

## COP30, Climate Justice and the Future of Agriculture in India

**Mains:** GS II - International Agreements| GS III - Environment

### Why in News?

Recently, The COP30 climate summit held in Belém, Brazil—at the heart of the Amazon—took place amid indigenous resistance, ecological fragility, and growing global inequality.

### What are the contradictions of the COP30?

- **Demands of Developed countries** - Developing countries entered COP30 demanding stronger commitments on climate finance and adaptation, while scientific bodies reiterated the urgency of rapid decarbonisation.
- **Brazil's Reiteration** - The Brazilian presidency attempted to re-centre the discourse around justice, equity, and ecological integrity—terms that had gradually faded from climate diplomacy.
- **The Contradictions** - The final outcomes exposed persistent contradictions in multilateral climate governance:
  - Countries expressed intent to “transition away from fossil fuels” but avoided firm commitments to an unequivocal phase-out.
  - Adaptation finance received rhetorical support without binding targets.
  - A measurable global goal on adaptation finance was deferred despite strong lobbying from developing countries.
  - A new framework for agricultural emissions reporting was introduced as voluntary, yet implicitly signalled future obligations.
- These outcomes underscored the structural asymmetries that continue to shape global climate negotiations.

### How agriculture emerging as a new climate battleground?

- **Agriculture** - Although agriculture was not a formal agenda item, it emerged as a highly contested issue at COP30.
- **Importance for India** - This is particularly significant for India, where agriculture employs nearly half of the workforce, dominated by small and marginal farmers.
- The sector is most exposed to climate risks but least protected by global finance.
- **Reasons for scrutiny on agriculture** - The scrutiny on agriculture intensified due to:
  - Methane emissions from livestock and paddy cultivation.

- Nitrous oxide emissions from fertiliser use.
- **Issues with the Guidelines** - The Belém guidelines encouraged improved reporting of agricultural emissions and adoption of “best practices” for mitigation.
- While voluntary, *these guidelines indicate a political shift*—largely led by developed countries—towards integrating agriculture into mitigation frameworks.
- **Implications for India** - For India, the implications are profound:
  - Methane emissions are deeply embedded in mixed crop-livestock systems, and proposals to reduce cattle populations ignore their economic, social, and ecological role in smallholder livelihoods.
- Such technocratic approaches risk overburdening small farmers while leaving industrial agriculture largely unchecked.

### How climate finance remain as the persistent fault line?

- **Climate finance** - It remained the most entrenched divide at COP30.
- **Demand from developing countries** - Developing countries demanded annual funding of USD 300-400 billion by 2030 to meet adaptation needs. The final agreement, however, merely “encouraged” donors to scale up efforts.
- **Key concerns:**
  - The Loss and Damage Fund received only symbolic reinforcement and remains severely underfunded.
  - Financing lacks predictability and grant-based support.
- **Affirmation of Developed countries** - They continued promoting private and blended finance as primary mechanisms.
- For Indian agriculture, this financing gap is critical.
- **Requirement of Sustainable finance** - Climate resilience requires sustained public investment in:
  - Micro-irrigation
  - Watershed restoration
  - Agro-ecological diversification
  - Soil regeneration
  - Rural extension services
  - Climate forecasting systems
- These are public goods that require public expenditure and long-term concessional international finance.
- COP30’s failure to establish binding commitments leaves India facing a growing adaptation deficit.

### What are the strategy if India at COP30?

- **3 priorities** - India entered COP30 with three strategic priorities:
  - Securing commitments on climate finance
  - Safeguarding policy space for development
  - Ensuring flexibility in agricultural emissions reporting
- **India’s success** - India achieved partial success by:
  - Incorporating references to food security and rural livelihoods in the final document.

- Resisting binding methane reduction targets in agriculture.
- Ensuring voluntary reporting of agricultural emissions.
- **Drawbacks for India** – However, India failed to secure meaningful breakthroughs on climate finance or binding obligations from developed countries.
  - Domestic vulnerabilities also shaped India’s negotiating position.
  - The country faces a deepening agrarian crisis marked by groundwater depletion, heat stress, crop losses, livelihood insecurity, and rising farmer debt.
  - Inadequate domestic adaptation investments and uneven institutional capacity across states weaken India’s ability to project a transformative agricultural vision at global forums.

### How the climate justice discourse revived at Belém?

- **Important proposers** – COP30 witnessed a revival of climate justice discourse, driven by Brazil’s presidency, Indigenous leaders, and the G77+China bloc.
- **Concerns in Amazon** – The Amazon became a symbol of historical exploitation and ecological injustice, highlighting unequal climate impacts:
- **Issues raised by local leaders** – Indigenous leaders highlighted:
  - Land dispossession
  - Deforestation
  - Resource extraction
- **Prospects for India** – These concerns resonate strongly with India’s tribal and forest-dependent communities.
- This justice-centred discourse challenged narrow technocratic approaches and re-emphasised the historical roots of the climate crisis.

### What lies ahead?

- Climate Justice must be embedded in finance, technology transfer, and regulatory frameworks—areas where COP30 made limited progress.
- COP30 at Belém exposed the limits of international climate governance and the widening divide between those responsible for emissions and those suffering their consequences.
- In India, these inequities are most visible in agriculture, where erratic monsoons disrupt livelihoods, reduce incomes, and deepen rural distress.
- The summit underscores a critical reality: climate justice in India will be shaped not only by energy transitions or industrial policies, but by the future of small and marginal farmers.
- Without shared global responsibility and a genuinely transformative domestic agricultural vision, climate justice will remain an aspiration rather than a lived reality.

### Reference

[The Hindu| COP30 Contradictions and Solutions](#)



**SHANKAR**  
**IAS PARLIAMENT**  
*Information is Empowering*