

## **Theme 11: Climate change and natural disasters**

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### **CLIMATE CHANGE, DISASTERS AND NATIONAL SECURITY- ISSUES, CONCERNS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIA**

Alluri V.N. Varma and Chandra Prasad J.

P.G. Courses & Research Centre (NAAC-“A” GRADE) Affiliated to Andhra University), Bhimavaram-534 202, W.G. DT.,  
Andhra Pradesh.

E-Mail: avnvarma@gmail.com

The global debate on whether there is indeed a process of anthropogenic climate change in progress has been for the most part settled by the international scientific consensus surrounding the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report<sup>1</sup>. The trajectory of global warming is expected to have a major impact on human society as a whole: calling for a co-ordinated international response towards mitigation and adaptation to a warmer planet.

This policy brief analyses how climate change will affect regional security in the Indian subcontinent and implications for India’s national security. It argues that glacial melt, rising sea levels and extreme weather will exacerbate ongoing conflicts and will require India to develop military capabilities to address a range of new strategic scenarios: from supporting international co-operation, to managing a ‘hot peace’, to outright military conflict.

Regardless of where one stands on the science, and the positions countries take to address the global collective action problem, it is clear that climate change constitutes a tangible risk to human security and development. It is no less a risk to national security than the risks of aggression, nuclear proliferation and other ‘traditional’ matters. Also, given the historical record, pessimism is warranted in terms of the ability of the international system to work out an effective solution to the global collective action problem . It is therefore incumbent on individual states to act in their own self-interest: co-operating with other states where possible, but acting unilaterally where necessary.