

Climate change: new opportunity to renew old orders

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IN RECENT months, Delhi has seen unprecedented growth in star foreign visitors flying in by night to advise us on the impending dangers of climate change and hand out 'how to' manuals on reducing the threat (see Factsheet: *Natural burden*). These visitors have Indian friends who have just heard of this strange rogue phenomenon and find it damn cute to organize 'climate balls' and 'climate receptions'. The star guests are invariably former heads of states historically identified as the greatest climate criminals. The hosts are the business class, national or global, whose profit maximizing activities contribute to this crisis in nature.

Is it politically correct to smell a rat? Isn't it nice the criminals have reformed? Ideally, the best result can be obtained if the worst offenders, super-developed states and the global industrial class, participate. But the realpolitik is that the climate agenda has been hijacked by the business class. Global warming must be managed by reproducing, not questioning the very political economy that created it.

In a recent interview to this magazine, Sir Nick Stern, who shot into fame by presenting the economics of climate change, when asked about rising consumption and its role in global warming, politely advised us not to question growth. Growth is truth. So how are we going to reverse the trend?

Well, the climate evangelists are suggesting technofixes. There is a scramble in the market to reshuffle production portfolios. CSE in its 1999 publication on global environmental governance, *Green Politics*, clearly showed all global environmental conventions were designed to secure northern business in the future and had little to do with environment or sustainability. This has sharpened; industries and developed nations are looking at a new business opportunity in the time of climate change. The results are showing. Without any noteworthy emissions cut, the rush for biofuel to manage emissions has already created a food crisis. All technofixes—biofuel, GM crop or nuclear power—will create the next generation of crisis, because they ignore the fundamental problems of capitalism as a system that ignores justice and promotes inequity.

In this growth rush, India has lost all moral authority to suggest substantial change for the future. Our smart politicians are also products of institutions working overtime to renew capitalism, maintaining all old social orders of growing consumerism, only with a marginal reduction in carbon emission, if possible.

Gandhi is worth only for quotations to start speeches!

P.S.

* From Down to Earth:

http://www.downtoearth.org.in/full6.asp?foldername=20080415&filename=led&sec_id=3&sid=1