

→ Climate change awareness: more important than Climate Actions -

"We are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change and the last generation that can do something about it", this was remarked by Barack Obama, then American President, in an attempt to draw world's attention towards the threat of climate change that it is facing. This statement effectively points out the urgency, with which measures need to be taken to address the catastrophic consequences of climate change - Without negating the importance of awareness, which is almost necessary for galvanising action, this piece shall disagree with the given statement, while focusing on the need of action to fight climate change. The essay shall start by shedding light on the steps taken by the Global North, Global South and Pakistan in the fight against climate disaster. It shall then also explore the areas which require more awareness. In the end it shall discuss the short comings and probable measures that can be taken.

Climate change is a disaster that has engulfed the whole world, without there being any discrimination in the region being developed or developing - The responsibility can also be safely attributed to both parts of the globe, though the magnitude is often subjected to debate in international conferences. The ever increasing carbon emissions have caused the global temperature to rise by 1.43°C . It will not be out of place to mention

Here that China tops the list of Carbon emitters, with 35% contribution to the total world's Carbon emissions. US being second on the list contributes 15%, while India contributes 10% approximately. While there is no dearth of awareness, vested every year at the Conference of Parties (COP) and other international organisations such as United Nations, a strong resolve and concrete measures need to be taken to effectively mitigate the carbon emissions, which have eventually led to this climatic catastrophe.

Over the years, the developed nations of the global north has effectively demonstrated that they need to be more robust in their actions against the climate change. It is imperative to mention here that in COP 21, or more famously referred to as the Paris Climate Agreement, developed nations such as America, Canada and Europe were given a target to cut their carbon emissions by 45% by 2030 (as compared to that in 2010). However, five years later in COP 26 or the Glasgow Summit, it transpired that USA has remained badly unsuccessful in carrying out effective measures. In fact, USA under Donald Trump, lifted the ban imposed on coal-based projects. Thus, this clearly implies that developed nations need to be alot more serious in their actions against climate change, than they are.

Moving on to the developing countries, they have also not remained behind in renegeing their commitments done in the Paris Climate Agreement. Nations of the Global South were tasked to cut their emissions by 30%

by 2030 and 50% by 2050. They were given a little more room in wake of the fact that they are still undergoing the process of industrialization. In COP 26, it transpired that China and India, both have completely missed their targets, while China remains to be the world's largest importer and burner of oil and gas. Therefore, the need of more action exists as much in Global South as it does in Global North.

In the Copenhagen Conference or COP 15, plantation was considered as an alternative to fight the climate war, along with cutting carbon emissions, and plantation of two forests in, Indonesia and Brazil was envisaged. Later, in the COP 21, Bonn Challenge was given to each country for forestation. However, it turned out that only a few countries such as Pakistan and Argentina were successful in meeting their targets, while others failed. The importance of forestation as an arsenal in this fight against climate change cannot be negated. Therefore, the world needs to get united and pool in funds for forestation, throughout the globe, wherever there is potential.

Another important hurdle, that needs to be overcome in order to achieve the goals envisaged in Paris Climate Agreement, is the paucity of funds with majority of the developing nations. A few developing nations, including Pakistan, who have remained among the worst effectees of climate change, also struggle with economic constraints, strifing their ability to take effective measures. COP 21 can be regarded as progressive in this respect as a \$100 billion fund was created and to be collected in the next five years. However, majority of the developed nations including USA and ASEAN nations

have remained unsuccessful in meeting up to their commitments. Therefore, immediate action is required in this regard by the Global North.

While the importance of the actions, discussed above, cannot be negated, some quarters also believe that the world needs more awareness. One of the arguments they do is that the developed nations do not realize the seriousness of threat, which the world is facing in the wake of climate change. Primarily the countries, who have not yet faced the wrath of climate disaster, tend to remain ignorant as evidenced by their failure to meet their respective targets set out in the Paris Climate Agreement. Hence, awareness campaigns in such unaffected countries of the developed world is also the need of the hour.

As far as awareness in Global South is concerned, two nations which primarily need it are China and India. Chinese race to become world's largest economy and the regional competition between China & India, has led to rapid industrialization. Despite being the effectors of Climate Change, both these nations appear to be driven by their resolve to become economic superpowers. Regional organisations such as BRICS and SAARC need to step up and play their role in raising awareness among these Asian competitors to let go of their economic gains to some extent in favor of life of this earth.

While as far as the forestation is concerned, Pakistan has achieved a remarkable success. "Billion Tree Tsunami" project successfully got completed in 2018, under which a billion trees were planted across Pakistan. 1.5 billion more trees were planted during 2018 - 2022, with an 86% success rate (World Economic Forum). However, Pakistan has remained unsuccessful in marketing this unprecedented forestation drive. Proper recognition of Pakistan's success will certainly inspire and raise awareness in other neighbouring countries such as India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka etc who also have a lot of potential.

Another concept of "Climate-conflict nexus", which has been recently coined also need to be marketed. As per this concept, climate disasters in any area exacerbate the already simmering conflicts. For example, in Pakistan the floods of 2022 displaced many people from their native areas, who were forced to take refuge in other areas. Such migrations often deepen the ethnic divides and enmity already existing. e.g. recently 2 daily wagers, originally belonging from South Punjab, were brutally murdered in South Waziristan due to ethnic reasons. Moreover, the floods of 2010 displaced the Ismaili community of Attabad, forcing them to take refuge in other areas of GB, which is already strife with sectarian violence.

Therefore, the other consequent problems that arise with the climatic disasters need to be propagated and awareness in this regard need to be imparted so that the magnitude of damages suffered can somehow be mitigated.

While the world needs awareness, nevertheless actions speak louder than words. While talking about the Global North, America has remained ambivalent in their struggle against Climate Change. It is evident from the fact that Bush Jr, withdrew USA from the Kyoto Protocol 1997 in 2002. Later Obama showed great ambition and visited a number of countries, along with John Kerry, US Secretary of State to convince them to fight climate change. However, more recently the Trump Administration pulled US out from the Paris agreement. Later, Biden Administration rejoined USA. Therefore, the confusion created by USA casts shadow upon their intentions of cutting carbon emissions. USA, being a superpower, needs to take concrete steps so that the other developed nations can follow.

In the middle east, as majority of the countries rely upon their hydrocarbons, a major shift towards the cleaner sources of energy will have adverse effects on their economies. Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of MBS have realised this and are investing in other sectors such as tourism etc to decrease their reliance on oil trade. Other hydrocarbon rich countries shall also step up and promote their other sources of income so that a fear of economic crisis does not prove to be a hurdle in their fight against climate change.

Therefore, in the light of the above discussion, it can safely be concluded that despite there being a need for raising awareness in some areas, the world is so short of awareness as to the catastrophic consequences which await us in the wake of climate change. While there being a lack of will in the developed nations and a constant struggle, to improve their economies, by the developing nations have kept any bright prospects in the fight against climate change at bay. It is high time that the global north uses its finances in research of more cleaner sources of energy and also help Global South in developing other sources than hydrocarbons, after all they have been using oil since long ago and thus share more responsibility with regard to the state of affairs relating to climate at the Present.