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**FRAGMENTED LAWS, UNIFIED CHALLENGE: RECONSIDERING
INDIA'S CLIMATE LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

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ABSTRACT

India's climate governance framework presents a paradox of legislative abundance and normative incoherence. While the constitutional ethos and a multiplicity of environmental statutes, from Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to Energy Conservation Act, 2001, implicitly address facets of climate regulation, the absence of a dedicated, integrated Climate Change Act has engendered a regime of fragmented legal mandates and institutional silos. This research delves into structural fragmentation within India's climate legal architecture and argues that the current assemblage of sectoral laws, policy instruments, and judicial interventions constitutes a diffuse and reactive model, ill-suited to the exigencies of a climate crisis that demands coherence, accountability, and anticipatory governance. Through a doctrinal and comparative legal analysis, this research maps the dispersion of authority among multiple authorities, such as Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), National Green Tribunal (NGT), and state-level entities, whose overlapping jurisdictions perpetuate regulatory uncertainty and institutional inertia. Drawing on international analogues, such as United Kingdom's Climate Change Act, 2008 & Kenya's Climate Change Act, 2016, the research contends that a unified statutory framework is indispensable to harmonize India's mitigation and adaptation objectives within a binding, justiciable, and participatory governance structure. This research advances the proposition that India's climate law must transition from a piecemeal environmental management model to a rights-based, principle-driven framework anchored in climate justice, intergenerational equity, and cooperative federalism. It recommends the enactment of comprehensive National Climate Change Framework Law that consolidates existing statutory mandates, institutionalizes coordination mechanisms, &

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embeds enforceable obligations across sectors and levels of governance. Only through such normative integration can India transform its fragmented legislative landscape into a coherent, forward-looking legal regime capable of addressing the unified challenge of climate change.

Keywords: Climate Governance, Environmental Law, Intergenerational Equity, Cooperative Federalism, Environmental Jurisprudence, Regulatory Integration, Climate Adaptation, Climate Mitigation.

BACKGROUND

India's encounter with the climate crisis embodies a paradox of acute vulnerability amid legislative abundance. The country stands at the epicenter of escalating climatic perturbations, searing heatwaves, erratic monsoons, glacial retreat, coastal inundation, and biodiversity attrition, each amplifying socio-economic precarity and ecological degradation. Despite this existential threat, India's legal and institutional response remains diffused across a patchwork of environmental, energy, and resource-management statutes, none of which directly articulates a coherent climate mandate. The constitutional vision under Art. 48A and 51A(g) establishes environmental protection as a state and citizen duty, yet these provisions operate aspirational, lacking justiciable precision in the context of climate change. Statutes, such as Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, & Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, provide regulatory frameworks that are sectoral and remedial rather than systemic and anticipatory.² The resultant governance landscape is one of overlapping jurisdictions, fragmented accountability, and policy discontinuities, conditions ill-suited to the cross-sectoral and intertemporal character of the climate crisis.

This legal fragmentation reveals a deeper normative incongruity between India's environmental jurisprudence & imperatives of climate governance. Judicial activism, through expansive interpretations of the right to life under Art. 21, has infused environmental concerns into fundamental rights discourse, yet the judiciary's interventions remain episodic and case-contingent, unable to substitute for legislative coherence. The proliferation of policy instruments, such as National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and its subsidiary State Action Plans, demonstrates administrative intent but lacks the force of statutory

² Gururaj D. Devarhubli & Bushra Sarfaraj Patel, *Environmental Laws in India – An Introduction*, 10 Int'l J. for Rsch. Applied Sci. & Eng'g Tech. 1038, (2022), <https://doi.org/10.22214/ijras.2022.40423>.

obligation or mechanisms for inter-ministerial integration.³ Consequently, India's legal architecture operates in silos, addressing climate-related harms through disparate regimes of pollution control, disaster management, and energy regulation, without a unifying framework that aligns mitigation, adaptation, and equity objectives. The paradox thus persists, a nation with one of the most active environmental jurisprudences globally remains without a dedicated climate law, navigating a crisis of systemic proportions through fragmented statutory means.

According to CSEP Report on Climate Change Governance in India of March, 2025, the country lacks formal climate legislation at both union and state levels, relying instead on over 20 sector-specific environmental laws, such as Electricity Act of 2003 & Energy Conservation Act of 2001, resulting in governance inconsistencies and gaps that hinder coordinated action; India has committed to reducing emissions intensity by 45% from 2005 levels by 2030, achieving 500 GW of non-fossil fuel-based power capacity by 2030, and sourcing 50% of energy from renewables by 2030, potentially lowering cumulative carbon emissions by 1 billion tons, while targeting net-zero emissions by 2070; globally, 56 countries had enacted climate framework laws by 2020 covering 53% of emissions,⁴ with examples including Germany's Federal Climate Protection Act, 2019 mandating annual emissions budgets and South Africa's Climate Change Act, 2024 mobilizing US\$8.5 billion via the Just Energy Transition Partnership; domestically, the 15th Finance Commission (2021–2026) raised the forest cover criterion weight to 10% for fiscal transfers from 7.5% under the 14th, incentivizing ecological outcomes amid mixed empirical results showing positive but limited forest cover correlations; state classifications reveal 3 states (Maharashtra, Gujarat, & Tamil Nadu) with high readiness and urgency for low-carbon transitions, 7 with medium readiness and high urgency (e.g., West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh), and 3 with low readiness and high urgency (e.g., Bihar, Assam).⁵

THE EVOLUTION OF INDIA'S CLIMATE LEGAL LANDSCAPE

The foundations of India's environmental jurisprudence predate any explicit climate-specific legislation, resting on a constitutional and statutory framework that implicitly recognized environmental protection as a core state obligation. The Constitution of India, through Arti.

³*Id.*

⁴Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP), *Climate Change Governance in India: Building the Institutional Framework* (Discussion Note, Mar. 13 2025).

⁵ *Id.*

48A, enjoins the State to protect and improve the environment, while Art. 51A(g) imposes a corresponding fundamental duty on citizens to safeguard the natural world. Statutory enactments, such as Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 & Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, though primarily aimed at pollution control, indirectly contributed to the early contours of climate regulation by addressing the industrial and ecological determinants of environmental degradation. These were judicially reinforced in *Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra v. State of Uttar Pradesh*,⁶ wherein court recognized the intrinsic linkage between ecological balance & right to life, thus laying the normative basis for environmental justice as a constitutional entitlement under Art. 21.

The post-1992 period, coinciding with India's participation in the Rio Earth Summit and its ratification of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), marked a discernible shift from reactive environmental governance to sector-specific climate policy interventions. The emergence of legislative measures such as Energy Conservation Act, 2001, Electricity Act, 2003, & National Environment Policy, 2006 signified an attempt to align domestic law with global climate commitments. Initiatives, such as NAPCC & SAPPs, institutionalized a policy framework for mitigation and adaptation. Yet, these measures remained largely administrative and programmatic, lacking statutory enforceability or integrated oversight. The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 & Biological Diversity Act, 2002, while critical to carbon sequestration and biodiversity preservation, continued to operate in silos, demonstrating the sectoral fragmentation of India's climate response.

Judicial innovation filled the vacuum of legislative coherence, with court assuming an activist posture often described as the emergence of a "Green Bench". Landmark decisions, including *M.C. Mehta v. Union of India*,⁷ expanded the scope of environmental rights through the doctrines of public trust, polluter pays, and precautionary principle, importing global environmental norms into domestic law. In *Vellore Citizens' Welfare Forum v. Union of India*,⁸ court explicitly integrated sustainable development as a constitutional requirement, giving judicial legitimacy to India's international environmental obligations. The establishment of NGT under the NGT Act, 2010, represented an institutional culmination of this judicial trend, creating a specialized forum for environmental and, increasingly, climate-

⁶ 1985 Supp SCC 79.

⁷ (1987) 1 SCC 395.

⁸ (1996) 5 SCC 647.

related adjudication. Through cases such as *Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti v. Union of India*⁹ and *Court on its Own Motion v. State of Himachal Pradesh*,¹⁰ NGT has sought to enforce compliance with pollution and conservation norms, implicitly advancing climate governance through the lens of environmental accountability.

Despite these advances, India's climate legal landscape remains piecemeal, reactive, and institutionally dispersed. The proliferation of sectoral statutes, overlapping administrative jurisdictions, and reliance on judicial intervention have led to a fragmented regulatory environment lacking a cohesive climate governance framework. Courts have often acted as the primary drivers of environmental reform, compensating for legislative inertia, yet their interventions remain case-specific and policy-fragmented. The absence of a comprehensive climate change legislation has resulted in ad hoc coordination between ministries, such as MoEFCC, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), & NITI Aayog, producing duplicative mandates and inconsistent implementation. Consequently, India's legal evolution in climate domain, though robust in jurisprudential development, has yet to mature into a coherent statutory architecture capable of integrating environmental protection, energy transition, and climate adaptation into a unified legal framework.

MAPPING THE FRAGMENTATION: KEY STATUTES AND INSTITUTIONAL SILOS

The fragmentation of India's climate governance architecture is most visible in the sectoral dispersal of statutory mandates, producing a mosaic of environmental regulation without a coherent climate focus. The Energy Conservation Act, 2001 & Electricity Act, 2003, though advancing energy efficiency and renewable integration, remain primarily techno-economic instruments rather than climate-oriented frameworks. The NAPCC, 2008, while rhetorically unifying sectoral missions, lacks statutory force and is implemented through disparate ministerial silos. Court in *M.C. Mehta v. Union of India*¹¹ underscored the necessity of "coordinated energy policy" in the context of vehicular emissions, yet this judicial exhortation did not yield an integrated legal mechanism linking energy regulation with climate mitigation. Instead, fragmented institutional competence, split between Ministry of Power, MNRE, & MoEFCC, has generated regulatory labyrinth where overlapping jurisdictions dilute accountability for national emissions reduction.

⁹ (2017) 5 SCC 326.

¹⁰ 2014 SCC OnLine HP 4276.

¹¹ (1987) 1 SCC 395.

A similar fragmentation pervades the domains of forests and biodiversity. The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 & Biological Diversity Act, 2002 address conservation through a sectoral and resource-centric lens, without an overarching climate adaptation rationale. Court's intervention in *T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad v. Union of India*¹² converted forest governance into a continuing mandamus, leading to judicial oversight of forest clearances. However, even this landmark jurisprudence did not integrate carbon sequestration or ecosystem resilience as legal mandates. Biodiversity conservation remains tethered to the tripartite structure of the National Biodiversity Authority, State Boards, and Local Committees, often functioning in isolation from climate policy mechanisms. Consequently, while both statutes contribute indirectly to climate resilience, the absence of cross-referencing provisions or harmonized institutional mandates perpetuates the compartmentalization of environmental governance.

The problem deepens under the triad of pollution control statutes, Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, and Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, which constituted the bedrock of India's environmental regulatory framework, yet they were conceived primarily as instruments of pollution abatement, not climate mitigation. Court, in *Indian Council for Enviro-Legal Action v. Union of India*,¹³ emphasized the principle of "polluter pays" under the EPA, but the operationalization of these laws remains confined to industrial and municipal pollution control, with minimal integration of greenhouse gas regulation. NGT, created under the 2010 Act, has occasionally extended its jurisdiction to climate-related claims, such as in *Ritwick Dutta v. Union of India*,¹⁴ concerning environmental clearances for coal-based projects, but its powers remain circumscribed by the sectoral definitions of "environment" in the parent statutes. The result is a regime of environmental compliance that is reactive, fragmented, and procedurally burdensome.

At the institutional level, the diffusion of authority among multiple bodies, MoEFCC, MNRE, NITI Aayog, State Pollution Control Boards, National Disaster Management Authority, & NGT, has entrenched administrative incoherence. The Disaster Management Act, 2005, though incorporating "mitigation" within its ambit, operationalizes it largely through disaster response, leaving climate-induced slow-onset events outside its purview. The

¹² (2002) 10 SCC 606.

¹³ (1996) 3 SCC 212.

¹⁴ 2019 SCC OnLine NGT 44.

Coastal Regulation Zone notifications under the EPA and urban land-use regulations under municipal laws further illustrate jurisdictional overlaps and policy inconsistency. In *Goa Foundation v. Union of India*,¹⁵ court lamented the “regulatory vacuum” in coastal governance, symptomatic of fragmented environmental administration. Consequently, India’s legal architecture functions as a disjointed assemblage of sectoral instruments, generating policy incoherence, inter-agency competition, and inconsistent enforcement. The absence of a unifying legislative framework perpetuates a governance paradox, a proliferation of laws without an integrated climate vision.

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES: LESSONS FROM GLOBAL CLIMATE FRAMEWORKS

The European Union (EU)’s Integrated Climate and Energy Package stand as a paradigmatic illustration of a supranational effort to embed climate governance within a legally binding and institutionally coherent framework. Adopted in 2008 and refined through the European Green Deal and subsequent legislative instruments, it establishes clear, enforceable emissions reduction targets, renewable energy mandates, and energy efficiency obligations across Member States. Its legal strength derives from its dual nature, directives that bind Member States as to results, and regulations that possess direct effect. The jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) reinforces this coherence by ensuring uniform interpretation and compliance. For instance, in *Commission v. Poland*,¹⁶ the CJEU upheld infringement proceedings for breaches of air quality standards, underscoring the enforceability of environmental commitments within the EU’s legal order. The EU’s approach exemplifies centralized coordination, anchored in the European Commission’s oversight and reporting mechanisms, thereby transforming climate objectives from aspirational policy into enforceable legal duty.

The United Kingdom (UK)’s Climate Change Act, 2008 represents perhaps the most comprehensive domestic statutory embodiment of climate governance. By imposing legally binding carbon budgets, it operationalizes the principle of long-term accountability through statutory predictability. The independent Climate Change Committee, established under the Act, ensures a depoliticized, evidence-based mechanism for monitoring progress and advising Parliament. UK courts have increasingly recognized the justiciability of climate-related duties

¹⁵ (2014) 6 SCC 590.

¹⁶ C-441/17.

derived from this framework. In *R (Friends of the Earth) v. Secretary of State for Transport*,¹⁷ the Court of Appeal quashed the approval of the Heathrow Airport expansion, holding that the government had failed to consider its commitments under the Paris Agreement, an implicit recognition of the binding force and constitutional relevance of climate obligations. This judicial engagement has fortified Act's normative authority, embedding climate responsibility within administrative rationality & broader rule of law.

In the Global South, emerging frameworks such as South Africa's Climate Change Bill and Kenya's Climate Change Act, 2016 reflect a conscious adaptation of Global North legal models to developmental and equity contexts. Kenya's Act, one of the first in Africa, establishes a National Climate Change Council chaired by the President, ensuring vertical integration of policy implementation across national and subnational entities, while incorporating public participation and accountability as statutory duties. Similarly, South Africa's Bill seeks to institutionalize carbon budgeting and resilience planning, echoing the UK's model but situated within a constitutional framework that emphasizes socio-economic rights and environmental justice under Sec. 24 of its Constitution. Judicial activism in *Earthlife Africa Johannesburg v. Minister of Environmental Affairs*¹⁸ has already signaled the judiciary's willingness to subject state climate inaction to constitutional scrutiny.

THE MISSING CORE: INDIA'S ABSENCE OF A CLIMATE CHANGE ACT

The absence of a dedicated Climate Change Act in India represents a significant lacuna within the broader environmental governance framework. While India has promulgated a range of environmental statutes, Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, & Energy Conservation Act, 2001 among them, none establish a unified, enforceable legal mandate for climate mitigation and adaptation. Instead, India's approach has been predominantly policy-driven, epitomized by NAPCC & SAPCCs. These instruments, while ambitious in articulation, are devoid of statutory backing and thus lack the coercive authority necessary for uniform implementation or accountability. The NAPCC operates through broad, sectoral "missions" (on solar energy, energy efficiency, sustainable habitat, etc.), yet these missions rely heavily on existing administrative structures without any legal obligation to deliver measurable outcomes. Consequently, what emerges is a soft-law

¹⁷ [2020] EWCA Civ 214.

¹⁸ [2017] 2 All SA 519 (GP) (S. Afr.).

architecture, persuasive but not prescriptive, where political will, rather than legal duty, determines climate action.

The constitutional and federal complexities of India's governance structure further impede the enactment of a unified climate law. Climate change, being a multidimensional phenomenon, cuts across the subjects enumerated in all three lists of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution, Union, State, and Concurrent. For instance, "forests" and "electricity" fall under the Concurrent List, while "public health" and "agriculture" are State subjects.¹⁹ This creates jurisdictional ambiguity, whether a central climate statute could validly encompass such a wide array of subject matters without encroaching upon state autonomy remains a contentious question. Art. 253 empowers Parliament to make laws for implementing international agreements, which could, in principle, support a national climate law under UNFCCC's framework. Yet, political realities of Indian federalism, marked by uneven administrative capacities, divergent developmental priorities, & periodic center-state tensions, render such legislative centralization both politically sensitive and administratively complex. Thus, constitutional permissibility does not necessarily translate into practical feasibility.

Economic and political factors compound these structural hurdles. India's developmental paradigm continues to prioritize rapid economic growth, poverty alleviation, and industrial expansion, objectives often perceived to be in tension with stringent climate commitments. The political economy of climate legislation is therefore fraught, imposing legally binding emission or adaptation obligations risks being viewed as anti-developmental or inequitable, particularly in a nation where access to energy and livelihoods remains uneven. Moreover, the political cycle fosters a short-term policy horizon that conflicts with the long-term temporalities of climate action. The absence of legislative compulsion allows successive governments to recalibrate or dilute commitments without legal consequence. Hence, climate governance remains vulnerable to shifts in political leadership and economic pressures, undermining consistency, predictability, and investor confidence in green transition pathways.²⁰

The cumulative outcome of this policy-legal vacuum is a fragmented and incoherent climate governance regime. Without a binding national or subnational legal framework, sectoral policies operate in isolation, and inter-ministerial coordination is weak or ad hoc. This

¹⁹ Shriram Patel, *Critical Studies of Environmental Laws in India*, 12 Int'l J. Sci. & Rsch. Publ'ns 360, (2022), <https://doi.org/10.29322/ijsrp.12.09.2022.p12945>.

²⁰ *Id.*

fragmentation leads to duplication of efforts, resource inefficiency, and lack of measurable accountability for emission reductions or adaptation outcomes. India's judiciary, though proactive in environmental jurisprudence, can only partially fill this gap through expansive interpretation of the right to life under Art. 21. In the absence of a statutory anchor, judicial interventions risk remaining episodic rather than systemic. What India thus faces is a paradox: a country deeply vulnerable to climate impacts, equipped with a dense network of environmental statutes, yet devoid of a coherent, legally binding climate governance framework capable of steering national action with certainty, continuity, and constitutional legitimacy.²¹

CHALLENGES AND CAUTIONS IN LEGAL INTEGRATION

The project of legal unification in India's climate governance inevitably encounters entrenched institutional resistance, a feature deeply embedded in the bureaucratic culture of environmental regulation. Ministries and agencies that have developed sector-specific expertise, such as MoEFCC, MNRE, & Central Pollution Control Board, often operate within insulated silos, guarding their statutory mandates and administrative discretion. The introduction of a unified climate law threatens to recalibrate these institutional hierarchies, potentially eroding ministerial autonomy and redistributing regulatory authority. Such bureaucratic "turf wars" manifest as procedural delays, duplicative clearances, and fragmented data governance, thereby undermining policy coherence. Moreover, policy inertia, reinforced by bureaucratic conservatism and lack of inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms, restricts the transformative potential of any integrated framework. Unless the architecture of coordination is embedded in law through binding mandates rather than ad hoc committees, legal integration risks remaining a rhetorical aspiration.²²

The political economy of climate legislation presents a second axis of resistance, reflecting the structural tension between economic growth imperatives and environmental stewardship. Industry groups, particularly in energy-intensive and extractive sectors, perceive unified climate regulation as an additional layer of compliance cost, potentially curtailing investment and competitiveness. The political class, sensitive to electoral populism, often frames climate ambition as a developmental constraint rather than an opportunity. Fiscal constraints exacerbate this hesitation: climate adaptation and mitigation projects demand long-term

²¹Manmeet Kaur Arora, Sahil Lal & Bhupinder Singh, *A Way Forward to Realm of Environmental Law in India: Unveiling Judicial Activism and Enforcement Challenges*, 7 Nat'l J. Env'tl. L. 85 (2024).

²² *Id.*

financial commitments, yet public finance in India remains heavily burdened by welfare obligations and subsidy regimes. At the subnational level, uneven state capacities, both fiscal and institutional, create asymmetries in implementation. Wealthier states may internalize compliance costs, while resource-poor states struggle to meet even the minimum environmental performance benchmarks, thereby fragmenting the very uniformity that legal integration seeks to achieve.²³

From a constitutional standpoint, the risk of legal overreach is particularly pronounced. Environmental protection occupies a concurrent space under the Indian federal structure, with both Union & States empowered to legislate. A centralized climate law, unless carefully drafted, may be construed as encroaching upon the states' legislative competence over sectors such as agriculture, land use, and local governance, all of which are climate-relevant. Such overreach could invite constitutional challenges, reviving debates over cooperative federalism and environmental subsidiarity. Court's jurisprudence on environmental federalism, though expansive, has historically balanced central oversight with state autonomy. Therefore, any integrated climate framework must be constitutionally sensitive, emphasizing coordination over control, and enabling rather than displacing state-level innovation in climate governance. A federated model of climate legislation, perhaps akin to the "framework law" approach, may offer a constitutional middle path.²⁴

Balancing flexibility and legal certainty emerge as a normative and structural challenge in the design of adaptive climate law. The dynamic nature of climate science, evolving international obligations, and rapid technological change render rigid statutory formulations counterproductive. Yet, excessive flexibility risks diluting accountability and legal predictability. The law must therefore institutionalize mechanisms for periodic review, regulatory adaptation, and scientific integration, ensuring responsiveness without arbitrariness. Instruments such as carbon budgets, adaptive licensing, and climate risk assessments could be embedded within the legislative text, allowing the framework to evolve without repeated statutory amendment. The strength of a unified climate law will depend not only on its integrative ambition but also on its capacity to reconcile adaptability with enforceable standards, jurisprudential balance between normative stability and ecological dynamism.

²³Jigisha Singh, *Evolution of Principles for Environmental Protection – Indian Context*, 7 Nat'l J. Env'tl. L. (2024).

²⁴*Id.*

CONCLUSION & A WAY FORWARD

India's current climate legal framework reflects a paradox: a multitude of environmental statutes, policies, and institutions exist, yet their collective capacity to address climate change remains constrained by fragmentation, duplication, and lack of normative coherence. The legal architecture operates through dispersed mandates under sectoral laws, covering forests, energy, pollution control, and disaster management, without a unifying climate rationale or integrative enforcement mechanism. This disjointedness has produced policy inconsistency, jurisdictional overlaps, and institutional inertia. Courts, particularly court & NGT, have intermittently filled this void by articulating doctrines, such as the public trust principle and sustainable development, but these judicial interventions remain case-contingent and lack systemic legislative backing. The absence of a statutory climate governance framework has thus rendered India's response largely reactive, policy-driven, and administratively diffuse.

A coherent way forward necessitates a paradigmatic shift from environmental protection in a narrow sense to comprehensive climate governance. The enactment of a National Climate Change Framework Law could serve as the normative and institutional pivot for such transformation. This law must not merely consolidate existing statutes but create a new legal order that embeds principles of climate justice, intergenerational equity, and common but differentiated responsibilities within the domestic context. It should establish a clear division of competences between Union & States, institutionalize inter-ministerial coordination through a National Climate Commission, and provide enforceable duties for mitigation and adaptation across sectors. Moreover, it should recognize procedural rights, public participation, access to information, and climate litigation standing, to democratize climate governance. The framework must also integrate carbon budgeting, climate finance accountability, and performance-linked implementation, ensuring that climate commitments are both measurable and enforceable.

However, the pathway to legal unification is not without obstacles. Centralized legislation may encounter federal resistance, bureaucratic reluctance, and political contestation from sectors fearing regulatory tightening. Hence, reform must adopt a polycentric legal strategy, one that balances national coherence with subnational flexibility, enabling adaptive governance that evolves with scientific and socio-economic realities. Building legal capacity within state institutions, fostering cooperative federalism, and ensuring periodic legislative review can guard against rigidity. Hence, India's climate law reform should aim not only to

unify fragmented regimes but to constitutionalize climate responsibility as a cross-sectoral, justice-oriented mandate. In doing so, India can transform its dispersed legal landscape into a coherent, future-ready climate governance framework capable of reconciling development imperatives with ecological survival.

