

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GEO-POLITICS: THE CREST AND TROUGH OF TENSION AND POLITICAL ATROPHY IN THE NORTH-EAST INDIA

Ayush Mazumdar*

One of the most volatile regions of India is North-East India due to its secessionist movements and tendencies since India achieved its Independence. Catering to the needs and demands of the several North-East Indian actors and State has thus been a challenging task for any incumbent Central Governments over the years. The recent NRC and the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill is trying to enlarge and activate the already existent non-active political fissures. This paper seeks to analyse, study and predict possible future outcomes that may happen due to the environmental degradation that is going on within the sub-continent and subsequent Climate Change that would make the geo-political scenario more vulnerable than ever. Hence, this paper tries to link the possible emerging relationship between climate change and politics and how geo-politics can play the dominant role in shaping it. The Indian nation is more important than any person or institution per se and thus, the foreign policy objectives of our country should adopt dual role in terms of catering to short-term and long-term agendas. Climate Change, Human security etc forms and comes in the domain of the long-term strategy. This paper seeks to identify the various environmental parameters and how it affects the human security domain, political atrophy and extremism in the long-run and tries to provide solutions to it.

Keywords: Climate change, North-East India, Non-active political fissures and active political fissures, Environmental degradation, Human security, Political atrophy.

* **West Bengal, India.**

The neighbourhood of in which we are placed is one of the most volatile hotspots when it comes to power politics. This is so because the South Asian region and China added into that context makes it the domain of three nuclear power nations. However, one of the main reasons behind this ever-increasing tension and palpitations on part of each of the state to be ahead of each other comes from the nature of relationships that India and Pakistan have inherited from its partition history. As a result, things have never been the same since 1947 and 1948 when millions of people lost their lives due to the horror of partition marked by communal riots and frenzy. History is not an isolated thing which happens for a moment and then blows off but rather it becomes the force that shapes the future. History transforms a nation just like evolution does to our species. It is always happening and thus, diplomacy like history should be in a state of function always. If we fail to evolve with history, we will be wiped out in this world of survival of the fittest. We must evolve technologically, diplomatically, infrastructurally and socially. In this uber-realistic world of International Relations, any domestic phenomenon or threat should be analysed from the perspective of our situation with respect to our enemies and allies in the context of our geographical and strategic point of view. Therefore, any problem or quagmire that can create tensions within our border has implications in our outer or external sphere too. In this globalized world, no problem or issue is an island in itself. Just as issues lose out of importance and new issues sprang up, but no issue is ever lost into the domain of inexistence because it can rise anytime and at any point of time and alter the course of present and future. The Nietzschean theory of eternal recurrence will always assume prominence because of its applicability. Therefore, understanding any issue and its nature for tackling it becomes very important and dividing issues into different categories becomes imperative. There are certain core issues which fuel other problems that activate various other stagnant or recurring problem in the context of the nation's long history of establishment and evolution. The task of this paper is to analyse one such core future or long-term problem which has the power and capability to fuel other allied political, social, cultural, economic and strategic problem. The core issue that we want to put forward is Climate Change and how it can create an administrative and strategic problem for India in the context of South Asia. In the aspect of Climate Change and the subsequent, sea level rise, India is the most vulnerable country and it can pose a threat to its rising ambitions of being a great power and how it can simultaneously provide an opportunity for India's rivals to exploit it and counter India on several fronts. One of the most important aspect of our current situation is

that one event is always followed by several parallel events on different fronts following a trajectory of function and formation. Climate, geography and politics is linked. The entry of nature and its fury into the domain of politics should have been avoided for as long as possible but the spectre of nature has arrived and it may pose one of the biggest challenges ahead. The survival of politics is at stake. Politics is about providing solutions to problems through authoritative allocation of values but, when it comes to natural problems, no such rules of allocation exists and no such authority above nature and its law exists. It is the constant principle of life neutral to living beings. Climate change is one such problem which if ignored can ultimately be called the mega problem in the long-run. It is to be pointed out that geographically not all nations are subject to the same risk value(Kaplan, 2012). That difference in risk value puts one country in relative deprivation to another country when it comes to same threats having unequal effect¹. North-East India has always been a vulnerable part of India when it comes to national integration and alienation. This boils down to various factors ranging from lack of interest and importance paid by various Central governments to the lack of apathy of the Political actors to the situation in North-East India and its uniqueness. India has always been in the words of Bhiku Parekh, Partha Chatterjee, P. Bardhan, Pratap Bhanu Mehta etc, a bargaining democracy(Mehta, 2003)(Parekh, 2015) and this bargaining democracy is an unequal one due to its population parameter as states with larger population is better able to negotiate with the Union Government. However, we are not to criticize this feature because this is natural in a parliamentary democracy. However, what matters to us is what we learn from this feature in terms of larger national interest and protecting the latter. National interest is directly proportional to self-interest and survival. A nation is like an organism and the states are its organ. Sometimes fissures and tumours arise in this organism too. Sometimes, the situation forces that infected cancerous organs to be surgically separated but if that organ is vital and our mobility depends upon it, we cannot allow it to be separated and taking precaution for preventing such scenario needs to be taken and if we ignore this fissure, then in the long-run, we will be a disabled nation, with one of the limbs or hands missing.

¹ China has much more fundamental stability due to the high level of centralization it tried to create during its ancient time period under Yangshao, Longshan, The three dynasties to the Qin dynasty. In comparison, India doesn't have such high levels of centralization. It creates a problem for India in the current era. India's geography is incomplete and incongruent to its current political boundary.

Active and non-active political fissures:

The word “fissure” in simple terms mean a long, narrow opening or line of breakage made by cracking or splitting, especially in rock or earth. The same concept can be applied to the field of politics too. However, when applied to politics, the concept of fissure is a territorial and ideological concept but its relevance lies with the ideological identity based on claiming certain territory as its own. This is true that the very technologies that defeat geography also have the capability of enhancing geography’s importance(Kaplan, 2012). Applying this concept to the Indian situation, we will understand that there has or are several fissures that had developed over the years during the course of nation-building vis-à-vis accommodation of various interests and regions with the Indian Identity. Political fissure is based on recognizing the ethnic, linguistic, religious root and identifying it with a territory and claiming autonomy within or outside the larger body. Just like a stem cell, can create a whole body from one cell, a whole country with all institutions can be created from one fissure but that leaves it in threat to a larger entity or nation having a coordinated way of functioning with all the fissures or states acting together. Whenever a larger country breaks down into multiple smaller countries, the earlier entities status becomes insignificant. The coming together of different fissures into one body, i.e. a nation is biologically necessary for survival and development, it is various cells coming together, forming tissues and tissues forming organs and the whole body. The breaking up of a nation is going backward in an evolutionary way. There is a huge functional difference between microorganisms and multicellular organisms like human beings.

The political fissures become active or non-active over time depending upon the issues, mobilization, aspirations which defined or defines it. These issues create political tension which activates the fissures. Therefore, in the long-run as well as the short-run, some fissures remain active and some become non-active, with the possibility of getting activated at any point of time. Thus, there are active and non-active political fissures. In the category of non-active or dormant political fissures would come the demand for a separate Khalistan associated with the area of East Punjab, there would come the demand for separate nation of the Tamil people associated with Tamil Nadu, the demand for bifurcation of the state of Maharashtra to provide the Vidarbha region with a state of its own. There are several such examples. For instance, the partition of the Indian sub-continent into two nation states of India and Pakistan was due to a political active

fissure which when brought to fruition led to partition. Similarly, the division of the country into various states from the original state structure after the Independence era into the current era which has 29 states and 6 Union Territories depicts the fruition of fissures. Nations represent the coming together of fissures into units, states and centres. It signifies the transformation of a micro-organism into a multicellular organism, i.e. into whole body with higher functionalization capabilities.



Fig 1.1

However, in the context of nation-building and maintaining the integrity of the nation i.e. the body as a whole it is important to recognize which are active and which are non-active fissures. The current active fissures are Kashmir and the North-east India. The aspect of Kashmir fissure is geographically and politically active and similar to the situation in Palestine where the effect of cyberspace and new media, fires renewed hatred among millions which has create a deadlock over the years(Kaplan, 2012).Though, the aspect of North-east India has been tried to be integrated and the integration level has succeeded in terms of providing political participation of the people of the respective North-eastern states in elections and also providing a political stability of sorts and the level of integration has increased with greater mobility between thepeople inter-nation and intra-nation, thus strengthening the identity of India. However, it is to be noted that the fissure of North-East India is not only one giant fissure seen in the context of the Siliguri Corridor also known as the chicken neck (22 KM)connecting mainland India into the North-eastern states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Tripura. These all states represent a cluster of fissures which if becomes active altogether

can head towards balkanization and possible separation from India. The important factor in this theory is that the fissures does not cut along state boundary level but they cut across within the state itself as can be traced from the existence of Bodoland, Greater Nagalim, the ethnic tribal geographic lines of several states in the form of Khasis, Garo's, Jaintia's, Hajongs etc, and they identify with a territory or geographical location. This is also characterized by the existence of Meitei, Mao Naga, Thado Kuki, Thangkul Naga etc. There are such ethnic groups in almost every state of the North-east India. These ethnic groups were hostile to each other and their tribal identity reigned supreme. Following the theoretical footstep of Bhikhu Parekh, India being a democracy of bargaining and reconciliation(Parekh, 2015), it is always important to stress and understand the nature of the dynamics shaping the Central and the state relationships, in this light the Central Government finds it much easier to permeate into the Indian Mainland consisting of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and vice versa. However, the same extent of percolation is difficult when it comes to many North-Eastern region. This has to do with the fact, that the Central Government doesn't want to disturb such stability it has able to create over the years through negotiation. It has to do a lot of cost-benefit calculation whereas such calculations are not needed for states nearer the metropole. The North-east India is strategically important to India because it provides India access to the ASEAN countries through land routes. The presence of land routes is immensely important than sea or maritime routes. Therefore, it is an important organ through which we are able to mobilize our ambitions. Survival for the sake of survival and survival for the sake of greatness are two different things and it is the latter that defines India. If it was all about the former, then it really wouldn't have mattered that much. In a world of realism, where survival, self-help and self-interest defines everything, survival only for the sake of survival is a risky business and history has provided numerous such examples from Kuwait, Iraqi Kurdistan to the survival chances of Taiwan in near future.

Therefore, it is important to not let the political fissures of the North-East India get activated again. Some issues activate all the existing fissures whereas some activate only one or two and extinguishing such isolated fissures is easier but when all such fissures become active it is a challenge upon the system as a whole. Such challenges create a survival risk. One such issue which cuts across ethnic lines and is able to bring together diverse hostile isolated actors into a common behaviour of resentment and disintegration is the aspect of Climate Change in the

context of Indo-Bangladesh border. Issues related to National Register of Citizens (NRC) which was an all Assam issue activating the fissures within Assam and having less effect over the other North-eastern states poised a political quagmire for the Central Government. It has been the natural behaviour of Central Governments over the years to get tensed whenever the North-East mobilises. Apart from the rhetoric part, that has been the naturally observed behaviour. The recent issue over the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019 which united such divergent actors and activated the fissures, poised a challenge to the Central Government. Even in Mizoram, posters of “Independent Republic of Mizoram” was sprang up by the students. Arunachal Pradesh kept quite due to the need of ILP or Inner Line permit for every visitor wanting to enter Arunachal Pradesh. Manipur, Meghalaya and Nagaland took similar divergent strategies as the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (I-M) faction appointed its new Chairman and deputies (Correspondent, 2019). Hence, the actors and the fissures are active. The entry of migrants and them getting citizenship is something the North-East as a whole detest and debate. Climate Change and the subsequent, rise of sea level and the submergence of major areas or regions of Bangladesh creating a huge mass of climate change refugees which will be much more catastrophic in nature and number than the current issue of Rohingya migration from the Rakhine state of Myanmar via Bangladesh (notably, the world’s largest refugee camp in Cox Bazaar, Bangladesh) to India. There is the matter of higher gradient attracting from the lower gradient seen in the context of migration to higher economies from lower economies. This problem becomes ever more important and looming to our future due to the fact that we have a porous border with Bangladesh. Migration becomes stable when the immigration as well as emigration is happening simultaneously, however, for a country like India with its own huge population and rising unemployment, migration is a bad thing. With Europe trying to close its border and USA adopting an anti-immigration policy and the rising growth of population in the sub-continent creates an unstable atmosphere. When the low-lying areas of Bangladesh having one of the most densely populated regions go below the sea-level and the areas submerge, then the existing population becoming climate change refugees and pushing into our borders and trying to illegally enter India through land routes into the regions of India which is already the most densely populated areas of our country, it creates a situation of deadlock. The coming of Rohingyas into India created an uncomfortable situation for us with consequences for our administrative, social, economic and political setup. Therefore, when such large amounts of

climate change refugees² millions in numbers trying to enter India through the porous borders, it will be a situation of huge administrative challenge for the different actors responsible for protecting the border as well as for the citizens as a whole. The importance of this lies in the fact that the problem of Climate Change is not a product of one nation but of all the highly polluting nations contributing the largest share to greenhouse gases emissions (Bearak, 2016). Hence, this is an international problem but its affect in the short as well as the long-run will be local especially in our surrounding areas paralysing our growth and ambition (Ge, Friedrich, & Damassa, 2014). According to Robert D. Kaplan, “India is a regional power to the degree that it is entrapped by its geography; it is a potential great power to the degree that it can move beyond it”. (Kaplan, 2012)

Climate Change and Geo-politics an unholy alliance:

This is an unholy alliance because from the point of view a country which trying to undo 200 years of colonial rule and bring millions of its people out of poverty through economic growth and economic development and in such a crucial stage, when Geography and Climate Change pose a threat it is an uncomfortable situation because it forces the nation to evolve differently and change its pattern of adjustment. Therefore, in light of the circumstances it is an unholy alliance because it will test the institutional and individual mettle.

Climate change as a process or phenomenon is not something new but takes place naturally over long periods of time³. The Earth is 4.5 Billion years old and during this time there have been significant changes in climate. The most recent climate change event has been the end of the Ice Age, at the end of the Pleistocene Age some 10,000 years ago. This was an entirely natural phenomenon as at this stage of evolution, human beings had little capability and capacity to influence the workings of the nature. Scientists are uncertain about the exact cause of climate change then, but many attributes it to the so-called Milankovitch cycle, which is when the earth

² Climate change is a result of greenhouse gas emissions and one of the most significant impact would be the rise of sea-level, most of the third world countries are low-lying countries and therefore, they are more subject to risk. Read in this respect the aspect of colonialism and neo-colonialism. The first world countries always had an advantage of time. Colonialism was the original sin. It created a cycle of underdevelopment. Immigration to first world countries from third world countries is a natural result of that original sin committed by the colonizers

³ Climate change is a natural phenomenon usually but the human dominance has altered to natural phenomenon into a man-made one. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/nov/03/climate-change-report-us-government-contradicts-trump>

tilts on its axis, causing shifts in how the Earth receives solar radiation. Therefore, in this context it wouldn't be so much as climate change but rather a natural phenomenon. Climate change was thus a natural phenomenon signifying the mechanism through which earth maintain its balance. However, the current face of climate change is a human induced one.

Anthropogenic (or human-induced) climate change is different. It is caused by the release of the greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane, which act as insulation around the earth's atmosphere. Again, the greenhouse effect is not new. During the early stages of the earth's formation, many gases such as carbon dioxide were released through volcanoes or the decomposition of vegetal matter on the earth's surface. These gases then settled in the atmosphere around the earth and had the effect of preventing much of the earth's heat from escaping. Indeed, this level of the greenhouse effect has been beneficial, allowing temperatures to remain high enough for the earth's current life forms to develop. But if there are too many of these greenhouse gases, the earth's temperature is likely to rise further. Human activities impact on climate change by releasing greenhouse gases. The most common of these activities is the conversion of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas to energy. The fossil fuels performed the process of carbon sequestration. Carbon sequestration refers to the process through which carbon is captured in solid and liquid forms in long term basis to defer global warming. The non-renewable fuels contain large quantities of carbon stored from previous geological periods, which when released as carbon dioxide will increase atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations. It is to be pointed out that forests play an important role in the process of carbon sequestration. Other sources of greenhouse gases include deforestation (which has the impact of releasing carbon dioxide, as well as reducing the ability of landscapes to recover – or sequester – carbon dioxide), land-use changes and construction work (which releases nitrous oxide), and the decomposition of organic matter and fermentation in rice fields (which releases methane). Indeed, nitrous oxide and methane have significantly higher levels of impact on heating the atmosphere (also known as global warming potential) than carbon dioxide. Climate change as already stated is the holistic outcome as a result of the process of extraction of these resources from the crust of the Earth and the process involved for extraction is not sustainable either as can be traced from the adverse effects of open cast mining, oil spills, dangerous sulphur mines of Indonesia, scummage for golds in poverty-stricken African countries which engulfs thousands

of lives every year⁴. Part and parcel of this process is the severe cost on human lives in terms of high pollution levels, forced rehabilitation and illegal way of acquiring tribal lands by MNCs and respective governments for extracting resources for their profit maximization. Rather, scientists represented on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have reported that climate change is most likely to result in a more erratic pattern (IPCC, 2014). This prediction means that there may be more storms and more unpredictable, higher-magnitude weather events such as cyclones and droughts. Some climatic zones will shift in geographical location over a gradual period (Parmesan , 2006, pp. 637--669). Yet, to achieve this change there may be associated events such as fires in landscapes that used to have trees and shrubs, but which are gradually becoming drier. These fires will also cause damage and disturbance to other ecosystems (WWF, 2018). Indeed, some observers claim that recent forest fires in Indonesia, or bush fires in places such as Australia and California are most likely evidence of long-term shifts in climate-vegetation zones taking place (Sykes, 2009). So, no matter we try to evade the term climate change and restrict its usage, it is in action everywhere and it will require a huge crisis for us to recognize it, maybe a crisis will also not let that conscience awake until and unless we are one of the victims.

Another concern is that climate change might raise sea levels by melting polar and land-based ice, or by heating the water and increasing its volume accordingly. These are serious concerns, and they might impact on coastal communities in various ways. For example, in Bangladesh, agricultural land near the coast will become more saline (salty) as the sea level rises. This requires local farmers to adapt by using crops that are tolerant of sea water. Coastal zones might also experience higher levels of tidal surges (the short-term rise in water) during storms. These events might impact on vulnerable populations in developing countries, as well as richer cities such as in Florida. Longer-term inundation of currently dry land on a permanent basis might take longer.

⁴ The real effect of climate change can be traced to the various fields of natural resource exploitation.
URL:https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kp6_sDiup6U&t=131s

Changed climate patterns could impact on the distribution of disease vectors such as mosquitoes⁵. They could also lead to a relatively rapid decline in biodiversity if living conditions and habitats for some species have insufficient time for adjustments to take place. The main source of information about climate change comes from the IPCC, which was set up in 1988. Its objectives were not to conduct research itself, but to bring together all research and analytical discussions about climate change within academic and applied scientific bodies in order to reach a consensus about trends. Its first report in 1990 proposed that the global economy should reduce emissions by 60 per cent in order to avoid climate change. Follow-up reports were published in 1996, 2001 and 2007.

There are several environmental challenges posed by the economic rise of India and China which include the threat of rapid and irreversible climate change due to the accumulation of greenhouse gases and the environmental impacts would be beyond their national borders and the third challenge would be in terms of domestic environment which would become unfit for habitation. Indian cities like Delhi and many more have witnessed recent changes in terms of severe breathing air quality which is highly hazardous to human health. Rivers such as Ganga and Yamuna are effectively dead. India and China, have recently witnessed large-scale depletion of groundwater aquifers, the loss of biodiversity, the destruction of forests and the decimation of fish stocks etc (Guha, Environmentalism; A Global History, 2016). In this backdrop, the Tibet Plateau which is one of the largest sources of freshwater, currently occupied by China, with future intentions to divert the waters of Brahmaputra to save the dying Yellow River and also diverting the waters of river Mekong, the Salween, the Sutlej etc (Mearsheimer, 2003). The rise of China and the threat of reduction in water in downstream countries effecting its economic and social structure is huge. China in its effort to rerouting the rivers flowing out of Tibetan Plateau has acted unilaterally and shown little interest in building international institutions that can help manage the ensuing problems (Mearsheimer, 2003). The need for SAARC + ASEAN Water dialogue forum is needed and common confrontation to China is of significance now before the

⁵ URL: https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg3/WGIIIAR5_SPM_TS_Volume.pdf
, https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/AR5_SYR_FINAL_SPM.pdf

Paaijmans, K. P., Imbahale, S. S., Thomas, M. B., & Takken, W. (2010). Relevant microclimate for determining the development rate of malaria mosquitoes and possible implications of climate change. *Malaria journal*, 9(1), 196.

“giant” goes out of our reach. The South-China sea quagmire clearly sees the ineffectiveness of the UN in confronting or containing China, a veto-yielding power.

The Bangladesh Quagmire:

The transnational character of climate change can be traced to this particular model. The Bangladesh model is a typical model which highlights the problem that low-lying areas will face due to sea-level rise which have been described as one of the main outcomes of climate change due to melting of the glaciers in the Greenland and the Antarctica. This melting of glaciers is due to the rise of the temperature of the atmosphere of the earth due to high levels of Greenhouse gases. The melting of Antarctica will change the global map as a whole. The British Antarctica Survey highlights that Antarctica is the fastest warming regions in the planet. The IPCC has predicted that by 2050, the sea level would rise by 1 Metre. Dr Andrew Clark has stated that countries like Bangladesh would become virtually inexistent (Clarke, 2014). IPCC predicts that by the end of the century, 17% of the landmass of Bangladesh would be inundated⁶. The subsequent inundation due to sea level rise would push the people living in those areas to the inner parts of the country and making these people as the “Climate Change refugees”. Hence, when Bangladesh being an already overpopulated country with a density of population at 19,447 people per square mile would be boosted further. Hence, the resource-population demand would be inadequate for human beings to rely and survive on. This would create a situation of conflict. This conflict wouldn't be restricted to the borders only but rather would affect its neighbouring countries and India would be the most affected by it because of its large and porous border with Bangladesh (4097 KM), the situation can easily be understood due to the recent complexity that arose due to the influx of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar via Bangladesh. The problem would be more complex for India because than most of the Indian peninsular low-lying regions would get flooded and these regions include most of the important cities of India like Mumbai, Calcutta, Chennai etc. These inundated places would create its own set of climate change refugees who would migrate to the central and northern parts of India. The northern plains of Indian are already one of the most densely populated regions of the world. Hence, refugees of its

⁶<http://icccad.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/IPCC-Briefing-for-Bangladesh.pdf>
<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/jan/04/bangladesh-climate-refugees-john-vidal-photo-essay>
<https://cdkn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Report-on-IPCC-outreach-events-Bangladesh-.pdf>

own coupled with refugees from outside would pose a challenge that would be beyond measure and beyond the capacity of the global administrative system to handle. It will be one of the greatest strategic challenges that the mankind has ever seen⁷. (Refer to fig 1.3)



The Siliguri Corridor (22 km).

Fig 1.2 (Source: By United States Central Intelligence Agency - CIA World Factbook Webpage)

⁷ In light of the Chicken neck or the Siliguri Corridor of 22 KM, the only way connecting mainland India with North-East India, strategically this location is very important because Indian navy doesn't have a direct access to North-East India. For controlling an area, the presence of land-army is more important even though precision-guided missiles launched from Aircraft carriers are not enough to control a territory. Read the Revenge of Geography, Chapter 11: The Geography of Chinese power, p. 188-227, Random House Publications, 2013, New York.

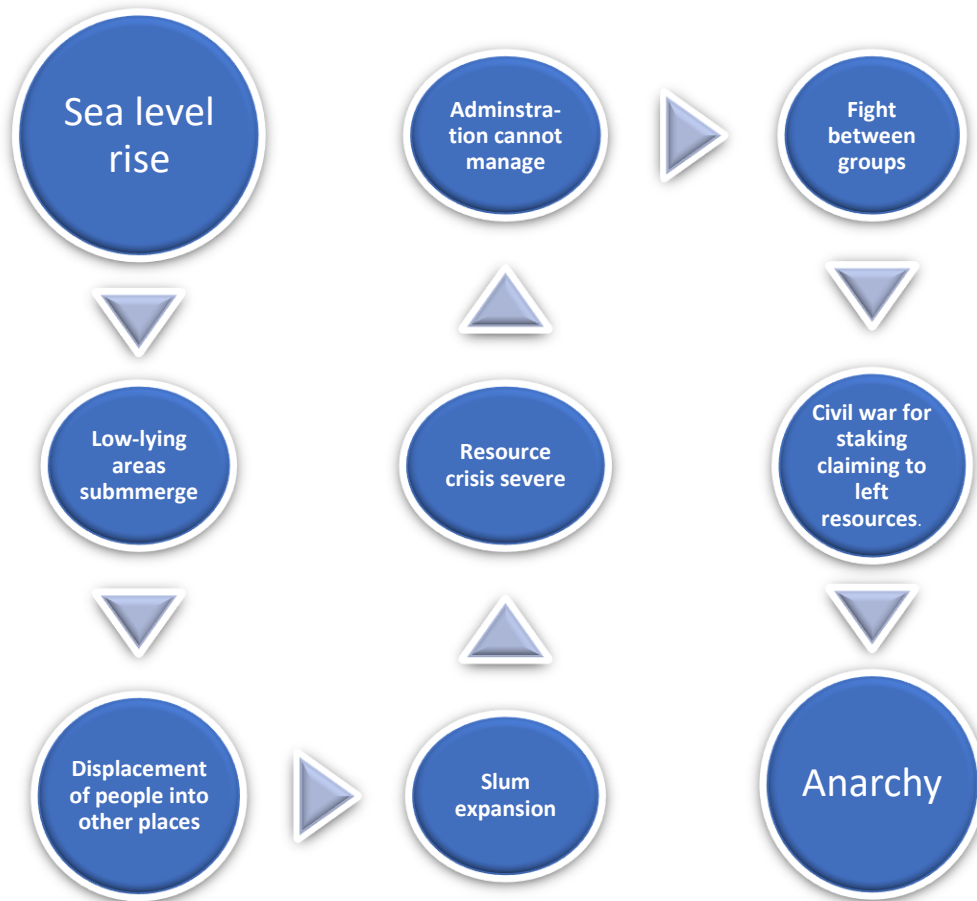
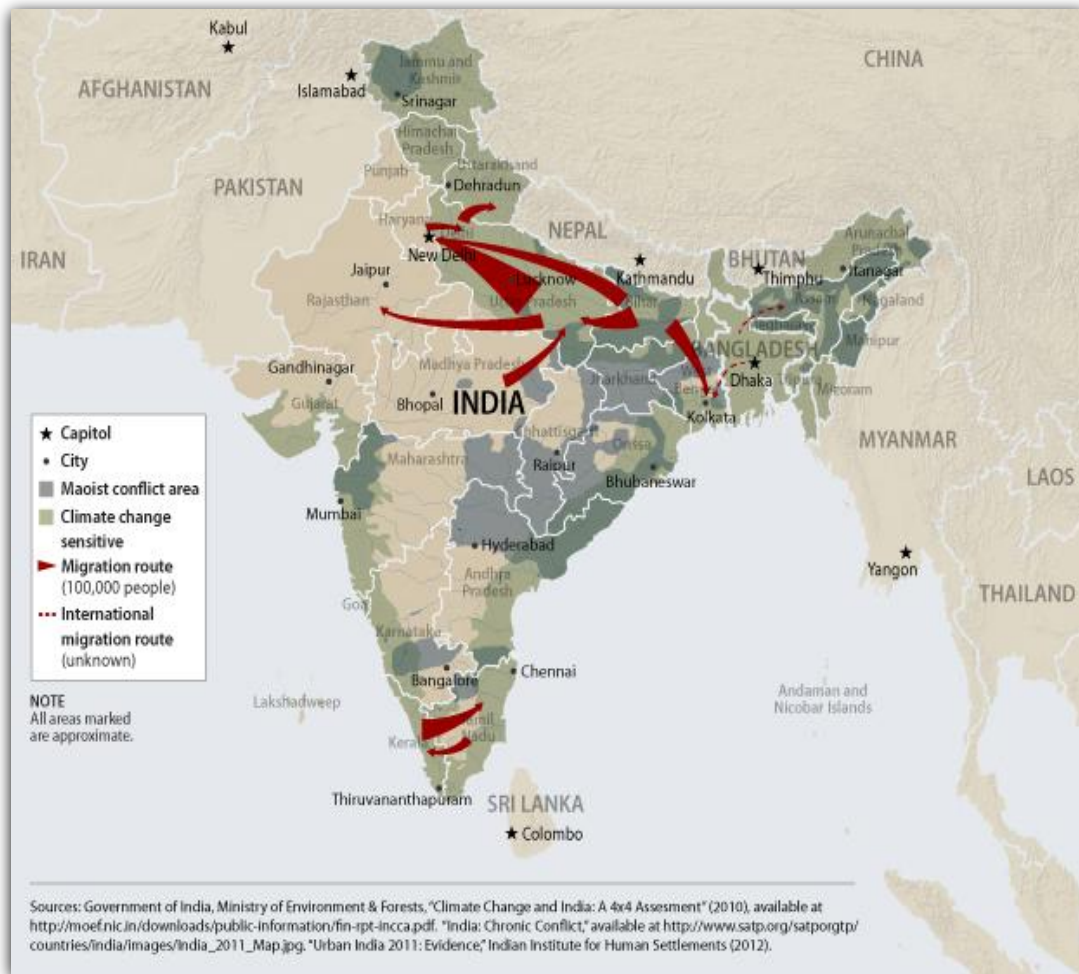


Fig 1.3

In Florida, the city of Miami is going through a construction boom with large-scale infrastructure projects cropping up but the recent Hurricane Sandy revealed the impending disaster ahead as most of the parts of the city was water-logged due to rise in the sea-level. Technology was sought as the possible solution. But it failed to restrict the forces of nature. It is estimated that the subsequent sea-level rise due to Hurricane Sandy created damages worth \$350 billion (Stern, 2008).

The geo-political scenario would change as major cities of India would be flooded and cities like Hyderabad, Bangalore and Delhi already facing water crisis and it is estimated that their groundwater table would be completely depleted by 2050. So, majority of the cities wiped out and major administrative centres flooded and uninhabitable, what will happen? The economic growth is devoid of any moralistic principle and that isolation from the happenings in the environment is destructive. Bangladesh is a third world, low lying country which has gone



through colonialism and is going through a period of high-economic growth 7.11%, and it has the same problems that a typical developing country has in terms of high population, resource crisis, social instability in terms of radicalization of population on religious lines. Dr Atiq Rahman, a Nobel laureate, argues that Bangladesh is the most vulnerable country in the world to climate change (Rahman & Mallick, 2004). This vulnerability is not only to Bangladesh but to India also, even more. (Refer to fig 1.4)

Fig 1.4 (Sources are mentioned below the picture itself.)

The process or praxis:

1. Sea-level rise: With possible sea-level rise in Bangladesh's low-lying regions and subsequent inundation of Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong; most of the population would migrate to areas of Dacca, Mymensingh, Rajshahi etc. Currently, Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong have a population of 52,436,444. So, this 52 lakhs people would migrate to already filled up town and

regions. In India, due to inundation of cities like Bombay, Chennai and other low-lying areas, India will have its own share of climate change refugees who will migrate to the rest of the regions. India will be faced with migrant population from both within and outside its borders.

2. Administrative mechanism stress: Due to influx of migrants from Bangladesh and within Indian submerged regions into Northern Plains (Uttar Pradesh= 2,140 /square mile, Bihar = 2,850/ square mile, West Bengal= 2,670/ square mile) and Assam in the north-east with a population density of 1,030/ square mile. This influx of migrants in huge number may lead to disintegration of the Indian political system as North-eastern states seen as a cluster of large active political fissures which have preserved their identities based on separation and agreement with the Indian Union would become redundant to preserve the unity of the nation as the democratic mechanism would become futile and unaccommodating. Hence, the survival of the Indian state would be in jeopardy.

3. Political Atrophy: When survival is at stake, no amount of agreement will work and the body will go its different way. This will be marked by disintegration and atrophy of the political setup. Atrophy will be required to survive. The situational context would require particularism. If the regional organs fail then chaos would ensue. The population scourging over each other for getting the already depleted resources would be beyond control or management. It will be characterized by a civil society highly mobilized, unconscious, and if armed, then civil war would start and if not armed then alienation would lead to starvation and death. It will be divided into particularistic social, cultural or ethnic lines and contest with other societies or ideological entities to acquire power. The state would be failing to accommodate and force use would become useless because democracy wouldn't be democracy anymore. Atrophy in Indian setup is inherent and is more inherent in context of the North-Eastern states because small issues can flare-up secessionist claims. Assam has been a boiling point when it comes migration and the push-factors in half submerged Bangladesh would provide a fertile ground for outfits like ULFA to acquire power and influence. Even the NRC (National Register of Citizens) issue has indicated the fractures or fissures within indicating the diastrophism that can take place, altering the Political map of India. Historical understanding states that, so far, Indian Union has accommodated to claims of the North-Eastern states but they have adjusted to the demand in terms of their suitability and benefit. When that benefit doesn't flow anymore but association with the Union becomes a burden tantamount to their development, fracturing of Indian political

setup in ethnic, regional, linguistic lines would be easier and more beneficial to them. Therefore, Balkanization would be the norm in such a context of difference. Hence, with climate change the odds are high and everything is at stake here.

Conclusion:

The aspect of Climate Change can fuel other problems or issues which have long-term or short-term nature of action. Climate Change being a slow phenomenon will produce results which will affect allied aspects of human security too. Incursion of huge refugees into the India will create more problems for our country in terms of tracking down terrorism activities situated in within the high densely populated areas of our country. The similar physiognomy of the people of the Indian sub-continent makes it harder for the system to trace down infiltration. The migration of unskilled, fundamentalist people from other countries like Bangladesh and Myanmar to enter India is harmful especially for the states bordering Bangladesh such as West Bengal and Assam and other North-Eastern states such Tripura, Meghalaya etc. In most of the states, such as West Bengal and Assam, immigration of large number of migrants becomes politically feasible as it provides a huge vote bank for the regional parties which synchronizes with the ideology of such migrants. However, the need of the hour is to totally seal the border. The role that the military and BSF will play in such management is enormous.

India should strengthen its diplomatic front in the multilateral agencies especially in WTO (World Trade Organization) where it can counter the hegemonial stands of USA and other countries like China which often engages in dumping. However, India is a dual producer in the sense that it extracts raw material and also manufactures for the rest of the world based on the outsourcing policies of large MNCs which siphon off the profits leaving us with costs of environmental degradation. This creates a problem for the large number of “ecosystem people” who had to rely on river waters which have become unfit for consumption and air so polluted that it is harmful to breathe and finally, succumbing to respiratory, intestinal diseases (Gadgil & Guha, 1995). India and other third world countries are paying much of the price and the “polluters pay principle” lays entirely with the parent’s countries where the HQ of the MNCs are. India should strengthen SAARC through which it can create an economic zone within the South Asian countries to restrict the entry of China into our regional sphere of action. Hence, a new

vision should be championed based on SAARC SUSTAINABLE based on sustainable industries making a transition from the coal based industrial process to clean energy process. The North-East zone of India should be connected to the ASEAN Zone and provide with more sustainable development efforts.

However, this situation is one of deep introspection and dilemma as we have moved beyond the period of “small is beautiful” to the period of “India’s national security”. Therefore, we have to create a balance of life by equating economic progress with human welfare and environmental welfare. The recent amendment in the Coastal Regulation Zone 2018 providing tourism projects to be constructed in earlier restricted zones is not good(Bureau, Press Information, 2018). We are in a cobweb of sorts, we human beings as the topmost predator on Earth has dominated over everything that is living as well as non-living but if we try to dominate over the laws that determine our existence, the consequences will be of unimaginable chaos.

Post-Script:

This idea is a work in progress since it is just the tip of the whole theoretical framework on which this idea is based. Therefore, certain aspects of the work can be embellished further through the security-based fissure scale which is in its developmental stages. With every new reading, new insights come forward. The recent attacks on the CRPF Jawans in Pulwama on 14th February 2019 and the inability of the UN to block JeM Chief Masood Azhar due to the efforts of the Chinese diplomatic front, clearly shows the realist world order in action but the multilateral agencies when steered through the general will which signifies the summation of all the national interest of respective countries can be utilized to provide various multilateral agencies to work in tandem with required action, it can successfully counter any hegemonizing tendencies from any states. One of the most successful cartel or multilateral fora in terms of action has been the OPEC. Similar, rational steering of micro and macro diplomatic bodies can play an effective role in maintaining a balance. The current International order is one which is characterized as realist core with a chance of multilateralism.

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