



“We are at a very critical stage in our effort to combat climate change. While science prompts towards greater action, we find that the response of countries is not adequate. We must incentivize action -- the first step in this regard is enhanced action by developing countries.”

Prakash Javadekar, Environment Minister¹



India dominates the South Asian subcontinent. It features tropical forests, vast deserts, and high alpine regions. Its primary weather system is the annual monsoon rains. With the change in climate, India is threatened with uncertainty over the summer-fall monsoon season, and thus is threatened with flooding and crop damage.² This increase in rainfall and local changes in temperature are expected to have significant impacts on crop production. India is also feeling the regional pressures from climate changes as refugees are crossing the border from Bangladesh to escape the mounting pressures from the rise in sea levels.³

Summary

Country: India

Region: South Asia

ASP Assessment:

Vulnerability: High

Perception of Climate Change: Environmental Threat

Capacity: Medium

Preparedness: Low

Overall Assessment: Weak

The Climate Threats

Regional Disaster Vulnerability

- Flooding in urban areas the could displace millions
- Rise in frequency and severity of coastal storms from in the Indian Ocean⁴
- Increase in depth and variability of droughts
- Uncertainty of the timing of monsoon rains⁵

The Need to Adapt

- Regional tensions prevent cross-border collaboration on issues of shared resources
- Sclerotic state has trouble building infrastructure or making long term plans
- Economic growth is given a higher priority than climate preparedness⁷

Links Between Climate and Conflict

- Bilateral Indian-Pakistani relationship complicated by changing water supplies of the Indus River
- Cross-border migration from Bangladesh
- Possible food price spikes leading to urban unrest⁶

Direct Threats to Homeland Security

- Rising sea level threatens coastal communities
- Reduced production in agriculture⁸



How is the Country Preparing for Climate Threats

Preparing for Disaster Response

“The goal of the National Disaster Management Authority is to build a safer and disaster resilient India by a holistic, pro-active, technology driven and sustainable development strategy that involves all stakeholders and fosters a culture of prevention, preparedness and mitigation.”

- National Disaster Management Authority’s Vision⁹

Adapting Installations

“The plan identifies measures that promote our development objectives while also yielding co-benefits for addressing climate change effectively.”

- National Action Plan on Climate Change Government of India, June 2008¹¹

Breaking the Link between Climate and Conflict

“The need of the hour is to chalk out a multi-pronged strategy for total risk management, comprising prevention, preparedness, response and recovery, on the one hand, and initiate development efforts aimed towards risk reduction and mitigation, on the other. Only then can we look forward to “sustainable development.”

- The Tenth Five Year Plan, Government of India 2002¹⁰

Planning for Homeland Security Threats

“The rapid increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, land degradation, increasing floods and droughts, advancing deserts and deteriorating conditions of fragile ecosystems, deforestation, loss of biodiversity and environmental pollution have become subjects of serious global concern.”

- The Tenth Fiver Year Plan, Government of India 2002¹²

Analysis

India is perhaps the most important outlier from the global consensus that climate change presents threats to national security. Its planning for climate security is enigmatic. Members of the Indian armed forces have rarely stated on-the-record that climate change presents dire threats to national security, and it is not discussed in official military planning documents. The current Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has written a book about how to take the lead on controlling climate change, while also expressing skepticism about whether the climate is actually changing. Perhaps the foundation of this is the nature of climate change in international negotiations, where any official statement of a climate security threat could be seen as undercutting the authority of the UN General Assembly (where India is a historical leader) in favor of the UN Security Council (where India lacks a permanent seat). Unfortunately, the climate security threat is greater than UN politics. Until India address these issues, it rates as “Highly vulnerable, but unprepared.”

The American Security Project’s Global Security Defense Index on Climate Change is an examination of how international governments and militaries plan for and anticipate the strategic threats of climate change.

For more information and references see:

globalsecuritydefenseindex.org