

THREE MONSTERS OF POLLUTION

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Each generation is trustee of the future generations. We being the best creation of nature have tremendous capacity to survive. Our forefathers In caves must have suffered a lot to make this world a better place to live. Now we are duty bound to protect this planet which sometimes appears disintegrating. They say the earth was created by a bang. It may end in the silance of Bhopal. When for the first time a picture of earth from space was published, it appeared like a lone, silent lifeless floating spaceship. The sensitive brains were shocked. Spaceship like any other machine is bound to end its fuel. If this fuel of earth Is finished, what will happen to it can be well anticipated.

Environment so far has been held to be a matter of conferences and conventions. Data show that there were about 300 multilateral treaties of which 200 have been signed after 1960. But the real danger is in the form of thinning of ozone layer; in the form of global warming; and In the form of acid rains. We can boast of Stockholm or Rio Summits but the three monsters of ozone layer damage; global warming and acid rains are still haunting the world. The International community is still not agreed as how to fight with these monsters. Acid rains, as we know, is a household expression today, was practically unknown a few years ago. The human comforts give rise to use of many chemicals and gases which get deposited in the atmosphere., It knows no national boundaries. In fact all the three monsters know no national boundary. Acid rain has been bone of contention among many Western countries. They describe It as chemical warfare. There has been nagging dispute between Canada and u. S. A. Trail Smelter arbitration between Canada and America took 13 years. The Tribunal held that no State has the right to use or permit the use of its territory in such a manner as to cause injury by fumes In or to the territory of another.

There are similar disputes between Scandinavian countries. Norway and Sweden claim that they are being environmentally bombed by U. K. and West Germany but still there is no International consensus as to how to control It. The Convention of Long Range Trans- boundary Air Pollution (LRT AP) was signed in 1979 but It Is criticized for its lack of tooth. Surprisingly Britain and U. S. A. still hold that too little is known for cause and effect of acid pollution to justify expenses of control.

Similar is the case with Global Warming or Green House effect. Climatologists claim that Global Warming will wipe out civilization within 500 years. In this case also the worst sufferer are poor nations. India suffered hottest

summer this year. Poor people cannot remain inside. They have to work outside for their livelihood. The result was that many people died. More than 30 Asia Pacific countries have blamed developed nations for this climatic change and have urged reduction in use of chemicals which cause Green House effect.

The third monster chlorofluorocarbon (C.F.C.) causes thinning of ozone layer. Ozone as we know is protector of radiation, a privilege given by nature to this planet alone. Other planets do not have this protection, therefore chances of life there are bleak. If the depletion of Ozone layer continues the end of the life on this planet is not far.

But the agony of humanity is that the International community is not ready to curb the use of C.F.C. consumption on one excuse or the other. The Montreal Protocol of 1988 is the latest convention. But this is against the spirit of development in poorer nations. They say that curbs should be on Western World which uses C.F.C. in its refrigerators and air-conditioners, why then the poorer nations alone should impose curbs. They demand, in lieu of it, transfer of technology and compensation. They justify their statement on the basis of principles of "Polluter Pays" and not "Victim Pays". India and China have not signed the protocol and emphasise on transfer of technology. Shifting burden to developing countries is in the vested interest of Western Countries because by imposing antipollution laws on poor nations they want to increase the cost of production in developing countries so that they may not compete with Western Countries and may be compelled to purchase Western goods because they will be cheaper. They feel that call for immediate cuts by the West is an attempt to prevent poorer nations from becoming principal players in Global economy. Their views appear to be true that it is the industrialized world growing rich while creating environmental crises and poorer nations are not responsible for current crises.

One thing is clear that these three monsters are leading the world to disaster.

In 1988 Government of Malta proposed a General Assembly Declaration proclaiming climate as part of common heritage of mankind. On Dec., 6, 1988 the General Assembly adopted a resolution, "Protection of Global climate for present and future generations of mankind". They recognised climate changes as common concern. In 1989 International meeting of legal and policy experts at Ottawa proposed "World Climate Trust Fund" to benefit developing countries.

All these proposals and conventions are toothless. At international level there is no Central Political Authority which can lay rulings binding to parties. If any country violates international convention it is a crime. We can not forget days when U. N. Assembly was trembling with the slogans against Apartheid policy in South Africa which was labelled as "Crimes against humanity." If one person is killed it is crime, If 2000 persons are killed in Bhopal it is 2000 times criminal. They have distributed compensation to victims but the law breakers

are still free and their hands are not cuffed. International community should sit and find out as to how these environmental crimes can be punished.

When they can declare Apartheid of South Africa as a "Crime against Humanity", why promotion of pollution can not be declared as crime against humanity? People were victorious In South Africa when white regime has been over thrown and replaced by Nelson Mendella's Govt. Similarly a popular movement can create an atmosphere for a conference of nations where It will be declared that causing pollutions is crime against humanity and that will be a background for creation of an international forum which will be able to punish such crimes, otherwise culprits of Bhopal shall remain moving free. Multinational Corporations are large private empires, a parallel state, but outside the control of state authorities or international organizations. Practically they are outside any control subordinate to common good of humanity. Even In a world that so cruelly witnessed its. 'Largest Industrial Peace Time Distater' in Bhopal the multinationals continue to escape subordination to the "common good of humanity." Now time has come to extend international human laws to M.N.Cs., so that they may not haunt innocent people like "Invisible man".

At this stage it Is desirable to deviate from environment topic to elaborate some points. Since 1981, nations of the world, particularly India, have been agitating for Right to Development. The land-mark event in extension of Human Rights occurred" on 4th Dec., 1986 when U. N. General Assembly adopted the declaration of the Right to Development. Primarily documents emphasise the importance of the this right to development between states and people but microscopic examination of the documents shows that "Right to development is a prerogative of both nations and individuals which make of nation. "If we enlarge those words the reflection is clear that poorer nations have a right t9 development which rich nations cannot deny. Therefore, rich nations must help us to give a healthier atmosphere. The non-fulfilment of this principle can be made a crime, if not penal, it can be a civil crime. Right to Development is again infringed by latest biotech In agriculture. The latest technology being gene-transplant in seeds and plants, Germplasm is the technology depending on plants of poorer nations. Canadian wheat contains gene from 14 countries, American cucumber has Indian and Burmese genes. Egypt, China and Ethopia have contributed to maintain barley production in Europe. American tomato canning Industry would have disappeared, were it not for constant induction of wild or primitive tomato from South American countries. Thus we can say South is 'gene rich" and north Is "crop rich". Gene can not be manufactured. Gene plasm requires a 'gene drain" from South to North. This adversely effects pre-existing plant varieties. India had 30,000 varieties of rice plant in the begining of the century. India will be left with only 15 varieties by the end of this century. Egypt which was home for onions for thousands of years now produces only one variety.

Thus crime against development may occur at national, regional or global level but if It is properly declared a crime, as was the case with Aparthied of South Africa we can well anticipate a new global movement to succeed like anti-aparthied movement giving a way to new international economic order. Similarly the latest hue and cry of Intellectual Property Rights is again pro North. If we are not permitted to have access to their technology in the name of their intellectual property rights, how South can progress. ?

Thus the cause of all these ailments, be it depletion of ozone layer; or global warming or acid rains, be it Infringement of right to develop, or be it a pseudo Intellectual Property Right, the cause is common which can be summed up in a single word and that word is "PROFIT". Profit out of every activity; profit so dear to the multinationals as to ignore the depletion of ozone layer, profit so dear to vested interest so as to leave the World warmer and accuse the poor countries that World is warming because they cook food for their large population; profit which is so dear to certain societies that they enter into unequal trade agreements exploiting the countries of South through their strict Intellectual Property Rights. A product costing 10 dollars can be sold to a needy country for 300 dollars. This margin of profit can be very encouraging by every economic standard but can it be justified on moral scales. ? What is the fun behind this theory of profit? Who invented it? A marginal profit is understandable but building empire by it, is against all the laws of nature. If the international community decides one day that this Draconian principle of huge profit is done away with the day is not far when the entire World will vibrate to the Vedic hymn of "वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्" ।

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