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ENG 1121

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May 18th, 2023

## **The Impact of Climate Change**

### **Introduction:**

As a society, people have already a structure how they their day-to-day lives and are accustomed to their own routines. This however can not stay like this forever as climate change is worsened and dramatically affected our society through our human health, infrastructure, and transportation systems like energy, food, and water supplies. As certain groups of people face greater challenges than others based on their environment, they are more vulnerable to extreme disasters like droughts, coastal storms, and the high rising of sea levels. My research question is how has Climate Change affected different factors in how people live. I am curious and interested as most of us know what climate change is but never research in-depth how this social issue has impacted people throughout the years. Has Climate Change dramatically affected certain areas or people and does poverty play a huge role in this issue? As people in poverty areas might not have the resources and money to afford themselves, how might this issue significantly change how they live? What are some ways to reduce Climate Change that people

can easily and slowly adjust to? I used different sources to help answer my curious questions and give me insight into the social issue of Climate Change.

**Source 1:**

“US EPA.” *Climate Impacts on Society | Climate Change Impacts | US EPA,*

[climatechange.chicago.gov/climate-impacts/climate-impacts-society](https://climatechange.chicago.gov/climate-impacts/climate-impacts-society). Accessed 18 May 2023.

This article discusses how climate change will affect certain groups of people more than others, depending on where they live and their ways of coping and dealing with the situation. The author discusses that people who lived in poverty may have a difficult time coping with new changes as they are limited in financial resources to deal with increased heat, increased in the cost of food, and relocating their times. Furthermore, younger children are sensitive due to their immune systems still developing and needing care from others in disaster situations especially when there is an inefficient of resourced to take care of the children. Throughout the article, one target of people climate change has deeply affected is Indigenous people. “Climate change can impact the health and well-being of indigenous tribes in many ways. Climate change will make it hard

er for tribes to access safe and nutritious food, including traditional foods important to many tribes' cultural practices.” The author explains that these groups are even more challenged as they are living in rural areas where they have to rely on their surrounding environment, looking for more natural resources to support their food, cultural practices, and income. This can lead to a disadvantage for indigenous people as they aren't being nourished as it is a basic necessity that people need in order to survive. “Many tribes already lack access to safe drinking water and wastewater treatment in their communities. Climate change is expected to increase health risks associated with water quality problems like contamination and may reduce the availability of water, particularly during droughts.” As water is basic another necessity of survival, water is a natural resource in order for indigenous people to be able to feed their animals and grow their crops to feed themselves. The prevention of poor quality water can lead to health risks and risk many young children getting sick as their immune system is fragile due to “water quality problems like contamination”. This article answers my research question as climate change affects a certain group of people, in this case, indigenous people. This helps me understand that climate change dramatically affects how indigenous people have to adjust to new changes especially when those changes are necessities that they need for their day-to-day lives to survive. As indigenous people live in more rural areas, it is difficult for them to communicate with others, and would need to rely on their environment's natural resources like water, plants, animals, and soil. Climate change affects these natural resources which affects their ability to prepare for, respond to, and cope with the impacts of climate change.

**Source 2:**

22, Renee Cho |September, et al. "Why Climate Change Is an Environmental Justice Issue." *State of the Planet*, 16 Sept. 2020, [news.climate.columbia.edu/2020/09/22/climate-change-environmental-justice/](https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2020/09/22/climate-change-environmental-justice/).

This article was written by Renee Cho and addresses how climate change is a threat to everyone's physical health, mental health, air, water, food, and shelter. However, those who are socially and economically disadvantaged may face greater risk due to the limitation of access to resources. The author addresses that vulnerable communities in the United States that are highly affected are those communities of color, immigrants, low-income, and people for whom English is not their native language. Knowing that Climate Change is causing warmer temperatures and more intense and frequent heat waves, which can lead to more deaths and illnesses. "A study of the impact of California heat waves from 1999 to 2011 on infants found that mortality rates were highest for Black infants. Moreover, disadvantaged communities often lack access to good medical care and health insurance." This author explains that the increased amount of heat waves caused by climate change has greatly affected mostly in black infants. This can lead to a disadvantage for communities of color in poverty and lack the money to afford to aid and support their children. Those residents' homes in poverty may have poor insulation and no air conditioning. As people's homes should be comfortable places for them to live in, they are suffocated in the hot air which can lead to many health problems like heat cramps, heat stroke, heat exhaustion, hyperthermia, and dehydration. As climate change can cause extreme weather this can lead to destruction in homes and illness due to heavy rains and floods polluting drinking water. "Communities of color are also less likely to receive adequate protection against disasters

or a prompt response in case of emergencies. In addition to physical hardships, the stress and anxiety of dealing with these impacts of extreme weather can end up exacerbating mental health problems such as depression, post-traumatic stress and suicide.” This demonstrates that disadvantaged communities are more at risk as they are more vulnerable to losing more than those who are financially stable. Having to deal with difficult situations that changed their daily routine can lead to mental problems due to the hardships of extreme weather. This article helps answer my question as those disadvantaged are heavily affected by climate change. As disadvantaged communities are already struggling day-to-day, they might not have the option of having a backup plan which can flip their lives upside down. Extreme weather and the increase in heat definitely connect with each other causing a threat to everyone especially those who are struggling. As the author discusses many ways like “Provide climate training to help people become more engaged”, “Clean up sites where environmental damage has been done”, and “build cleaner and greener”. These small things can definitely help those in need and reduce the impact of climate change.

**Source 3:**

*Youtube*, May 31, 2018,

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRmHp0VC4K4&ab\\_channel=TEDxTalks](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRmHp0VC4K4&ab_channel=TEDxTalks) Accessed 18

May 2023.

This YouTube video is a TedTalk by Adriana Laurent discusses the topic of climate justice which is the intersection between social justice and climate change. Adriana discusses her story as she lived in Honduras on the coast of Central America which is a hurricane-prone part of the world. Adriana says “I have definitely felt the impact of climate change in my home country.” When

she was 4 years old in 1999, her home country got hit by Hurricane Mitch. There were many impacts on her country as a hundred and sixty bridges all over her country and two fell into her home city. As she says, “A fallen bridge isn’t just a matter of faulty infrastructure, its disconnecting at a time like this. So imagine that your family that you’re in the middle of this hurricane and your family is on one end of the city and you’re on the other.” As there was a lack of technology back in the day, this caused her to be frightened, not knowing if her other family members were hurt or injured. Another impact was severe flooding and the spread of diseases of malaria and dengue and cholera which can be fatal to children under the age of five. In the end, 10,000 to 15,000 people died from Hurricane Mitch. She also discusses privilege as her family was still able to get food and resources and discussed that many others were not able to get those things as she did. This video helped my question as Adriana’s TedTalk allowed me to understand her experiences when she was a child and understand the fatal changes and impact that extreme weather can do on a family. Having her say that she was privileged, shows that many others were not so lucky and lost everything they had and need to restart their whole lives by rebuilding their homes and communities.

**Source 4:**

*Youtube*, September 27, 2021

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHF4HHeOtkc&ab\\_channel=BBCNews](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHF4HHeOtkc&ab_channel=BBCNews) Accessed 18 May

2023

This YouTube video from BBC News discusses the problem of climate change and how it is affecting people in poverty as the world bank says “it could push 130 million people into poverty

in the next 10 years.” Stephanie Hegarty, the population correspondent, says that “the richest half of the world are responsible for 86 percent of greenhouse gas emissions and the poorest half for just 14 percent.” From the emission caused by the rich that people might not notice, extreme heat is a major problem that people have to face. Scientists found that streets in poor areas in the united states are “3 to 10 degrees Celsius hotter” and research suggests “people in areas with less vegetation have a five percent higher chance of dying of heat-related causes”. As this percentage might not be high, throughout the years, temperatures may increase leading to the percentage of dying higher, risking going outside to be more fatal. In places like Sierra Leone, six percent of the natural population are farmers and due to the extreme heat from climate change, the weather of the rain is inaccurate affecting the crops in failing. This Youtube video helps my research question as climate change affects people’s agriculture. As farmers’ crops are something that they profit from, not being provided with rain can lead to many crops dying in the hot sun and many farming businesses going out of business. Climate change will increase people going into poverty which is something to be mindful of for our future.

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, as most of us are stuck in our daily routine of how we live our lives, this can heavily pay a price in the future when we will face detrimental consequences of extreme weather and increasing heat temperatures. This will connect to other problems such as how we obtain resources and destruction in homes. Climate change greatly impacts those who are vulnerable like the poor causing them to hardly adjust and cope with their new circumstances. Making a small difference in making our environment cleaner and greener can play a heavy part in reducing the social issue of climate change.