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RESILIENCE IN FLUX: UNDERSTANDING THE INTERPLAY OF DISABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE DYNAMICS

AUTHORED BY - NABIL IQBAL

1. Introduction

Climate change is considered as one of the biggest threats for current and upcoming generations.¹ It has affected the life of individuals through various ways, the most crucial being threat to the enjoyment of rights that is considered as essential for living.² Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) defines climate change as “a change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g., by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer.”³ Various effects of climate change include – rise in sea level, draught, flood, heat waves etc.⁴ These effects can be either slow-onset (such as - sea level rise)⁵ or sudden-onset (such as flash flood).⁶

The impact of climate change is seen severely on marginalized groups such as women, children and disabled.⁷ This essay will focus on people belonging to the latter group i.e., disabled. The community of disabled is considered as the largest minority group in the world,⁸ which comprises of 15% of world’s population.⁹ Right from ancient period, they are facing stigmatization,

¹ Gerrard, M., & Wannier, G. E. (2015). *Threatened Island Nations: Legal implications of rising seas and a changing climate*. Cambridge University Press.

² Ohchr and climate change. (2021, June 30). Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/climate-change>.

³ Glossary. (n.d.). Retrieved November 18, 2022, from <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/glossary/>.

⁴ Causes and effects of climate change.(n.d.). Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/causes-effects-climate-change>.

⁵ Slow onset events. (n.d.). Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://unfccc.int/wim-excom/areas-of-work/slow-onset-events>.

⁶ Risk profile: Sudden-onset hazards and the risk of future displacement in the Marshall Islands - Marshall Islands. (2022, March 01). Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://reliefweb.int/report/marshall-islands/risk-profile-sudden-onset-hazards-and-risk-future-displacement-marshall>.

⁷ Social Dimensions of Climate Change. (n.d.). Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/social-dimensions-of-climate-change>.

⁸ Factsheet on persons with Disabilities Enable. (n.d.). Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/resources/factsheet-on-persons-with-disabilities.html>.

⁹ World Report on Disability. (n.d.). Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://www.who.int/teams/noncommunicable-diseases/sensory-functions-disability-and-rehabilitation/world-report-on-disability>.

discrimination, marginalization and other inequalities. Now, the climate change has further increased their vulnerability.¹⁰ The problem become more intense due to the fact that the effect of climate change is seen more severely in poor countries.¹¹

In view of the above-mentioned fact, this paper discusses the effect of climate change on disabled people. To make the essay coherent, the paper is divided into four parts. Part I discusses the meaning of climate change and its impact on the society. Once the basic understanding of climate change is acknowledged, the essay focuses on the impact of climate change with respect to disabled people. This is discussed in part II. This part is further sub-divided into two broad categories based on the type of effects i.e., slow-onset and sudden-onset.

To understand the problem faced by disabled in the former situation, the essay look into the country of Kiribati. Kiribati is an island nation which is located in the Pacific Ocean¹² and have a total population of 119,000.¹³ This country is considered as one of the most affected country due to climate change¹⁴ and it is believed that Kiribati will become completely inhabitable due to rise in sea-level by 2050.¹⁵ While looking into the situation of Kiribati, the focus is made on how slow-onset of climate change create challenges for disabled people. To understand the second type of effect i.e., sudden-onset, the essay discusses how sudden onset of climate change affects the basic life of disabled people.

Part III highlights the issue of non-inclusion of disabled people in policies and decision making regarding climate change. It further suggests the requirement of including disabled people in such decision making process. And Part IV recognizes the need for a human-rights based approach to solve the bias against disabled people during climate change events.

¹⁰ Cacciatore, G. (2021, March 31). The intersection of disability and climate change. Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/21/03/intersection-disability-and-climate-change>.

¹¹ Dervis, K. (n.d.). Devastating for the world's Poor: Climate change threatens the development gains already achieved. Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/devastating-worlds-poor-climate-change-threatens-development-gains-already-achieved>.

¹² Kiribati. (n.d.). Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/kiribati>.

¹³ Population, total - kiribati. (n.d.). Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=KI>.

¹⁴ Ives, M. (2016, July 03). A Remote Pacific nation, threatened by Rising seas. Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/03/world/asia/climate-change-kiribati.html>.

¹⁵ Martin, B., Dyke, J., Turnbull, J., & Malin, S. (2019, August 15). How to save a sinking island nation. Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20190813-how-to-save-a-sinking-island-nation>.

2. Part I - Climate Change & It's Impact

2.1. Meaning:

'Climate Change' is the most significant moral and political issue in the contemporary times. But, it is often used interchangeably with global warming. However, these two words are completely different. 'Climate Change' as described by the United Nations is a long term alteration in weather and temperature patterns.¹⁶ Climate change is often understood as a consequence of human activities which primarily include burning of fossil fuels and deforestation.¹⁷

These human activities, especially burning of fossil fuels leads to green house gas emissions (GHGs) which are responsible for increased temperatures all over the planet. The temperature pattern in the last decade proves that the average temperature of the planet has increased about 1.1 degree Celsius.¹⁸ In fact, the last decade was the warmest ever recorded. Climate change has induced a series of events that include extreme weather conditions such as droughts, floods, rise in sea-level, melting of polar ice caps, etc. Floods, drought, storms and other events are occurring more frequently and intensely due to climate change. It has caused the weather patterns to be comparatively unpredictable. When these weather patterns occur naturally, they are slow and less damaging.¹⁹ However, the human-induced climate change is far reaching impacts not only for human beings but for the whole planet.

2.2. Impact of Climate Change

Climate Change is a fundamental topic for debate of the twenty-first century. Ecosystems around the world are getting affected. Climate change not only impact weather patterns but all the things that we depend on. It affects our vegetation, transportation, housing, health, etc.²⁰ The impact of climate change is interrelated. For example, climate change affects rainfall pattern which in turn affects the vegetation and thus food security and health. Similarly, flood affects disease outbreak and damages crops and infrastructure. Therefore, it touches every aspect of our life. It threatens the whole world and has proved to be a threat to realization of wide range of human rights.²¹

¹⁶ What is climate change? (n.d.). Retrieved December 12, 2022, from <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/what-is-climate-change>

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Supra* note 4.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Supra* note 2.

It is often argued that climate change is ‘indiscriminate’, in the sense that it affects everyone equally.²² However, this does not hold true for everyone. Some countries and some sections of people are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change. For instance, low lying countries, specifically small island nations like Kiribati and Maldives are most prone to get affected due to climate change.²³ As a matter of fact, some regions in Kiribati have already become inhabitable due to rising sea level which is a consequence of climate change. Similarly socioeconomic factors also determine the impact climate change has on society. A society with few resources and poor economy is bound to get adversely affected due to climate change. The impact of climate change is seen severely on marginalized groups such as women, children, old people etc.²⁴ In the same way, people with disability are the ones who are most detrimentally affected due to the affect of climate change. Therefore, it is important to discuss about the impact of climate change on disabled people.

3. Part II - Impact of Climate Change on Disabled People

‘Disability’ includes conditions that confines ability of a person to do certain activities.²⁵ There are various categories of disabilities, including disability related to hearing, mobility, speech, vision, etc. It is not an unknown fact that people with disability face significant challenges than non-disabled people. In general, disabled people are treated unequally and face difficulties in the normal sphere of life. Although, disabled people form about 15% of the world’s population, they are ignored in the climate change discussions.²⁶ People with disabilities would face increased hardships due to climate change. These hardships would not only affect the quality of life but also basic human rights of disabled people. It would affect right to life, right to adequate standard of living, right to food, etc. amongst other human rights.

The key impact of climate change on disabled people would mostly be on the quality of life. This could be understood by the fact that, disabled people, generally, already face hardships for access

²² Myers, N. & Kent, J. (1995). *Environmental exodus: an emergent crisis in the global arena*. Climate Institute.

²³ *Supra* note 1.

²⁴ Social Dimensions of Climate Change. (n.d.). Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/social-dimensions-of-climate-change>.

²⁵ Climate Change and the Health of People with Disabilities. (n.d.) Retrived December 8, 2022, from <https://www.epa.gov/climate-change/climate-change-and-health-people-disabilities#:~:text=Increases%20in%20average%20and%20extreme,groups%2C%20including%20people%20with%20disabilities.&text=Some%20people%20with%20disabilities%20are,heat%2Drelated%20illness%20and%20death>.

²⁶ *Ibid*.

to safe drinking water and hygiene. It is estimated that during the present century, water accessibility would be negatively affected due to climate change.²⁷ IPCC has also stated that it will affect both the quantity and quality of water.²⁸ In such situations, the decreases water quality would result in disease outbreaks and may also cause disability related issues. Further, it would also create accessibility related issues to disabled people.

Climate change affects disabled people in numerous ways. In certain situations like cyclones, storms, floods, etc. it has immediate repercussions. In other conditions, like rise in sea-level, its affect cannot be predicted imminently. The former case falls into the category of sudden onset effects and the latter one in the slow-onset effects of climate change.

3.1. Impact of Sudden Onset of Climate Change on Disabled People

The world has already witnessed the sudden onset events related to climate change. Sudden onset events mean the immediate and sudden effects of climate change. It has been stated by the researchers that in the wake of climate change, stronger hurricanes and storms are more prevalent in warmer climates.²⁹ These prevalent changes in the weather which gives rise to frequent events like hurricanes, storms, flood, etc. could be generally understood as sudden onset events of climate change.

As the events are sudden, people usually do not get enough time to react and therefore, they suffer numerous impacts. These impacts have disproportionate affect on vulnerable section like disabled people. Disabled people face challenges in the daily sphere of their lives. During emergency situations like storms, they face enhanced adversities. Firstly, they may not have access to same information related to warnings of sudden onset events due to their disability. This is particularly true for people with hearing and vision impairment. Secondly, they may not have access to same resources that the non-disabled people while preparing for coping up with such emergency situations. Finally, they also face deprivations after the events of sudden onset calamities.

²⁷ *Supra* note 24.

²⁸ Climate change widespread, rapid, and intensifying – IPCC. (n.d.) Retrived December 4, 2022, from <https://www.ipcc.ch/2021/08/09/ar6-wg1-20210809-pr/>.

²⁹ How climate change makes hurricanes more destructive. (n.d.) Retrived December 10, 2022, from <https://www.edf.org/climate/how-climate-change-makes-hurricanes-moredestructive#:~:text=Stronger%20hurricanes%20are%20becoming%20more,Ocean%20has%20doubled%20since%201980.>

3.1.1. Displacement & Inability to Migrate

Displacement is one of the most stressful impacts of sudden onset events. Sudden onset events are unpredictable but they cause loss and damage. Sometimes, they wreck havoc, lasting for days or even more. It is estimated that about 80% of disabled people live in middle income and low income nations, which are highly vulnerable to climate change.³⁰ Sudden onset of climate change can cause displacement by means of enhanced incidence of extreme weather events of droughts, floods, storms, etc. Disabled people are at greater risk because of discrimination in protection and access to services. They also face challenges in availing durable remedies to displacement. People with mobility related issues are the ones who are specifically affected due to their special condition. They are affected the most because they are not able to access the facilities.

Disabled people are amongst the one who are worst hit by displacement due to climate change because of their special conditions. But, they are also the ones who face problems while trying to migrate. Migration is sometimes the only solution when coping up with the aftermaths of climate displacement. But, disabled people, in particular, people with mobility issues face trouble migrating.

3.1.2. Livelihood

Sudden onset events often displace a person, which also affects their livelihood. For disabled people, getting an employment is already difficult. But, after climate change disasters, they are at mercy of social services. In such conditions, each facet of their lives is affected. They do not have proper access to food and other resources. Given these circumstances, going back to former way of life might be impossible for them. A disaster due to climate change does not just affect the population, but the economy of a place. When climate disaster such as storms and flood hits a particular place, it also destroys the potential agriculture and other resources. Such resources are often a source of livelihood for people. Given the limited ability of disabled people, it is impossible for them to learn new skills every now and then. When the original source of livelihood is destroyed, they are left with no sources of income. Moreover, they cannot always switch jobs. While, it is difficult for even non-disabled people to maintain the source of their livelihood after sudden onset events of climate change, because they need to migrate to other places.

³⁰ Disability, Displacement, and Climate Change. (n.d.) Retrived November 30, 2022, from, <https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/disability-displacement-and-climate-change#:~:text=Climate%20change%20may%20lead%20to,that%20impacts%20livelihoods%20and%20survival.>

But, there is 'inequality' factor attached with people with disabilities.³¹ For example, in a place which is near to sea or ocean, most of the people depend upon fishing or related occupations for sustaining their livelihood. But, if a storm approaches and destroys the place, people would have to relocate. Most of the people, who would relocate would need to learn new skills to sustain their livelihood because it is not guaranteed that they would relocate to a place which would be close to sea or ocean. In such circumstances, disabled people would face additional challenges than non-disabled. Primarily, relocation would not be so easy for them because their respective special conditions or impairments. Secondly, even if they relocate, they may not be able to get an employment similar to their former employment. Learning new skills to gain different employment is often not easy for disabled people,³² because of the bias they face.

Because of their physical conditions and the brutality of the sudden onset of climate change, vulnerable people, including disabled have to face challenging consequences. Though, these consequences are faced by disabled and non-disabled person equally and they have suffered. But the suffering of the non-disabled people, in more due their special conditions. Getting access to services is also challenging for them, because most of the times, they do not have proper information. There is a stigma attached with disability³³ and even in the times of disaster, this stigma persists.

3.2. Impact of Slow Onset of Climate Change on Disabled People

Slow onset events of climate change can be primarily understood through Cancun Agreement (COP16)³⁴. It relates to the affects and the hazards linked with climate change. Cancun Agreement specifically mentions rise in sea-level, desertification, acidification of oceans, deforestation, melting of glaciers, land degradation, increase in temperature, etc. Evidently, these events related to climate change, like sea- level rise occur at a slow pace. Although, the damage caused by the slow onset of climate change is not too different from the sudden onset events. It also leads to displacement, and loss to livelihood. However, as these events occur at a slow pace, people generally have some time to react and cope up with its damage. Usually people migrate or relocate to safe locations before the affects become destructive.

³¹ Geddes, G. (2016). *Disability and Inequality*. Palgrave Macmillan.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Cancun Agreements. (n.d.). Retrived December 12, 2022, from, <https://unfccc.int/process/conferences/pastconferences/cancun-climate-change-conference-november-2010/statements-and-resources/Agreements>.

But, if we talk specifically about vulnerable groups such as disabled people, the impact of slow onset is different and they do not have many options (like relocation and migration) to cope up with the situation. The case of Kiribati is perhaps the case on point which could elucidate this situation and reveal the bias against disabled people.

3.2.1. Kiribati: An overview

The Republic of Kiribati, is an island country situated in the central Pacific Ocean. It consists of 32 low-lying atolls, all of which are about 2-3 meters above sea level.³⁵ Due to its physical geography, it is facing the consequences of sea-level rise, making it one of the most affected nations to climate change. According to experts, the island might disappear in the upcoming future.³⁶ Consequently the citizens of Kiribati are facing several human right violations and are forced to migrate to other places. In such cases, the challenges to disabled people are twin-fold. Firstly, they face various violations of human rights and secondly, they also face hardships while trying to migrate to safe locations.

3.2.1.1. Food security: People of Kiribati are mostly dependent on Fishing and Agriculture.³⁷ But, due to rise in sea-level, they face numerous repercussions. It directly affects the agricultural production and leads to breakdown of food system. Coastal flooding leads to salt deposition in the soil and harms the crops.³⁸ This also disproportionately impacts the disabled people. They face the risk of malnutrition and food insecurity.

3.2.1.2. Water accessibility: Coastal flooding affects the groundwater system in the island country resulting in threat to access to safe drinking water, hygiene, and sanitation. Tarawa, the capital of Kiribati, has meager freshwater sources and it leads to scarcity of water. In such situations, nearly 60% of the population relies on the government for water supply.³⁹ Coastal flooding and salt deposition affects the water quality. This may lead to introduction of disease carrying microbes in the drinking water supplies. Often people with cognitive disabilities, individuals who have hearing or vision loss might not have access to information regarding

³⁵ Waiting for the tide to turn: Kiribati's fight for survival. (2017, October 23). Retrieved December 5, 2022, from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/23/waiting-for-the-tide-to-turn-kiribatis-fight-for-survival>.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ AF (Kiribati) [2013] NZIPT 800413.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

treatment of contaminated water (such as the information like boiling the water before drinking). This may affect their health.

While, this may prove to be a challenge for every citizen, but disabled people due to their special conditions are the one most affected to such issues. They face numerous barriers and inequalities in water, hygiene, and sanitation access. Even the United Nations accept that water crisis affects disabled people disproportionately.⁴⁰

3.2.1.3. Health: heat waves, increase in average temperature, changing weather patterns may induce health related issues for people. This holds true for people of Kiribati, who are at risk to infectious, vector borne diseases, dengue, diarrhea etc. due to water contamination and changing weather patterns. In fact, the health of infants is getting deteriorated due to such issues and is also causing impairments which may lead to disability.⁴¹

The region has witnessed outbreak of many infectious diseases. Usually disabled people are dependent on others (family members, nurses, social services, health care services) for assistance and information. While, in times of crisis, alerts for public assistance are generally issued, but people with disabilities (such as those with hearing and vision related problems) may not be able to get access to the information as non-disabled people. Therefore, frequent outbreak of infectious diseases may further imperil the daily activities of disabled people and in such cases even health and social services might not prove to be useful.

In case of slow onset of climate change, impact may not be clearly visible due to slow pace of events. But, disabled people are always at the risk. This could be seen by the difficulties that they face in their day to day lives. In times of distress, their difficulties increase manifold and they have less mechanisms to cope up with the loss. So, although the events proceed with a slow pace in case of slow onset of climate change, they are continuous and create new challenges everyday for disabled people.

⁴⁰ The water crisis has a “major impact on human rights” expert says. (n.d.). Retrived 8 December, 2022, from, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2021/03/water-crisis-has-major-impact-human-rights-expert-says>.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

4. Part III - Inclusion of Person with Disabilities in Policy-Making

Due to the unpredictable nature of climate change, it is difficult to formulate policies that could provide complete relief to all sections of the society. But, policies related to climate change would be ineffective, if it does not protect the vulnerable, including the disabled people. There is a stigma attached with disability and disabled people face bias in almost every phase of their life, be it education, work, or other places. However, the effects of climate change could cause serious repercussions to disabled people and due to their impairment it is not always possible for them to cope up with its detrimental effects. Nevertheless, there is a lack of proper inclusion of disabled people in formulating relief policies due to climate change.

4.1. Lack of representation in policy and decision making

Although, the preamble of Paris Agreement⁴² states the requirement of including disabled people as one of the groups most affected due to affects of climate change, they have been left out from the process of decision-making under the United Nations Framework for Climate Change (UNFCCC). Further, there are no policies on domestic level to include them in the decision making process related to impacts of climate change. This drawback of exclusion of disabled people from the decision making process have serious consequences. Coupled with non-accessibility of information, discrimination, and poverty, disabled people are often omitted in response action and planning. It is clear that both sudden and slow onset of climate change affect the livelihood, health, and well-being of disabled people worldwide.

Further, there are additional consequences to some section of disabled people (Such as old-age, women, indigenous people) that suffer from intersecting aspects of discrimination.⁴³ Apart from suffering the impacts of climate change disproportionately, disabled people also suffer detrimentally from the responses to climate change. This could be understood by the fact that, policies related to climate change (for example: reducing carbon emissions bans on carbon intensive products, etc.) are often formulated ignoring the needs and affects on disabled community.⁴⁴ Differential costs of such policies and the pressure on disabled community is not considered. These result in inequalities and creating social barriers for them. Therefore, it is essential that policies are designed keeping in mind vulnerable section of the society, especially

⁴² UNFCCC. *Paris Agreement*. U.N. Doc. FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev/1 (December 12, 2015).

⁴³ Common Barriers to Participation Experienced by People with Disabilities. (n.d.). Retrieved December 12, 2022, from https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/cop26_advocacy_paper_0.pdf.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

disabled people, who have differential needs.

4.2. Recognizing the need to include disabled people in the process of policy & decision making

The disproportionate impact of climate change on disabled people cannot be ignored. Only the people with disability are in the best position to understand the impacts that it has on them. Therefore, they are in a befitting position to suggest the proper solutions. For this reason, it is vital that disabled people should have an adequate representation in the policy and decision making process. They can advice on their vulnerabilities and the mechanisms that could be adopted to reduce the negative impacts of the disaster due to climate change. Critical factors such as the accessibility, adaptive capacity of disabled people, play an important role in making policies related to climate change. Disabled people are often among the ‘poorest of the poor’ because of lack of education, equal employment opportunities, social exclusion, and limited access to facilities. Therefore, the first step in addressing this issue is the proper inclusion of disabled people in the policy & decision making process.

4.3. Policy Suggestions

After the first step is achieved, i.e., proper representation of disabled people in decision-making process, the next step is formulating proper policies to redress the impact of climate change on people of disabled community. The first solution should be improving accessibility to information. This could be done by addressing the special needs of disabled people. Special methods should be developed so that disabled people could gain information related to climate change and emergency warnings in the vulnerable areas. Further, the areas which are highly vulnerable to the risk of climate change should have an emergency and development response team, which takes care of the proper accessibility to information, especially for vulnerable sections of society.

Moreover, ‘Climate Funds’ should be created to assist the people in most vulnerable and economically poor countries who are at high risk of getting affected due to climate change. These funds should especially address the need of ‘disabled people’. This is because mostly disabled people are left out while implementing the policies. In addition, special emphasis should be given to policies that address the relocation phase following a climate disaster. It is equally important

to address the affects of climate change both before and after the disasters. Relocation centers which have facilities for disabled people should be made mandatory so that no one is left out while trying to cope up after the disaster. Finally, all the policies related to climate change, be it at international, domestic, or regional level should necessarily include provisions for disabled people to address their special needs for mitigation and adaptation.

5. Part IV - A Rights Based Approach: Way Forward

In addition to other solutions, a rights based approach appears as a promising answer to tackle the challenges that disabled people face due to affects of climate change. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)⁴⁵, directs the state parties to fulfill their obligations and address the broad range of human rights (civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights) held by disabled people.

UNCRPD in article 4(3)⁴⁶ also states that, state parties should ensure that disabled people are included in the policy, legislation, and decision making process, specifically if it concerns people with disabilities. Moreover, by way of article 11, also directs the state parties to protect and ensure safety to disabled people in situations of risk, such as at times of natural disasters, in situation where humanitarian and emergency assistance are required.⁴⁷ This obligation under the UNCRPD shows a way forward for people with disabilities. These obligations also mean that states should take necessary measures to include these obligations in their legal domestic framework.

Paris Agreement has already recognized the need to protect the right of people with disabilities, while taking action against climate change.⁴⁸ The UN Human Rights Council, has also stressed the need to include disability-inclusive, human rights based approach to address policies on climate change. These efforts on the international front shows that human rights based approach is the best solution to tackle the challenges that disabled people face due to effects of climate change. However, mere inclusion of these obligations in legal instruments is not sufficient. Considering the effects of climate change, a speedy implementation of these legal obligations is the only viable solution at present to protect the rights of disabled people.

⁴⁵ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities : resolution / adopted by the General Assembly*, 24 January 2007, A/RES/61/106.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, art 4(3).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, art 11.

⁴⁸ *Supra* note 42.

6. Conclusion

It is evident that climate change is affecting the whole planet. It is anticipated that it will affect vulnerable section of people, especially people with disability more adversely than others. Climate change would not just affect 'disabled people' but it may give rise to 'impairment' and 'disability'. Evidently, the impact of climate change on disabled people is far more damaging than the non-disabled people. Further, both sudden and slow onsets of climate change have different impacts on the lives of disabled. On one side, the sudden impact brings about displacement, loss of livelihood, and is unpredictable. In such circumstances, it is almost impossible for disabled people to cope up with such situations due to lack of proper accessibility to solutions and resources. Whereas on the other side, slow onset of events related to climate change is also damaging. However, in those circumstances, it is possible for disabled people to seek out help. Although, the danger in slow onset is not imminent, it is continuous and ongoing. The consequences are slow but they may be equally damaging. It is apparent that irrespective of the pace (sudden or slow), vulnerable section of the society, including the disabled people do not have same access to information and the protection that is available to other, Even if these services are accessible, majority of the times, it is not possible for disabled people to take advantage of such services and resources due to their conditions. It could be illustrated by an example. In a situation of hurricane, although the warnings are issued by the state, it is not possible for disabled people, especially those with hearing and visual impairment, to take benefit of the information.

In such circumstances, where policies related to effects of climate change are made without proper inclusion of disabled people, they will continue to suffer gradually more. Therefore, policies related to disaster and climate change should be made with involvement of disabled people. Climate change is inevitable and it is real. It is affecting the lives of everyone in some way or the other. But, in such circumstances, policies should be developed according to the vulnerable section of the society (disabled, old-age people, indigenous people, women, etc.).

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