of heat exposure. A variety of research studies shows the link between psychological distress of employee and increased temperature at work place.

- Drought and Mental Health

Drought is one of the most perilous outcomes due to climate change which is directly connected with farmer's life. Research shows connection between drought and farmer's suicides. This has been happening not only in developing countries like India but also in developed countries like Australia. Expenses for living and economic status of farmers are completely dependent on the fertility of crops on the failure of which they are not able to sustain their life and left with only one awful alternative which is suicide. Not only farmers but other communities might also get the victim of drought as it disturbs the

ratio of demand and supply in the society which results the incapability for basic food purchase. Drought also results the likelihood of malnutrition and high risk for other infectious diseases in the community. Migration and profession chance due to droughts can be generally observed in farmer`s community which will again impair their psychological health. This is a grave issue to be addressed because world`s basic food needs and mental health of farmers are correlated.

### **Effect of Climate Change on Economic Factors**

Climate change may bring many transformations in economic conditions and affects the factors responsible for these transformations directly or indirectly. People living in the areas which are prone to prolonged climate change have poor economic conditions and shows greater symptoms of impair mental health. Drought affects the productivity of grains hence disturbs the demand and supply of basis things which ultimately hit the economy. Rising sea level due to temperature changes is also affecting the agriculture and other coastal line of work. Industries and other commercial areas are not untouched with climate changes because these are directly linked with raw production on agricultural fields. Due to change in the climate people do migrate which reduces the man resource for these industries and will influence rate of production. All these factors will lead to economic hardships on a wider spectrum which will again prone to poor mental health of people.

### **Effect of Climate Change on Psychological Factors**

Climate change brings nasty calamity on a larger and wider scale or community. People who encounter these disasters show higher risk of having neurotic-disorder symptoms. Sometimes the memories of such disastrous events are so horrendous and life-threatening that people who go through it are at considerable chances of developing Post traumatic Stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD symptoms may or may not be appear even after several months or years. Person in PTSD will face many life disturbing problems like distress because of re-experiencing the trauma, sleep difficulties, avoidance, and numbness. Climate changes often causes behavioral and adjustment disorders in the mass of communities which have an effect on the wellbeing and mental health on a large scale. Sadness, hopelessness, lack of enjoyment, nervousness, anxiety and suicidal thought are the common symptoms of adjustment disorders. This could be both acute or chronic depending upon the duration of these symptoms experienced. Depression, feeling of insecurity, loss of faith, flashback and fear are common psychological problems which people face after such drastic change in life which will lead to psychotic problems too. People face loss of loved ones or home in calamity may develop bereavement. Physical health and wellbeing are also affected by these changes often and ultimately diminish the psychological health. Climate change influence the psychological wellbeing in severely negatives ways so this is a matter of concern for the global problem.

### **Climate Change and Measures to Cope up**

Since there is a strong correlation between change in climate and impair mental health it needs to be address worldwide. Now it is high time to take some serious preventative measures and imperative actions to deal with the changes of climate and its hazards. Global warming is one of the foremost challenges of climate change which is accountable for many health related threats hence immediately needs to be address on the grass root level. Government should make some eco-friendly policies with strict parameters to follow measure for use of fuel or energy per person. People should make aware through mass media or other measures about the ways and importance to reduce Carbon footprint and this has to practice over a few decades to make a sense of balance in climate. Change in temperature can also be control while reducing the emission of greenhouse gases with a collaborative inter-national effort.

Few footsteps which are taken by the government of India like documentation of the issue in National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) should keep on following continuously till the sustainable positive change in the Climate. NAPCC includes eight prime missions that are National Solar Mission, National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency, National Mission on Sustainable Habitat, National Water Mission, and National Mission for Sustaining the Himalaya Eco-system, Green India Mission, and National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture and National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture, National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change. Implementation of these missions will help to cope with the issues of climate change.

Equal emphasis should be given on health related policies and facilities for the people who experience or are prone to experience the climate change and its effect in various ways. This should include both physical as well as mental health measures. People who survive natural disasters need psychological help the most because they are vulnerable to many neurotic and psychotic disorders. An interventional team of psychologist should visit to each of such places after any calamity or disaster along with the team of doctors and physicians so that external and internal healing could happen. Group of Community psychologist should be appointed on calamity prone areas so that immediate help and interventions could be ensured. Government should take serious actions to ensure the economic wellbeing of farmers especially those who are living in geographically difficult regions. Special policies and emergency protocols should make to deal with the hardships of farmers experienced drought and crop-failure. This will reduce the rate of suicide and acute stress among the farmers and drought and flood.

Approach to deal with climate change should be dyadic. On one hand attention should be on the improvise human efforts to make environment more clean and green while following all above measures and on the other hand providing health facilities to those who have already gone through with its hazards. Above mentioned are few ways to take preventive and intervening actions to make environment safe as well as to ensure mental health and wellbeing of people dealing with the issues of climate change.

### Conclusion

Climate change brings many downbeat faces up to psychological challenges and consequently needs to be dealt sensitively and on priority. It affects mental health and wellbeing of people in many substantial ways. Drought, flood, global warming and rising sea level are the main effects of Climate change which brings psychological agony, distress and malfunctioning; thus needs a systematic and expert intervention planning and execution on global aspect for hale and hearty inner and outer world for us.

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“Thanks to Almighty God & My Parents”

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