

Letter from the Editor

Dear reader,

How can we build the momentum to act on climate change now, instead of seeing it as a problem of the future? One way is to acknowledge the disproportionate effects of climate change on people. Contributions in this special issue examine issues of power, ideology, and inequality, as these interact with people's social and environmental vulnerabilities. Research and interviews with leading scholars and practitioners in the fields of environmental and social justice, climate science, and rhetoric, discuss how examining the interaction between climate change and other forms of inequalities is critical for sustainability. Whether you are an academic, a practitioner, or an activist, my hope is that content in this special issue will activate your desire to act now.

Rahul D. Ghosal's paper, entitled 'Climate Change and the Caribbean: A Multi-Scalar Account of Context and Inequality' examines how vulnerability of small island nations to climate change related risks not only depend on the frequency and intensity of these hazards but also rest on the root causes of existing social and political vulnerabilities of people and sectors, such as tourism and agriculture. He argues that integrating the root causes of social injustices into a broader understanding of vulnerability, provides a frame of reference for evaluating the distributional impacts of climate change

Interview with Dr. Robert Bullard explains why climate change is more than parts per million of greenhouse gas emissions. It is a human right issue. Dr. Bullard explains why effective planning for climate change requires the government to become sensitive to the equity-related challenges in communities in the U.S. He outlines some effective ways of building relationships with communities—for developing a solid resistance against environmental injustices. His interview also provides valuable lessons for developing socially just policy and planning.

In the next interview, Bill Bigelow explains why the educational system needs to take a proactive position on tackling climate change. He suggests this to be a necessary step to counter the deleterious impacts of climate change on our society. He provides advice on educational strategy so that students can successfully engage with climate change-related issues.

As I start putting the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle (interviews in this special issue) together, I notice that communicating climate change is an important theme for sustainability. Dr. Danielle Endres talks to us about how communication, specifically rhetoric can play a critical role in addressing the challenges of climate change. Similarly, in another interview, Dr. Alan Wanamaker, highlights why scientists can no longer afford to disengage with the public. In his

words, “It would be like sitting here and watching something really bad happening.” Dr. Wanamaker’s offers useful advice for young climate scientists to increase effective engagement with the public.

The purpose of this special issue is to build realization that we are living in an age where urgent action is needed for mitigation (reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation (building capacity to respond). The article and interviews reveal both the causes of social and environmental injustices (in relation to climate change) and provide lessons to counter them. I hope that you will enjoy reading this special issue.

Sincerely,

Maaz Gardezi
Editor