

GLOBAL WARMING AND CLIMATE CHANGE

2003 was recorded as the hottest year in 150 years with the average world temperature being 0.45°C higher than the normal, reported the world meteorological organization. The ozone hole above Antarctica has reached an all time high, which accounts for the temperature increase world over. This news highlights the fact that global warming is a major problem today. A number of articles have appeared in newspapers and journals by prominent individuals, organisations and policy makers about the various contributors to this phenomenon. The media has lived up to its duty of reporting facts as they are and make the people aware of the lurking danger.

Apart from the reports that climate change and global warming are due to pollution, scientists have also come up with theories that say that the phenomenon may be natural or that the earth's core was the main source of heat and not human activities.

Some facts and figures as reported over the past year:

- The biggest ice cap in the arctic region, the Ward Hunt ice shelf broke into fragments as a result of global warming, reported NASA.
- More average shoreline in Fiji receding by half a foot every year.
- Adelie penguin populations in Antarctica shrink by 33%.
- 20- 30% of the world's reefs wiped out.

The above mentioned facts are the tip of the iceberg as far as disastrous effects of global warming.

Global warming and climatic changes on the rise.

Carbon dioxide and methane major green house gases.

Soot contributes to the effect.

Few scientists claim that the phenomenon is not solely man made but also natural.

Carbon dioxide is the major green house gas in the atmosphere leading to global warming and its content has been rising mainly due to burning of fossil fuels and expansive industrialization as claimed by top climate experts from USA.

Methane, which is 20 times more effective green house gas than carbon dioxide, is mainly from the large cattle population in Brazil, China, India and New Zealand etc. Efforts are on to device a new feed for the cattle population so that methane output can be reduced.

A group of institutions in USA are trying a new farming method called 'conservation tillage' where the sequestration property of plants is being utilized to reduce carbon dioxide content in the atmosphere.

NASA has also reported that soot is a major contributor to global warming as it forms a layer over ice preventing it from reflecting the sun rays. Soot contributes to about 25% of the total global heating.

Effects of global warming are visible in Tripura, a small state in northeast India, whose climate has undergone changes, which are not characteristic of the area.

New methods of farming tried to reduce CO₂ in the environment.

New feed for cattle to reduce methane emission from India, Brazil and New Zealand.

India worse effected by global warming also supported by TERI.

Ministers too voice concern.

Mercury pollution a threat.

Ministry of environment and forests funded studies to find out the impact of climate change in India and found that India will be worse affected by climate change, a claim also supported by Dr. R.K. Pachauri, director TERI.

As a result of climatic change diseases like malaria will appear in the form of an epidemic. Cyclones will be increased both in amplitude and frequency; glaciers

like Gangotri are shrinking leading to low water discharge in Ganga. A threat to the rich bio-diversity of India that the corals in Lakshwadeep will bleach and world heritage site of Sunderbans will be submerged. The infrastructure would demand high costs both in construction of new and retrofitting of the old.

Vidya stokes, the minister of science technology and environment of Himachal Pradesh, a state in India, issued a statement requesting the policy makers in the country to rise to the occasion and keep in mind the effects of climatic changes while forming policies.

Pollution due to mercury will have worsened effects. Mercury damages the brain and the nervous system and affects the memory.

A Goa based geologist from the geological oceanography division has predicted that important port cities in India like Kolkatta, Chennai and Mumbai will be submerged by 2020.

Few people also present a conflicting point of view. They agree that the human activities are responsible but not solely for global warming. Professor Ruddiman from university of Virginia, USA believes that it is a natural cycle, which took place before the last ice age too when the CO_2 levels had increased tremendously.

University of California had reported that the earth's core is a great source of heat due to radioactive potassium in the core. Hans Keppler, a German scientist also believes that the carbon in the earth too responsible for global warming.

Conflicting view of scientists.

A natural cycle occurred before last ice age too.

Carbon and Radioactive Potassium in the core also responsible.

Active sun too effects global warming.

Alternate sources and global attempts will slow down global warming.

Earth greener in 20 yrs.

Two professors from Germany and Finland too have the same views that the sun and its activity are likely to promote global warming.

Whatever be the reasons global warming is for real and Rakesh Bakshi, Vestas RRB India Ltd says that wind and water are the potential crisis solvers for now. Professors from university New York say along with this as a major project that should be undertaken and technology should be revamped to slow the process of global warming.

University of oxford in a joint program with Rutherford Appleton Laboratory and the US govt. are using super computers to try and chart accurate weather changes across the globe. The software is downloadable from the net and is an attempt to include the general public in the process.

To finish it on a happier note NASA has claimed that the earth is greener in the past 20 years due to global warming.

WWF-INDIA AS AN ENVIS CENTRE/NODE HAS BEEN KEEPING A TAB ON THE MEDIA ACTIVITY ON ENVIRONMENT RELATED ISSUES AND CARRIES OUT ANALYSIS ON DIFFERENT ISSUES IN MEDIA.

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