

To survive we need to industrialise like Singapore or South Korea

DR A.M. CHOUDHURY

THE causes of global warming are well known. It is due to various greenhouse gases emitted as a result of industrialisation by the advanced countries. The chief greenhouse gas is carbon dioxide that results from the burning of fossil fuels like petroleum, coal etc, which comes mainly from the developed countries.

The result of the carbon dioxide emission during the industrial era has been a colossal increase in global temperature. The global temperature has increased by about one degree Centigrade during the last century and that too mostly during the last few decades, when the use of fossil fuels have increased exponentially as a result of the rapid economic growth of the industrialized world. Such a large scale increase in temperature has not occurred in the recent history of the world. The world temperature has shown fluctuations due to natural causes in the past, but this has taken millions of years and human beings did not exist then.

The modern human civiliza-

tion commitment to cut down emissions because the problem is a very complex one.

Reduction of emissions will require a lot of technological innovations which involve sizeable expenditure. Not only will the developing countries be affected as a result of climate change, but the whole world, including the advanced countries will be adversely affected also. For example, Arctic Ocean is getting warmer at a rate twice the global average. As a result, melting of ice in the arctic oceans is occurring at a very fast rate. It is a known fact that ice reflects radiation whereas water absorbs radiation and consequently the Arctic Ocean is getting warmer and warmer. The result is a very warm Europe. We witnessed death of some 30,000 people all over Europe few years back as a result of a heat wave. Scientists predict that such heat wave will be a regular phenomenon in Europe in future. What a horrifying picture?

We have also witnessed increase in forest fires all over the globe especially in the western hemisphere. This is

The Bali conference recently has only postponed the issue. Realising the danger of global warming, the British Govt. appointed Mr. Stern to produce a report and he has produced a seven hundred page global report. The conclusion he has made is that we should start reducing greenhouse gases right now otherwise the more delay we make the more costly will be the effect.

The fact is that global warming has changed our climate. In Bangladesh there used to be normal floods which was within the tolerance limit of the people. It used to bring alluvium which was good for crops, and this is how Bengal delta has been built. There used to be big flood once in 50 years approximately. And cyclones? There is record in Ain-E-Akbari that there was a big cyclone at the time of Emperor Akbar. Then there was the record of a big cyclone in 1876. Such big cyclones used to occur once in a 100 years. But because of the climate change, floods and cyclones now occur almost every year. People work very hard, but because of these disasters, our GDP

tory will go under the sea. Bangladesh being the most densely populated country in the world, having a population of 150 million presently, and growing at the rate of 1.5% a year, how will it survive with land being continually devoured by the sea?

We had witnessed this phenomenon during cyclone SIDR. People have reported that the sea has come closer to their homes. More people are being affected by storm surges than before. The sea will attack more inland area than before when storm surge occurs and may be in not too distant a future we will witness storm surges in Dhaka. Our geologists have reported that Bangladesh coast is sinking at a rate of 4 mm to 7 mm a year. We pledge that we will sacrifice our life to defend our land; we will not give up on inch of our soil at any cost. But our land is being devoured by the sea because of the action of the homo sapiens.

Whatever land is being left is getting saline and losing fertility. If it continues Bangladesh will not remain fit for habitation. What can we do under the circum-

should serve as an eye opener to all of us as to what global warming can do.

It seems that we are not powerful enough to compel the gas emitting countries to reduce emission so that we can survive. So we have to change our strategy. We have to survive as a decent nation. From a least developed country we have to change into an advanced country. We have to change into an industrialized country, say in ten years.

To meet the sea level rise some people have started country boat culture. They are encouraging people to live in boats. Well this is nothing new. We have boat people who are practicing this culture for thousand years, and these people are snake charmers. So the people who are promoting boat culture do in fact want this nation to be a nation of snake charmers. It is surprising that these people are receiving big international awards.

No, we do not want to go backwards. We want to march forward. We will build up heavy industry which has high value addition; build tall buildings so that even if we lose land, we can expand

education system drastically; build a Kyast as the Koreans did. Not one Kyast, hundreds of them. Change all educational institutions into technical institutions. Make science and technology compulsory and humanities as optional subjects. We will not lose anything. We can learn literature or history by being a technological country. I am using the term technology not science. Science can become unproductive if it is not production oriented.

We want that our education becomes production oriented and all the universities of science and technology to become so. Let us change our entire education system to make a society which will become production oriented. Teachers can work both in universities and remain attached to industries. The present scenario of the universities producing unemployed graduates must change.

Let our educational institutions become arms of our industries. We can recall our technologist NRB's (Non Resident Bangladeshi) back to the country. We have to change lot of our rules and

many civilizations in the past like the Indus Valley or Mesopotamian civilizations that perished because of the adverse impact of deteriorating environment.

One may ask from where we shall get the money for industrialisation. We are quite a prosperous country with an annual budget of some 40,000 crores Taka. Use only 10% of this sum in industry and this will do the work. Shun all projects which do not contribute to national economy. Index of development is industrialisation. So if we want to develop, we have to industrialise. So why not do it now instead of postponing it for later years.

Our expatriates remit about six billion dollars annually at present, which will grow constantly and that sum can be used to industrialise the country. Let each (NRB) be an entrepreneur. The return will be very quick. We need to industrialise our agriculture of which some start has already been made. We should preserve our agricultural products in a modern way by developing agro-industry in each village.



zation is about 5000 years old and it has not witnessed any such large scale increase of temperature in such a short time. The prediction is that during the next thirty years the temperature will rise by two to six degree centigrade. The greenhouse gas emitting countries have not shown any

definitely the result of global warming. Thus nobody can escape from the dangerous consequences of global warming. However, in spite of the fact that Kyoto Protocol was ratified by most of the countries for the reduction of greenhouse gas, it has not been implemented.

growth rate, instead of moving to two digits, is going down.

IPCC is predicting that sea level will rise by a metre due to global rise of temperature of 2 to 6 degrees Centigrade during the next thirty years. What will happen to Bangladesh? 20% of its terri-

stances? Recently we are witnessing a global food crisis. The food exporting countries have not produced as much food as they used to do before. The cause is either flood or drought or such natural adverse environment and this is definitely related to climate change. This

upwards. If Singapore can live as a country, we will have much more land than Singapore even after the global change effect. So follow the example of Singapore and South Korea. Build up an industrial society. Give up old ideas and follow the doctrine of value addition. Change the

ideas. This 1/11 Govt can bring this change. Our politicians should consider themselves as belonging to 'Nationalist Technological Parties'. There has to be a revolutionary thinking by all our citizens. This is necessary to save our posterity. Otherwise we will perish like

Question may be asked that electricity has not reached all our villages. Let us start with those villages where electricity has reached and let us electrify the whole country in the quickest possible time.

Dr A.M. Choudhury is former chairman SPARSO.