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India, China and US at greatest 'socioclimatic risk'

December 11th, 2007 - 1:52 pm ICT by admin -  [Email This Post](#)

Washington, Dec 11 (ANI): A new research has found that India, [China and the United States](#) are at the greatest 'socioclimatic risk', which is a newly devised methodology that indicates different nations face different exposures to climate change depending on their socioeconomic dimensions. The research was carried out by a team from the [Purdue University](#) and the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste, Italy. The study found that the climatic and socioeconomic variables together determine the international variations in socioclimatic risk.

"Our analysis provides quantitative information to support [international negotiations](#) such as those that are taking place in Bali," said Noah Diffenbaugh, the Purdue assistant professor of earth and atmospheric sciences, who led the study. "By integrating state-of-the-art global climate model experiments with socioeconomic indicators of poverty, wealth and population, we create a unique measure of 'socioclimatic' risk for each nation," he added.

"Patterns emerge that you wouldn't recognize from just looking at either climatic or socioeconomic conditions," said Diffenbaugh.

For example, China has a relatively moderate expected climate change. However, when you combine that with the fact that it has the second largest economy in the world, a substantial poverty rate and a large population, it creates one of the largest combined exposures on the planet.

"We see similar effects in other parts of the world, including India and the United States, which also have relatively moderate expected climate change. So it's where the socioeconomic and climatic variables intersect that is the key," said Diffenbaugh.

"Climate change is only half of the story," said Raymond, who also is an associate professor of political science at Purdue. "We need to consider how different societies are threatened by these physical changes in unique ways. Impoverished areas have fewer resources to deal with environmental stress, while wealthy areas have a greater amount of infrastructure that could be lost, and areas with larger populations have more lives at stake," he added.

According to Michael Mastrandrea, a research associate at the Center for Environmental Science and Policy at Stanford University and member of the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#), this combination of climatic and socioeconomic indicators provides a new method to assess the risks of 21st century climate change and how they vary across nations.

"As this work is developed further, it has the potential to be informative to the international climate policy debate," said Mastrandrea. "The severity of future climate impacts is very sensitive to the [pathway of socioeconomic development](#). This paper proposes an interesting basis from which to quantify the broad implications of concurrent changes in climate and society," he added.

"Our study is an important first step to get people thinking about the issues from this new perspective," said Raymond. "Of course, famine is a far more serious risk than property damage. But all of these parameters are relevant to policy decisions, and it seems clear that more sophisticated estimates of national exposures to socioclimatic risk will be highly relevant for negotiations of any future climate change agreement," he added.

"Our study leads toward providing integrated, country-based information to aid the development of adaptation and mitigation policies at the national and regional level," said Filippo Giorgi, [vice-chair of Working Group I](#) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. "Much additional work has to be done to account for more comprehensive climatic and socioeconomic information. This is an extremely exciting and innovative area of future research," he added. (ANI)



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