situation for farmers. As this is majorly an agricultural country, and lots of people depend on agriculture to survive, you need rain to grow crops, and that has become more and more difficult over the years," he explains.

Terming Bangladesh as the reservoir of natural problems, Orsenna explains that if had the chance he would send climate change deniers to the country to see for themselves the consequences of first world actions being suffered by an innocent third world country.

"Bangladesh does not have a high carbon footprint. It does not even produce or consume as much energy as some first world countries and yet, it has to suffer the disastrous effects of climate change. People need to come here and study the environment to actually understand the damage done and to know where to go from here," he says.

Even though the people of the country cannot be fully blamed for the drastic climate change, they need to be more aware and increase their knowledge about the environment, and know to care for it. "The people of Bangladesh are very brave, they are very resilient. They always try to adapt themselves to the changes but this will only take you till a certain point. When the situation becomes too "non-human", you need to know how to fight it not how to adapt to it," he argues.

If you have to live, and live well, you have to be a bit of a scientist, explains Orsenna. But that does not mean that you have to enroll yourself in an educational programme or consult with experts. You just need to study your own environment, and then go from there. The internet is no context, you can't just depend on the information provided there. You need first hand information and as people living in a country undergoing such a drastic change in climate, we actually have the opportunity to learn from these disasters, and can thus to choose to increase our knowledge.

Orsenna says that his meeting with the students of disaster management at Dhaka University was particularly interesting. "After listening to all the bright minds, I had only one suggestion to give them; don't ever rely on general ideas. You have to be more specific. If you are talking about the water situation, focus on the situation of the Jamuna or Ganges in the subcontinent. You have to be local if you hope to find solutions to your individual problems," says Orsenna.

Orsenna, a naturalist, wrote books on cotton (In the Land of Cotton), paper (On the Paper Road) and seas (A Portrait of the Gulf Stream: In Praise of Currents), and he says researching on these books made him feel like a reporter, like a person who could actually make a difference with his works. "I've wanted to be a journalist since I was ten years old and now I am 67, and finally I can call myself a reporter," he says with a laugh. His non-fiction books on history, economics and geography are usually translated in over ten languages, and he believes that this gives him the leeway to carry his word forward. He is fortunate, he says, that he can do that even in the capacity of a civil servant, which allows him to connect with large sections of people and spread the message about the effects of climate change.

His love for the environment stems from Orsenna's deep passion for the sea. A sailor during his free time, Orsenna says that the sea has many lessons to teach that mankind can benefit from. He complains that while millions of dollars are spent to explore and understand the space better, the sea is almost always neglected. Our earth comprises of 70 percent water, all life comes from the sea, and yet the sea is ignored, and contaminated. The truth of life is mobility, and that is something that the sea has taught him. "If you have that sense of mobility then you behave a little more cleverly," he says with a smile.

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"I've tried to live my life on earth exactly the way when I am at sea on my boat. The sea teaches you that you are not stronger than it. If you think you are, then you are extremely stupid. When you are at the sea, you usually have a crew with you, and if you treat the weakest members of your crew badly, then the morale of the whole team suffers. This is true of the actual world as well," he explains.

Orsenna will include his observations on the effect of climate change in Bangladesh in his forthcoming study on a history of the sea, and also hopes to address the issue at a world climate change summit to be organized in 2015. "But before that, we hope to organise a small event in France with experts and climate change advocates, where I will present my findings on climate change effects in Bangladesh," he concludes.

If we are to effectively address our climate change issues, we'd do best if were to abide by Orsenna's simple motto: be aware, educate yourself and know your land more than others do. It's this rather than mere talk that will take us further in our pursuit of solutions to the problems brought forth by nature. ■