



The Climate Crisis Reflects a History of Colonialism- Explain. (150 Words / 10 M) (GS-3 Environment)

Approach:

1. Intro – link b/w climate injustice and colonial past.
2. Introduce the concept of climate colonialism.
3. Explain the deepening colonial climate injustice & the need for reparations.
4. Conclusion, briefly pointing to the way forward.

It is argued that a **connection between colonialism, capitalism and climate change is directly historical** – the **developments of the last 50 decades** linked much of the world in a system of politics & economics. This system was led by the **industrial revolution**, which inter-alia was an **energy revolution** too. **These energy changes were the beginning of anthropogenic global warming**. This revolution had **created a power difference in terms of energy**, which in turn **determined who will be most vulnerable to climate impacts and who will remain protected**. Thus **history has a practical connection** towards ensuring **a future of climate justice**.

The term '**climate colonialism**' embraces **both climate impacts as well as the nature of policies that countries, corporations and other actors pursue to respond to climate change**. Importantly, these can result in **a world where colonial power hierarchies are deepened**.

There is a real argument for **climate reparations** now, in the context of **global north's governments refusal to climate reparations**. This has **accentuated social conditions in other countries to deteriorate under climate impacts**, leading to **increase in climate-induced disasters & displacements**. This then created a kind of self-justifying reality around **xenophobia and border violence in the global north**. Also, in the recent **pandemic instance** that required **equitable vaccine distribution** across the world for immunization, the urge to **protect only the elite interests of the global north by vaccine monopolization**, is inhumane.

The developed countries often argue that **large developing economies like India and China are also responsible for emissions** now, **shedding off their historical onus**. However, this argument shows a **need for historical and political analysis that goes beyond just tracking C-emissions**. If we examine **emissions per capita on a cumulative historical basis**, then clearly **India & China are not the problems**. Till date, **US** occupies the **top position** in terms of **CO₂ emissions per capita**. This raises a question on the **particular development paths** pursued by these powerful countries that have **periled the climate scenario for future generations**. These countries are also **complacent about investing in the climate resilient technologies** and in the global south.

Therefore, what is more pertinent is that instead of pointing fingers, **a collaborative approach** built on **ensuring climate reparations in the form of fiscal, technical and other assistance** must be initiated **by developed countries to enable emerging economies like India, China,**



Brazil and South Africa to grow along a renewable energy trajectory. There are several examples of ***climate injustice*** like heat waves in S. Asia, cyclones in Mozambique, etc. This ***reflects the paradox*** that ***countries that have in no serious way contributed to climate crisis***, are ***actually bearing the brunt of its effects***. Here lies a ***deep sense of unfairness***.

To correct this ***climate justice*** is needed which means ***expanding self-determination of how governments & communities can relate to their future***. This will have to be achieved in an era of ***accumulated ecological mistakes of the past***, posing huge challenges. Thus, effective climate justice will entail ***giving people genuine democratic inputs, devising community-developed adaptation efforts, ensuring community-designed way of energy provision & distribution and securing food sovereignty & resilience***.

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