

A Submission on Climate Control Policy

Introduction

The peace of the world and indeed human life itself move under an intensifying threat compounded of several causes that, though they may have been separate in their origins, will be collaborative in their consequences; to mention 5 of the most severe:

Overpopulation

Climate change

Waste of energy

Illiteracy and culture

Degradation of soils

Overpopulation is a basic contributor to the others in the list above but (outside of China) escapes direct political engagement. Literacy, underpinning the opportunity to promote liberal and rational thinking, would in turn seem to be the means most conducive to non-violent, personal involvement in confronting the above issues but may do so too slowly in some cases and when is lacking the educational background to be motivated by conviction.

I spent 7 years in Kolkata training Indian engineers during the 1960s for a company that manufactured pump sets that enabled peasant farmers to irrigate their land by drawing on the water table reaching up to 4-5 metres below the surface. On my arrival there, large numbers of drought-driven people from the surrounding villages had flooded into the city in the hope of obtaining the means of survival from the city streets. They ate, slept and bred on the pavements. The “Green Revolution”^{*} of the 1960s enabled India to become self-sufficient in food grains and the pavements cleared, only to be reoccupied again at the end of the decade by a burgeoning population and refugees from the war in Bangladesh: the cost was a massive increase in utilisation of fossil fuels. My (Indian) Personnel Manager impressed upon me that we were in the business of changing attitudes but in this were not, I think, very successful. The episode was perhaps not an exercise in futility although it seemed so when one wandered out onto the streets.

Addressing demographic issues, then I regard as the major adjunct of dealing with Climate Change: failing this, efforts to combat its causes may result in its increase.

Measures that reduce numbers of people

By pursuing persuasive and moral references to urge restriction in family size. Imaginative propaganda by government might be employed to convey desirable norms for instance the 2

child nuclear family, by making comparisons that illustrate its resilience in economic and physical adversity as compared with larger family units and evaluating its smaller dependence on benefits and taxpayer assistance generally.

By avoiding measures that are illogical from a long term viewpoint: an example is the encouragement of immigration to provide for an aging home population which might aggravate the same problem that it was introduced to solve when the immigrants age. The argument from a declining population is a dubious one since the reduction in family size is often an adjustment to resource availability such as maybe reflected in the costs of a good education, quality nutrition, sports' coaching, and in the availability of career and employment opportunities; in short the progress towards the possibilities of humane and cultivated human lives.

Related to the above, admitting immigrants when quite high unemployment levels are likely to persist over more than the short term in the receiving country is sociologically unsound and aggravates racism.

Aid should relate strictly to the ends that donors judge desirable, predominantly into education, contraception and medicine, say. Again it is too easily directed to areas that increase the problems that it is needed to ameliorate.

Run out of time!

From: John Gadd, retired engineer.

P.s. The 5-fold salient features of the Green Revolution were:

- 1) New higher yielding strains of rice
- 2) Irrigation
- 3) Synthetic fertilisers
- 4) Extensive use of pesticides and herbicides
- 5) Mechanisation, in particular use of agricultural machinery.

The enabling vector was the great increase in energy availability, particularly as coal-generated electricity.