

The global economy is now constructed at the cost of shrinking forests

Perils of Consumer Lifestyle

By Arun Devnath

IN the technology-driven-world, human beings ignore environment at their peril. They are harnessing their energy to exploit natural resources; power-plants are set up, highways are constructed and cornucopia of automobiles are on the road — all to the detriment of environment. These are needed to satisfy the ever-increasing demands of a gluttonous consumer lifestyle. The global economy is now constructed at the cost of shrinking forests, declining water resources and disappearing species. It is an axiomatic truth that over the last fifty years the global economies have produced much more disposable goods for a burgeoning population. Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and Russia will become economic superpowers in the twenty first century. But these countries will not be able to battle rising carbon emissions and preserve the dwindling natural resources, thus setting the saddening process of extinction. Can we fight pollution without opposing the consumer lifestyle?

Education that insists on a tough and aggressive ideology of success in a technology-driven-culture is largely responsible for the complex environmental woes that confront us. Students see themselves not as open-minded seekers of knowledge, but as marketable commodities in the countries and companies that pioneer technology. Our present miseries are the terrible outcome of the consumerist model of education that enslaves us to the pitiless coils of greed. Today's educational goal is building self-esteem, in other words, catering to the spiralling demands of consumer lifestyle rather than creating intellectual independence.

The recent Magurcharra disaster is the painful realization of the full extent of the damage we are doing to our planet. We should balance the price of economic development against the real cost to the environment. Massive explosion in the Magurcharra Gas-well that destroyed one of the richest pockets of deciduous forest in our country is the earth's eviscerating cry in the air. How hideous is the process of development!

Despite much-vaunted population stability, many European countries are