

2010 Top to Top Global Climate Solution Award

Essay

As the delicate balance of time moves on, slight differences in the weather can be noticed. The concerned person can see that there is a shift in the balance of the environment; heat waves, floods, hurricanes and the like are occurring faster than ever. Given the name of “global warming”, it is a problem on a world wide scale and only the cooperation of everyone can it be fixed or at least slowed down.

The major cause of global warming is the emission of green house gases like carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide etc into the atmosphere. The major source of carbon dioxide is the power plants. These power plants emit large amounts of carbon dioxide produced from burning of fossil fuels for the purpose of electricity generation. About twenty percent of carbon dioxide emitted in the atmosphere comes from burning of gasoline in the engines of the vehicles. This is true for most of the developed countries. Buildings, both commercial and residential represent a larger source of global warming pollution than cars and trucks. Heavy industries such steel, fertilizers, etc also have a major carbon footprint.



Regardless of whether people accept it or not, global warming has started affecting our lives and distorting it. Maybe, sometimes the causality of an event is not that easy to establish. Pondering for little time, however, shows us the stark reality.

I will take two of my personal experiences as a basis of study

As an avid mountaineer and trekker, I frequently go to Himachal Pradesh (India), as this state is nestled in the Himalayas.

The apple line in Himachal Pradesh is slowly shifting upwards. Earlier there were apple orchards even in the Kulu valley. As temperatures are rising, previously cold regions, have been rendered un-fit for cultivation of apples. Prodding the local people will reveal that they are flabbergasted as to why, apples which had been thriving on their land since centuries, have so suddenly betrayed them.



THE RECEEDING APPLE BELT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

Another instance from my travel is Sunderban delta in West Bengal. When I had gone there, I saw a new phenomenon in the making – “The environmental refugees”.

Islands in Sunderbans are slowly disappearing, due to the rising sea levels. Natives have no option but keep on relocating. Very recently, in March 2010, New Moore Island in the Sunderbans got completely submerged (For nearly 30 years, India and Bangladesh have argued over control of this rock island in the Bay of Bengal. Now rising sea levels have resolved the dispute for them: the island's gone.)



THE SINKING SUNDERBANS

Surely, things are going awry. And this brings us to the question, what can be done? There is a lot which can be done to improve the present condition. Approaches such as renewable sources of energy, usage of public transport, etc are slowly gaining popularity.

I will discuss a green way of farming which has revolutionized the farming scene in Cuba – “*organoponics*”. Organopónicos first arose as a community response to lack of food security after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Oil, pesticides and chemical fertilizers which were supplied from USSR, became scarce in Cuba. So Cuba turned to a greener alternative, which did not require dependency on tractors (read diesel), fertilizers or even means of transporting food from rural farms to cities. The “organoponic” garden is a farm in a city consisting of low-level concrete walls filled with organic matter and soil, with lines of drip irrigation laid on the surface of the growing media. Organopónicos provide access to job opportunities, a fresh food supply to the community, neighborhood improvement and beautification of urban areas. The best part is that they totally do away with the large scale industry style farming practiced in many countries, and have shown a new way of eco-friendly farming. Zero usage of fertilizers and pesticide also imply reducing a lot of carbon footprint in the manufacture of these chemicals. Also, mechanized farm implements are not required. Cuba has more than 7,000 organopónicos. More than 200 gardens in Havana supply its citizens with more than 90% of their fruit and vegetables.



ORGANOPONIC FARMING
VS
INDUSTRY STYLE FARMING



This model should be emulated in places throughout the world. Organoponics is a sustainable food security solution and it immensely helps to reduce global warming. As organoponic gardens are popularized, cities of the world will become (partly become) self sufficient in their food requirements and the road/ rail transportation of an entire cities vegetable requirements from conventional farm production centers will become obsolete.



ORGANOPONIC PRODUCTS MARKET IN HAVANA

I really hope a day will come, when in Delhi, people will be having fresh, eco-friendly fruits and vegetables produced in their neighborhood organoponic farm

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