



A climate vulnerability index for India on the anvil

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An online portal with district-wise data also in pipeline

- The Department of Science and Technology (DST) will be commissioning a study to assess the climate risks faced by States in India.
- This follows an assessment of the global warming risks faced by 12 Himalayan States — and discussed at last year's U.N. climate change conference in Poland — that found States such as Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand vulnerable to climate change.

Common methodology

- Last year the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) at Mandi and Guwahati, and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, coordinated with State authorities in Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, the hill districts of West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir, to evolve a common methodology, and determine how districts there are equipped to deal with the vagaries of climate change.
- The researchers prepared a 'vulnerability index' of each of these States based on district-level data. Vulnerability would be a measure of the inherent risks a district faces, primarily by virtue of its geography and socio-economic situation.
- The scientists conducted workshops with the States and culled eight key parameters on the basis of which a vulnerability score could be generated.
- They included:

percentage of area in districts under forests,

yield variability of food grain,

population density,

female literacy rate,

infant mortality rate,

percentage of population below poverty line,

average man-days under MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act), and the area under slope > 30%.

- On a scale ranging 0-1, 1 indicating the highest possible level of vulnerability, at the top of the scale were Assam with a score of 0.72 and Mizoram at 0.71, whereas Sikkim, with an index score of 0.42 was relatively less vulnerable.

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