

# The Crisis of Global Climate Change and Sustainable Remedial Measures

## Deepening Crisis

Humanity today is confronted with a serious crisis of its survival into the third millennium. It is a multi-dimensional crisis that grips every aspect of our lives including our health and livelihood, ecological and environmental systems, patterns of human relationships, economy, technology and politics.

As a matter of fact the crisis began with the nuclear holocaust which destroyed the two cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on Aug 6 & 9 in 1945. It was a crisis of intellectual, moral and spiritual dimensions, a crisis of a scale and urgency unprecedented in recorded human history. It unleashed the wanton race for the stockpiling of tens of thousands of nuclear weapons enough to destroy the entire world several times. The planet's climate before the advent of Industrial Revolution was regulated by the 'blanket' of greenhouse gases naturally. The emissions of greenhouse gases increased tremendously with the acceleration of the process of industrialization and the testing of nuclear devices by superpowers and thickened the 'blanket' at an unprecedented rate. Though the era of cold war has ended, the stockpiles of nuclear arms remain intact. The nations which are in possession of these weapons of mass destruction are unwilling to part with them so that they may hold non-nuclear nations to ransom. The irony is that they want to retain the exclusive right of testing and manufacturing nuclear bombs and impose a ban on other nations to build atom bombs. They want all other non-nuclear nations to sign the treaty banning nuclear proliferation. I wonder if we can achieve the goal of a nuclear-free world if this type of hegemony of the nuclear nations persists. The rapid expansion of the global nuclear club and unsustainable development has caused the most dramatic change in atmosphere's composition adding to global warming at a formidable level.

Unfortunately we see rapid decadence in social and cultural values at global level. People are getting self-centered and very few of them think of the welfare of the people around them, let alone their concern for the future generation. Industrialization and advancement in scientific technology have, of course, made human life comfortable but the cost of this comfort is dreadful that it has also brought with it diseases that defy remedies, unprecedented pollution, street violence and above all shameless indulgence in immoral practices to grab resources from the face of the Mother Earth. Communal and ethnic violence are on the increase and Jehadi forces that indoctrinate youths to kill 'non-believers' and die for the sake of their 'Gods' which ironically enough exist only in their imagination have made life on the planet hellish and miserable. They are now trying to acquire nuclear weapons clandestinely to achieve their objective. This terror goes deeper than the fear of weapons themselves.

As though these unforeseen problems were not enough to punish humanity for its deviation from the path of righteousness, nature has given rise to a plethora of problems that may hasten its extinction. What makes us sad and melancholy today is that this extinction will not be brought about by nuclear war as was often feared but by environmental and ecological disaster that is gradually closing in on humankind. The latest review of the problem of the climate crisis by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has further added to our despair and fear. It concludes that the earth's climate has changed over the last century, that there is a new and stronger evidence that most of the warming is attributable to human activities, that because of greenhouse gas emissions, temperatures should continue to rise over the 21<sup>st</sup> century which will impact human life adversely. IPCC warns that if the earth's temperature continues to rise, it will further diminish the mountain snow pack and alter the seasonal availability of water. Sea level will rise. As a result many small island nations may vanish.

It is beyond doubt that human activities are causing huge pollution increasing the vulnerability of ecosystems. The fear that humans will continue to act irresponsibly despite the fear of extinction that looms large on our heads is reflected in these lines of a poem written by a 14 year old Canadian student 25 years ago:

Why even try :

the striving and struggle  
to be our best,  
would be in vain.

Why even try :

all our technology  
and advancements will destroy us,  
someday soon.

Why even try :

our family, our friends  
our language  
and culture  
gone with the push of a button.

Why even try :

if we have to live  
in fear of the end,  
of everything.

Why even try :

if we are probably going to die,  
anyway was prompted

At that time the fear in the child's mind by the caused by the possibility of an imminent nuclear holocaust but the fear as portrayed by the tiny mind is still real – it may

now be the fear of extinction on account of the rapid pace of the climate change and global warming. The crisis seems to be deepening.

### **Climate Change as Perceived by Us**

We feel that this unusual phenomenon of climate change sweeping the planet is a man-made disaster. It is the result of our unbridled lifestyle rooted in excessive consumption, exhibitionism, greed and desire for comfort at the cost of other species. It is true that man loves comfort. It is the innate trait of his nature. But if a human being acquires the means of comfort in a limited manner and if it doesn't harm other life forms that inhabit this planet, no one will be averse to it. But if his actions contribute to the magnitude of the problem that impacts all sections of humanity and becomes instrumental in wiping out species vitally important for our survival and for the harmonious balance of our ecosystem, it bodes ill for humanity. Our belief is that this challenge can be met if we go deeper into the root cause of the climate change. The scientists say that the climate crisis is being precipitated by excessive emissions of carbon dioxide and green house gases as a result of the unrestrained human activities including industrial processes, fossil fuel combustion and changes in land use such as deforestation. Continuation of green house gas emissions will result in additional warming with the current projection of global increase of 2.5 by 2100. We do not want to explain the technical aspects brought to light by scientists. They are already available in thousands of pages on websites and in print. We better turn to the question as to what are those human activities that are accelerating the climate crisis. The global increases in carbon dioxide concentration are due primarily to fossil fuel use and land-use while those of methane and nitrous oxide are primarily due to agriculture. We list the following human activities responsible for this crisis

1. Use of excessive automobiles by the citizens of industrialized nations.
2. Emission of greenhouse gases by industries which fulfill increasing human needs.
3. Shrinking forests to accommodate homeless population and for meeting the needs of industry.
4. Wiping of species for satisfying human lust.
5. Excessive use of coal and oil for producing energy.

### **Remedial Sustainable Measures**

The Kyoto Protocol (the climate change treaty 1997) is there to prevail upon nations to explore alternative options for sources of energy that may preserve our ecosystem and prevent further deterioration of climate crisis but a parallel mass movement is needed to educate the people about the possible ruinous effect on their life on account of their violent lifestyle.

His Holiness Acharya Mahapragya, the spiritual patron of ANUVIBHA is of the view that this problem is the by-product of unethical human behaviours, lack of education

and awareness among the people. The scientists say that nations must adapt themselves to climate change by switching over to technological options and alternative energy i.e. solar and wind energy. They also advocate behaviour change at individual level. In order to create mass awareness of this grave crisis Acharya Mahapragya has embarked on Ahimsa Yatra which focuses on voluntary acceptance of a code of conduct known as Anuvrat Code. In the course of his Yatra he inspires people to limit their food and water consumption, relinquish some of their comforts to save energy, abstain from cutting green trees and killing species that are useful for our survival. He says that mere volunteering to adhere to a code of conduct is not enough. In order to strengthen their commitment they must undergo training in nonviolence. He is of the view that training young people in ahimsa will prevent the increase in earth's temperature and will solve all our environmental and ecological problems.

Training in ahimsa consists of four essential ingredients

1. Conceptual Awareness of Ahimsa and the crisis that grips humanity
2. Change of Heart
3. Training of the Mind
4. Training in Fair Means of Livelihood

The course modules designed so far address all the problems that we face including the problem of climate change. Acharya Shri has established five nonviolence training centers in India known as Ahimsa Samvaaya Kendra which are organizing regular training for youths in nonviolence. He has not only confined his action-plan to students, children but he is also prevailing upon politicians to change their lifestyle in consonance with the spirit of the principles of Lord Mahavira, Lord Rama and the message embodied in the Gita. The Anuvrat Pledge is available on our website [www.anuvibha.in](http://www.anuvibha.in). If the youths, children and their parents listen to Acharya Mahapragya who has launched a worldwide campaign to create a culture of peace and nonviolence as a part of the programme of UN Decade of a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World, the challenge of the problem of climate change can be met effectively and a new era of peace, prosperity, an cooperation and co-existence will be ushered in.