

An Analysis of the Affect of Climate Change on Humanitarian Law: The Way Forward

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Abstract : Climate change is the greatest threat being faced by mankind in the 21st century. It no longer is merely an environmental, scientific or economic issue but is a humanitarian issue as well. Paris Agreement put great pressure on the businesses to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate the impact of climate change. However, the already increased climate variability and extreme weather are aggravating emergency humanitarian needs. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), if efficient policy changes are not made in time to combat the climate change issues, the situation will deteriorate with an estimated global temperature rise of 4 degrees. The existing international network of Humanitarian system is not adequately structured to handle the projected natural disasters and climate change crisis. The 2030 Agenda which embraces the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) discussed the relationship between the climate change and humanitarian assistance. The Humanitarian law aims to protect, amongst other things, 'internally displaced persons' which includes people displaced due to natural hazard related disasters engulfing the hazards of climate change. 'Legal protection' of displaced people to protect their rights is becoming a pressing need in such times. In this paper, attempts will be made to analyze the causes of the displacement, identify areas where the effect of the climate change is most likely to occur and to examine the character of forced displacement triggering population movement. We shall discuss the pressure on the Humanitarian system and assistance due to climate change issues and the need for vesting powers to the local communities or local government players to deal with the climate changes. We shall also discuss the possibility of setting up a new framework where non-state actors could be set up for climate change impact and its governance.

Keywords : humanitarian assistance to climate change, humanitarian crisis, internally displaced person, legal framework for climate migrants, non-state actors

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