

Environmental Law & Climate Change Litigation

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Abstract

Climate change litigation and environmental law have become fundamental tools for tackling the urgent issues of our day. This article examines how they work together to advance international sustainability initiatives. We go into the foundations of environmental legislation, its development, and the global accords dictating how we as a society should face environmental problems. Then, we examine developing area of climate change litigation, outlining significant cases and their repercussions.

This shows that how environmental law and climate change litigation are complex related, demonstrating how they work in tandem to influence environmental policy, safeguard ecosystems, and hold governments and businesses liabilities. We also explore the difficulties that these legal paths must overcome, including standing, causality, and political opposition. Among these difficulties, environmental law and climate change lawsuits have made significant progress towards reducing environmental degradation and promoting sustainable practices.

It is becoming very clear that these legal instruments are essential tools in our quest of a more sustainable and resilient planet as the world deals with the mounting problems of climate change and environmental degradation.

Citation: Farman Rafi, Faculty of Law, Environmental Law & Climate Change Litigation, The International Journal of Advanced Research on Law and Governance, Vol.5, Issue 2, 2023.

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Abbreviations:

Environmental Law, Climate Change Litigation, Arbitration, United Nations Environment Program(UNEP), Global Report

Research Objectives:

Behind every research project, there are some objectives on which research has happened. In my research paper, which is on Environmental Law and Climate Change Litigation, there are some objectives such as:

- To understand the meaning of Environmental Law.
- To know about the other Environmental Laws which have the same value with different provisions.
- To know about the litigation in Climate change from an Indian perspective or globally.
- Have a knowledge of it and know the issues and challenges and also how to suggest things for environment and litigation.

Research Methodology:

Research methodology is fundamental thing of every research. I can clearly says that it is very essential for every researcher whether it may be a Professor, Scholar Student etc.

Without research, the researcher can't write their paper because it helps to think how I would write either in Qualitative or Quantitative.

In my case, I have used Qualitative research where collected information from different national and international Journals and put it on paper after analysis. Also, a report which the United Nations Environment Program, a report which is certified by the International Organisation shows how many cases were filled during the several years regarding Climate change.

Introduction

Ongoing years have seen an expansion in the noticeable quality of natural regulation and environmental change case in lawful, social, and political discussion. These two interlinked areas of legitimate practice are vital in deciding how we answer the serious natural issues that our reality is as of now confronting.

The point of natural regulation is to safeguard the climate at all levels-nearby, public, and worldwide by enveloping an expansive and changing collection of regulations, shows, and guidelines. A legitimate construction that can sufficiently oversee natural difficulties has become more important as our consciousness of these issues has developed. While homegrown regulation gives state run administrations the power to uphold rules, save environments, and consider polluters responsible, peaceful accords like the Paris Arrangement feature the overall weight to doing combating environmental change.

Environmental change prosecution has turned into serious areas of strength for a responsibility in this still-youthful yet rapidly developing industry. To allocate fault for environmental change and looks for move to illustration its belongings, official procedures are made against state run administrations, organizations, and individuals. Milestone cases like "**Juliana v. US**" and "**Urgenda Establishment v. The Netherlands**" have collected worldwide concentration by featuring the crisis of making a move on environmental change and the job that the law plays in achieving change.

Understanding Environment Law

The Law which is a subset that arrangements with regulations, strategies, and rules for defending the climate, including its biological systems and normal assets is known as the Climate Regulation. Ecological regulation is designated to safeguard the normal world, stop natural abuse exercises, and keep up with and save its assets to serve future generations. ^[1]

Air and water quality, land use, squandering the executives, and the conservation of untamed life are only a couple of the legitimate issues that fall under the extent of natural regulation. It involves the control of the earth hurting human exercises like modern activities, the removal of unsafe waste, and contamination.

Types of Environment Law

Mainly there Six types of Environment Laws: ^[2]

1. Clean Air Act, 1981

The Clean Air Act controls air pollution and establishes requirements for businesses and automobiles. Additionally, it creates the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, which place restrictions on the amounts of air pollution in order to safeguard public health.

2. Clean Water Act, 1974

The Clean Water Act establishes regulations for waste water discharge as well as controls water contamination. In order to safeguard aquatic life and public health, it also specifies criteria for water quality.

3. Endangered Species Act, 1972

By prohibiting actions that would damage their habitats, the Endangered Species Act safeguards vulnerable and endangered species. Additionally, it allows for the classification of crucial ecosystems and the recovery of endangered species.

4. Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, 1976

The management of hazardous waste, from generation to disposal, is governed by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. Additionally, a system for the secure handling of solid waste is established.

5. Comprehensive Environmental, Compensation and Liability Act, 1980

The cleanup of hazardous waste sites is governed under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, generally referred to as the Superfund. Additionally, it specifies who is accountable and makes provisions

for the remediation of hazardous waste sites that have been left unattended or abandoned.

6. Toxic Substances Regulation Act, 1976

Chemical processing, importation, and production are all governed by the Toxic Substances Control Act. Additionally, it creates rules for chemical testing and reporting and gives the Environmental Protection Agency the power to control the use of substances that may be hazardous.

An Overview of Climate Change Litigation

Climate Litigation in India: ^[3]

As the country manages the mounting impacts of environmental change, including outrageous climate occasions, rising ocean levels, and modified rainstorm designs, environmental change prosecution has been dynamically making progress in India lately. Different lawful measures have been taken by Indian individuals, ecological associations, and the public authority to battle environmental change and its belongings. Key components of environmental change claim in India incorporate the accompanying:

- 1. Public Interest Litigation (PIL):** In India, public interest litigation has been a popular arena for lawsuits involving climate change. PILs allow people and organisations to petition the courts for relief from environmental and climate-related problems. These lawsuits frequently seek to hold both public and private organisations liable for their roles in accelerating climate change and failing to do enough to lessen its impacts.
- 2. Air Pollution and Emissions:** Air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions are a major topic in Indian climate litigation. Indian courts have ordered bans on the use of firecrackers during festivals and implemented steps to prevent traffic pollution in key cities like Delhi in order to address concerns about air quality.

3. Adaptation and Vulnerability: India is extremely sensitive to the effects of climate change, hence some legal action has centred on adaptation strategies. These situations frequently require that the government establish infrastructure and regulations that increase resilience in order to safeguard populations against climate-related disasters like flooding and droughts.

4. Environmental Clearances: Environmental clearances given to infrastructure and development projects have been the focus of much climate change litigation. Some projects, according to critics, have been approved without appropriate consideration of their effects on the environment and the climate, giving rise to legal actions to stop or alter such projects.

5. National Green Tribunal (NGT): Since its establishment in 2010, the NGT has been a key player in India's handling of matters involving the environment and the climate. It has the power to consider disputes involving environmental protection, especially those involving climate change. On topics including waste management, river pollution, and air quality, the NGT has rendered decisions.

Climate Litigation in Globally:

Cases connected with environmental change are being documented under the watchful eye of courts all through the world, which is a worldwide peculiarity. These cases frequently focus on considering organizations and state answerable for their support in raising environmental change and for not accomplishing other things to diminish its belongings. Here are a few critical instances of environmental change claims from different countries: ^[4]

1. United States:

➤ **In Juliana v. United States (2015):** often known as the "Children's Climate Lawsuit," a group of juvenile plaintiffs sued the American government for failing to take sufficient action to address climate change. Despite the case's legal

difficulties, it significantly increased young people's understanding of climate change.

- **Municipalities v. Fossil Fuel firms:** Numerous American towns and counties have filed lawsuits against significant fossil fuel firms, claiming that they should be held liable for the expenses of adaptation and mitigation since they deliberately contributed to climate change.

2. Netherlands:

In the historic case of **Urgenda Foundation v. The Netherlands (2015)**,^[5] the Urgenda Foundation sued the Dutch government for failing to do more to prevent climate change. The court found in favour of Urgenda and commanded the government to lower greenhouse gas emissions, declaring that it was legally required to safeguard its inhabitants from climate change.

3. Germany:

RWE v. Peruvian Farmer (2015): A farmer from Peru and the NGO Germanwatch filed a lawsuit against the German electricity company RWE for its role in climate change. Even though the court rejected the case, it brought to light the possible responsibility of companies in the context of climate change.

4. Australia:

Eight Australian teens filed the class-action lawsuit **Mann v. Australian Government (2021)**, alleging that the government had failed in its responsibility to safeguard youth against the effects of climate change. This case is still open.

5. Canada:

Her Majesty the Queen V. La Rose (2019): Indigenous activist La Rose and other plaintiffs launched a case against the Canadian government for failing to take enough action to prevent climate change, which they claim violates their fundamental rights. Even though this case was dropped, it brought attention to the rising concern among indigenous groups about the effects of climate change.

Issues and Challenges in Climate Litigation

Establishing a connection between a government's inaction on climate change and the impact on human rights ('causation'), determining whether or not a court has the authority to hear claims about executive climate change decisions ('justiciability'), determining who qualifies to bring a case in court ('standing'), dealing with complex scientific evidence, and the fact that rights-based climate change litigation faces a number of challenges Below is a discussion of the first two problems, which have proven to be extremely difficult thus far.^[6]

1. Standing and Causation: It can be difficult to establish legal standing in climate disputes, which entails proving a specific, observable damage or harm. Due to the extensive series of interconnected events involved in climate change, proving causation or that a single action or lack of action actually caused climate impacts is challenging.

2. Attribution Science: Advanced scientific analysis is needed to determine the extent to which a particular organisation (such as a government or business) is accountable for climate change-related harms. Even while the science of attribution is progressing, it can be challenging to unambiguously link certain weather occurrences or global patterns to particular people.

3. Political and ideological opposition: Governments, businesses, and interest groups with a stake in upholding the current quo frequently oppose climate lawsuits. This opposition may cause delays, higher legal fees, and resistance to legal measures relating to climate change.

4. Resource Intensity: Climate litigation may be expensive and time-consuming, especially for lone individuals or tiny businesses. It can be expensive to gather scientific data, work with legal consultants, and fight protracted legal fights.

5. Legal Frameworks: Dealing with intricate national and international legal frameworks is a common part of climate litigation. Cases may involve different

jurisdictions and call for knowledge of numerous legal disciplines, including administrative, constitutional, and environmental law.

6. Jurisdictional Issues: Since climate change is a worldwide problem, it can be difficult to decide which court or jurisdiction is best for a certain situation. Emissions and contamination that traverse international borders sometimes complicate judicial actions.

In spite of these hardships, environment case is crucial for the general work to battle environmental change. It could prompt regulative changes, lay out legitimate points of reference, and consider liable gatherings responsible. Environment prosecution is expected to create and turn into an undeniably more significant instrument in the battle against environmental change as the impacts of environmental change deteriorate.

Global Climate Litigation Report: 2023^[7]

A state-of-the-art system to modify the elements of the fight against environmental change is an environment suit. As indicated by the Worldwide Environment Case Report: 2023 Status Review, more people are utilizing the general set of laws to address the environmental fiasco. In 65 nations, including global and local courts, councils, semi-legal associations, or other adjudicatory bodies like the Exceptional Systems at the Assembled Countries and mediation courts.

i. 2,180 climate-related lawsuits had been filed as of December 2022.

ii. From 884 instances in 2017 to 1,550 cases in 2020,

This demonstrates a consistent ascent. Kids and youth, ladies' associations, nearby networks, and Native People groups, among others, are having a huge impact in the arraignment of these cases and the progression of environmental change administration change in a rising number of countries around the world.

This exploration gives an outline of the current circumstance of environmental change suit and a report on overall patterns in environmental change prosecution. It

refreshes prior Joined Countries Climate Program evaluations gave in 2017 and 2020. It fills in as a vital asset for understanding the present status of worldwide environment prosecution, including depictions of the central concerns that courts have experienced throughout environmental change cases, for judges, legal counselors, advocates, policymakers, scientists, natural safeguards, environment activists, common freedoms activists (counting ladies' privileges activists), NGOs, organizations, and the bigger global local area.

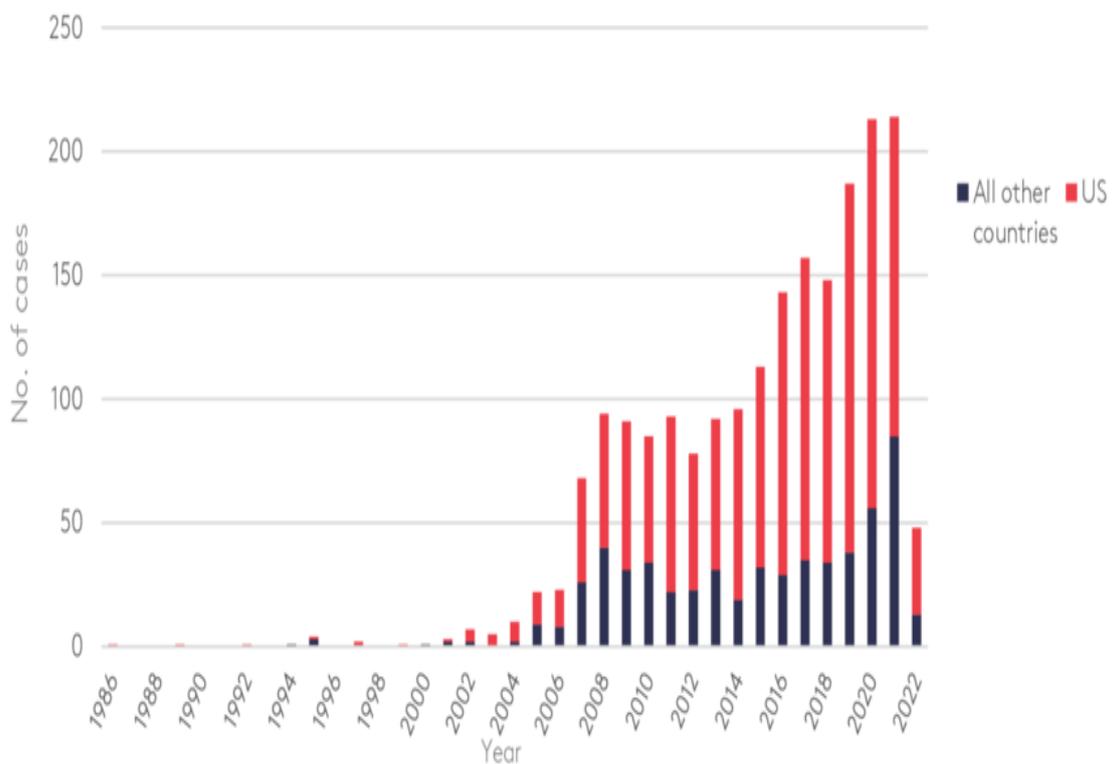


Fig. 1: Total climate change cases over time, US and non-US (up to 31 May 2022)

Conclusion

Environmental law and climate change lawsuits are significant forces for change in our society, not just legal specialties. These legal instruments are now essential in the fight for a more resilient and sustainable future as our world experiences enormous environmental problems.

Environmental laws are established by international accords and serve as a basis for international collaboration in the fight against climate change and the preservation of ecosystems. In the meanwhile, climate change litigation serves as a catalyst for accountability, pressuring authorities, businesses, and people to accept responsibility for their roles in climate change and its effects.

These legal options do not, however, come without difficulties. Progress can be hampered by issues including standing, causality, and political resistance. However, environmental law and climate change lawsuits have made substantial gains in the face of these difficulties. They have influenced corporate responsibility, altered regulations, and increased public understanding of environmental challenges.

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