

Book Review

Book Details

***Climate Justice in India*, Prakash Kashwan (Ed. 2022), Cambridge University Press, 264 pages, ebook, ISBN: 9781009171908**

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Climate Justice in India, edited by Prakash Kashwan, is a comprehensive volume that explores the intricate relationships between climate change, social justice, and policy within the Indian context. Kashwan examines the deep connections between climate justice and broader issues of economic disparities, caste systems, gender discrimination, and political governance, drawing on contributions from scholars, activists, and policymakers. Given India's complex socio-political landscape, this book is significant in shedding light on the intersectional nature of climate justice, making it an essential read for anyone engaged in environmental governance and social justice.

Through a critical examination of India's climate policy, grassroots movements, and structural inequalities by Kashwan and his contributors, this book makes a vital contribution to the field of environmental justice, bridging the gap between academic discourse and real-world activism. While it succeeds in its comprehensive approach, there are areas where more detailed policy recommendations and solutions to the problems presented would be beneficial. Nevertheless, *Climate Justice in India* is a foundational text for understanding climate injustice in a developing economy marked by deep-seated inequalities.

The book was published when India was facing severe climate-related challenges such as erratic monsoons, rising temperatures, pollution crisis and environmental degradation, etc. The editor identifies throughout his volume that climate vulnerability is a deeply political problem shaped by historical injustices and contemporary economic structures. The book demonstrates the neoliberal economic model as a significant influence on India's development trajectory. As the book notes, economic efficiency is often prioritized over environmental and social initiatives. Various aspects are mentioned, including struggles against colonialism and capitalism and the non-alignment of developing countries with global climate agreements and policies.

The book's strength lies in its critique of climate policy. Discussions range from urban climate justice and energy transition to caste-based inequality and access to water. The authors find that marginalized communities are left out of the discussion most of the time (Borras & Franco 2018). In cities like Mumbai and Chennai, slums are ignored when adaptation plans are developed, as the Urban Climate Resilience chapter reveals. Similarly, the chapter on the Solar Transition analyzes whether "green initiatives" really democratize power or merely reinforce existing hierarchies (Chu & Michael 2018). In a chapter on agrarian justice, caste determines resource availability like water and fertile land, leaving vultures like droughts and floods to pick marginalized groups. The authors show how Dalit and tribal communities bear the brunt of environmental degradation. However, caste is conspicuously absent from the global climate discourse. The book also explores the relationship between policy making at local and national levels and how this is brought about, for instance, through instruments like the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and state level policies.

Climate Justice in India differs somewhat from other works in identifying race as an important component of environmental justice, often overlooked in mainstream climate justice literature. On the other hand, Navroz K. Dubash's *Handbook of Climate Change and India* (2012) combines scientific data with policy analysis, whereas Kashwan's collection showcases a breadth of theoretical frameworks. Other notable works, such as Naomi Klein's *This changes everything: Capitalism vs. the climate* (2014) and Rob Nixon's *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011) books, provide compelling global narratives on climate justice but lack the nuanced discussion of racial hierarchies and local governance structures found in Kashwan's edition. While Klein widely critiques of neoliberal policies on climate policies (Klein 2014), Kashwan brings an India-centric perspective that has become an important resource for those interested in the climate justice debate in the South Asian region.

Climate Justice in India is structured by well-organized. The chapters are logically rounded, moving from brief conceptual discussions to specific case studies. The book's arguments are quite relevant, as they are properly presented with empirical data and historical analysis. The authors illustrate a very logical argument on how climate justice is deeply embedded in India's socio-economic structure. However, in some cases, the topics discussed could have been more extensive, such as the role of corporate accountability in climate governance.

The writing style of *Climate Justice in India* is both rigorous and accessible. Although the book is academic in nature, non-specialist readers will not be alienated by it. The ease of use for non-expert readers is primarily facilitated through subject-based searches. The book's examination of caste, gender, and economic inequality in the climate debate makes it unique. Moreover, the inclusion of poetry and artwork adds a cultural and artistic identity that is quite unique. Finally,

those unfamiliar with some of the terminologies used in environmental and social justice discussions may require careful reading.

While the book makes compelling arguments for a justice-based approach to climate policy, the specifics remain unclear in some areas. For example, the authors advocate prioritizing equity over growth, but provide little guidance on how policymakers can strike this balance. A separate chapter could have filled this gap. The book also extensively addresses criticism in the context of climate. The authors could have highlighted successful climate justice initiatives as models for future action. Another limitation emerges regarding accessibility. Although this is a valuable academic resource, it may not be straightforward for new general readers. To bridge this gap, dense theoretical discussions could be balanced with reader-friendly syntheses.

This volume is invaluable for readers interested in gaining a deeper understanding of climate justice. The inner message of *Climate Justice in India* clearly reflects that climate justice cannot survive without dismantling systems of oppression. This serves as a call to policymakers to address inequality in climate planning. The contributors hope that their work will complement existing climate action plans to address this disparity. For activists, this book provides a framework for amplifying marginalized voices. Academics and students will find the book a rich resource for research and discussion, thanks to its emphasis on interconnectedness, such as the connection between caste discrimination and the global movement for environmental reparations. By connecting climate justice to all inequalities, the book warrants further research.

Kashwan and others scholars gives a large contribution to environmental studies, political science, and public policy. *Climate Justice in India* encourages a rethinking of environmental policy from a justice perspective. It also builds on existing literature in the field, including Kashwan's earlier work *Democracy in the Woods* (2017), which analysed environmental governance and land rights.

Ultimately, *Climate Justice in India* is a groundbreaking addition to the field of climate justice. It not only identifies the issues but also encourages readers to ask who bears the costs of climate change and who is left out of the entire conversation. It thus challenges conventional climate policy approaches and calls for a more equitable framework. This book will linger in your thoughts long after you finish reading it.

Reviewer's Details

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