

How to Cite:

Baskar, S., & Malaviya, D. (2026). M.K. Ranjitsinh & Ors. v. Union of India & Ors, analysed through the lens of climate change and governance. *International Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 20(2), 264–267. Retrieved from <https://ijeponline.org/index.php/journal/article/view/1282>

M.K. Ranjitsinh & Ors. v. Union of India & Ors, analysed through the lens of climate change and governance

Siddharth Baskar

Assistant Professor, IILM University Gurugram

Deepayan Malaviya

Assistant Professor (Senior Scale), University of Petroleum and Energy Studies, Dehradun

Abstract--The activities of humans have resulted in the deterioration of the climate, which is having obvious and severe repercussions—not only for humans but also for other species. The unprecedented rainfall and flooding that took place in 2024 led to a significant number of people to lose their lives across a number of countries. This was a direct result of the increase of temperature and other environmental events that took place during that year. People were also confronted with a great deal of economic difficulties. As a consequence of these impacts, a significant number of animal species are currently in jeopardy of becoming extinct. The sustainability of humans and other species is being gravely endangered by climate change and over the course of the past few years, the adverse effects of climate change have made the conditions for an extensive number of species extremely challenging. Within the framework of this investigation, the subject of biodiversity conservation and the part that the Hon'ble Supreme Court played in the safeguarding of the Great Indian Bustard will be investigated in greater depth. Furthermore, the Hon'ble Court, in this particular case, advocated for the observance of sustainable development goals and the escape from the effects of climate change. It is a fact that climate change is a real phenomenon.

Keywords--Climate Change, Great Indian Bustard, Sustainable Development Goals, Sustainability.

INTRODUCTION:

The Constitution of India ensures the protection of species and biodiversity while advocating for compassion towards living beings. Article 21 of the Constitution has been construed to extend the right to life to animals¹. Do these principles, in fact, have practical applicability? The Hon'ble Supreme Court, in the case of "*M.K. Ranjitsinh & Ors. v. Union of India & Ors*", recognised that it is a fundamental right to be free from the detrimental impacts of climate change². Addressing climate change presents a significant challenge, and the Hon'ble Court has underscored the necessity for a clean and sustainable environment in various landmark rulings. It is important to note that in "*Animal Welfare Board of India v. A Nagaraja*", the court upheld that animals possess the right to live with dignity and have inherent rights pertaining to their well-being³.

The Great Indian Bustard (also known as the "GIB") was protected by the court in the case of *M.K. Ranjitsinh*, which also highlighted the importance of improving habitat conditions. In order to mitigate the effects of climate change, it is generally acknowledged that a clean environment is an immediate remedy that can be implemented. Through the application of constitutional interpretations, the court has safeguarded biodiversity and made a significant contribution to the preservation of this species that is in grave danger of extinction. It has also asserted that those who put biodiversity in jeopardy will be subject to severely severe punishments. Taking into account ecosystems in conjunction with the expansion of the nation's economy is something that the court has mandated through this particular case.

FACTS OF THE CASE:

The GIB is a bird native to western and southern India, typically inhabiting grasslands. Rajasthan is the principal state housing the majority of this species' population. Since 2018, the population of GIB has been experiencing a significant decline, and the "International Union for Conservation of Nature" (IUCN) has classified GIB as a critically endangered species due to habitat loss, hunting, and adverse environmental impacts caused by human activities. ⁴ To safeguard the Great Indian Bustard, Mr. Ranjitsinh and others, hereinafter referred to as the petitioners, approached the Hon'ble Supreme Court under Article 32 (Writ Petition).

They contended that the GIB has nearly vanished from its native habitat and asserted that overhead cables pose a significant threat. As detailed in the Power Line Mitigation Report of 2018, approximately 100,000 birds perish annually, necessitating a reduction in mortality factors affecting this species. ⁵

¹ Constitution of India, 1950.

² [2024] 3 S.C.R. 1320, WRIT PETITION (CIVIL) /838/2019.

³ (2014) 7 SCC 547.

⁴ IUCN, 'The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species' (IUCN, 2025) < <https://www.iucnredlist.org/> > accessed 31 March 2025.

⁵ Wildlife Institute of India, 'Power Line Mitigation Report' (Power Line Mitigation Measures, 2018) < https://wii.gov.in/images/images/documents/publications/rr_2020_GIB%20Power-line_mitigation_conserve_bustards.pdf > accessed 31 March 2025.

The petitioners request the Union of India, hereinafter referred to as the respondents, to issue directives for the protection of GIB's.

ISSUES:

1. Is the government taking any steps to protect and preserve endangered species? are there any measures that have been implemented?
2. Is it appropriate to encourage the promotion of ecological balance and the utilisation of renewable resources?

LEGAL ANALYSIS:

Articles 21 and 14 are essential provisions for the right to a clean environment and protection from the adverse effects of climate change, according to the decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, which stated that the "*right to be free from the detrimental impacts of climate change is a fundamental right.*" As a result of the court's decision, the state and municipalities are now responsible for fulfilling their constitutional obligation to put into effect measures that are both effective and efficient in protecting and promoting the natural environment. The obligation was imposed by the court as a requirement. The observance of sustainable development is of the utmost significance; consequently, the Honourable court mandated the installation of diverters along with the stipulation that a study must precede their finalisation in order to evaluate the underground transmission lines. This was done in order to ensure that everything is in compliance with sustainable development. The respondents are the ones who are responsible for bearing the costs that are associated with the installation of the diverters.

To mobilise financial resources, the court suggested a number of different strategies. One of these strategies was to bring the attention of each electricity utility to Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013, which mandates corporate social responsibility based on a specified portion of net worth or profit. Another strategy was to utilise Section 166(2) of the same act, which requires company directors to act in good faith and in the best interests of the company, community, employees, and environment.⁶

In its ruling, the court emphasised the importance of upholding international obligations that were established by the Paris Agreement and the Kyoto Protocol. It also highlighted the necessity for the government to find a way to reconcile ecological integrity with economic interests.

PRESENT DAY RELEVANCE:

The reality of climate change has been brought to light by the judicial system, which has also acknowledged the significance of enjoying the fundamental right to reside in an environment that is free of pollution. Comparable cases include "*Ashok Kumar Sinha V. UOI,*" in which the Hon'ble Supreme Court ordered the Union and the state of Bihar to find solutions to the problem of waste being

⁶ Companies Act, 2013.

dumped in the Ganga river. The current case can be compared to other cases that have been decided in the past.⁷

The court has stated that the disposal of plastic has a detrimental effect on aquatic life and water bodies, and it also has a degrading effect on the environment, which is the very source of life that we provide for ourselves. The court made the appropriate observation that protecting the environment is one of the most essential components of achieving the goals of sustainable development.

In a similar manner, in November 2024, when the air quality in the National Capital Region became hazardous and the index was marked to 1500, the Hon'ble Court took action by implementing the "**Graded Response Plan**" and stated that actions need to be taken immediately in order to maintain the environment in a sustainable state for the future.⁸

The legal dispute referred to as "*M.K. Ranjitsinh & Ors. v. Union of India*" takes on an even greater level of significance due to the fact that it expressly demands that every single person be liberated from the consequences of climate change. By recognising this as a component of fundamental rights, the court has established a significant precedent that will pave the way for a movement towards change.

CONCLUSION:

The GIBs are on the verge of extinction, and the Hon'ble Supreme Court has taken a courageous step to protect the species. In today's world, it is necessary to have a harmony between the growth of ecosystems, and in my opinion, stringent environmental laws need to be incorporated, and raising awareness about the importance of environmental protection is the need of the hour. The offenders will be forced to reconsider their actions and ensure that they comply with the environmental regulations if they are subjected to stringent provisions and heavy fines.

⁷ Original Application No. 42 of 2020 (EZ).

⁸ Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas, 'Graded Response Action Plan' (GRAP, 13 December 2024) <<https://caqm.nic.in/WriteReadData/LINKS/Comprehensively%20revised%20GRAP%20Schedule%2013122024de8b0d8d-b1e0-4acd-ab27-d0709bb3d905.pdf>> accessed 31 March 2025.