

Rising temperature to cut living standards

Six hundred million Indians could see a dip in living standards by 2050 if temperatures continue to rise at their current pace, according to an analysis by the World Bank.

Seven of the 10 severest or most vulnerable 'hotspots' in India would be located in Maharashtra; the rest would be in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. In the absence of a major climate mitigation, nearly 148 million Indians will be living in these severe hotspots in 2050, according to the report.

States in the central, northern and northwestern parts of India emerge as the most vulnerable. Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, which are predicted to experience a decline in living standards of more than 9%, are the top two 'hot spot' States in India, followed by Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Maharashtra.

India's average annual temperatures are expected to rise by 1°C to 2°C by 2050, even if preventive measures are taken along the lines of those recommended by the Paris climate change agreement of 2015. If no measures are taken, average temperatures in India are predicted to increase by 1.5°C to 3°C.

Economists at the World Bank correlated these climate projections with household consumption data (a proxy for living standards) in Nepal, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, and extrapolated it to 2050.

Using publicly available climate models that project how rising temperatures will affect rainfall and seasons, the researchers concluded that if emissions continued at the current pace, India could see a 1.5% decline in its GDP by 2030. However, were some corrective actions to be taken — like India concerted implementing its National Action Plan on Climate Change and States implementing their domestic climate change mitigation plans — this could be halted to 1.3%.

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