

## **“FACED WITH FOOD AND ENERGY CRISIS, HOW CAN SOCIETY IMPROVE ITS WELL-BEING?”**

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Energy and food are fundamental to human existence and therefore it should not come as a surprise that the way mankind have being using these resources produce the heart of many environmental problems that have emerged in recent years. As the population of the earth is flourishing different types of pollution are invading planet earth, but the emissions from the combustion of fuels in power stations and cars are probably the most worrying for most people, given the impact of air quality on health and the impact of flooding in certain parts of the world. More generally the use of fossil fuels such as coal, oil, gas and fertilisers is increasingly seen as having major global environmental impacts such as global warming and eutrofication. There are also major concerns over the risk of release of radioactive materials taking the example of Chernobyl in 1986 as these sources are the substructure in what many describe an unsustainable form of industrial society, as the environment is used as a free resource of energy and other materials and as a more or less infinite sink for wastes, with the ratio and measure of the ‘throughput’ from source to sink growing ever greater. To therefore investigate if society can improve its well being a further investigation is required in relevant topics that will enable an individual to understand its theories and plots.

### **FOOD CRISIS AND SOARING PRICES**

Food crisis is the beginning of most unfortunate events that strike within planet earth as experts have placed the blame on rising fuel costs, lower agricultural production, weather shocks, more meat consumption, and shifts to bio-fuel crops making the prices of each individual product to unexpectedly rise up to 120 %such as wheat and many products including rise have risen up to 75% while poor families spend up to 80% of their budget to food and according to the world bank an estimated 100 million people have fallen into poverty in the last 2 years making soaring prices to stay high up until 2015 and this is only the beginning sooner or later future generations will face the impact of the water crisis as well. The solutions to this problem are the most typical answers that every human being knows firstly people need to give equal rights in trading with third world countries like Latin America or Asia as suggested by humanitarian aid and secondly developed countries should cancel out all debts to these developing countries as this prevents them getting the correct equipment to improve yield, therefore making farmers in those regions to migrate into cities and live in poverty until death comes to them.

### **TECHNOLOGY, SOCIETY AND BASIC ENERGY CONCEPTS**

Humans have developed a capacity over the centuries to create and use tools or the term that is used in the information age known as technology. Technology is there therefore to provide the means for modifying the natural environment for human purposes by providing basic requirements like shelter, food, warm, communications and consumer products and services (ELLIOT 2003).

However in order to understand technology, certain energy concepts must be defined by humans like the expression of quantities of energy provided by the two different United States systems and the British system. Nevertheless energy resources are obvious examples of limited resources which

cause major impacts. As outlined before the most indisputable environmental impacts are of mining for coal and drilling for oil and gas and distributing the resultant fuels to the point of use (WENDELL 2000). These in return generate a range of harmful gases and other wastes taking the example of carbon dioxide a gas that is thought by scientists to play a key role in the greenhouse 'global warming' and climate change. This makes things to have a significant fear as failure in acting now on climate change could mean the Amazon rainforest is devastated, large sections of the global community go short of food and water and many low lying coastal areas will be flooded making also deadly insect-borne diseases such as malaria to spread across the world. This will not only affect developing countries or tropical areas, it could affect the Gulf Stream due to the melting of the polar ice caps which could result in average temperatures in the UK falling by around 10 °C(ELLIOT 2003).

Leading to the main issue of environmental sustainability, in other words can the planets ecosystem survive the increasing levels of human technological and economic activity?

This could be could be summoned up by radical critics, as of current patterns of energy and resource which go beyond just the issue of environmental impacts and ecosystem disruption. By taking into account the way human beings are going to live. As for them being environmentally unsustainable makes an unwholesome and unethical approach to life. On the other hand other critics will go even further by challenging the whole industrial project and the concept of development like marginalising the poor and disrupting the ecosystem. Clearly if these views are left aside from a number of perspectives the interaction between technology, the environment and society is troubled. This could be explained by looking at certain model that involves human and environmental interactions, when the model is complete there are three conflicting human groups, producers, consumers and investors or shareholders which are locked into economical conflict. Seeing the other side the environment is able to constrain human activities by imposing costs on them if key natural processes are disturbed, making human life unviable(ELLIOT 2003). Does this mean alternative technology will take its toll? Many believed including a man named Dickinson that society determined technology, meaning you would require social change first. For others however alternative technologies simply provide a way of escaping from society. In contrast there has been some enthusiasm for a return to the idea of using nuclear power, since nuclear plants do not generate carbon dioxide gas, but this will make a significant impact and it will be large in scale and only some countries like France, Japan, China and Korea and even the USA reinforce the idea while the rest of the world see it as a failed option due to economic problems. Ever since the 1973-74 energy crisis research on solar power and other forms of renewable energy like sunlight, winds, waves, biomass wastes and tides even energy crops has expanded and has led to some relatively large scale deployments. For example, by 2002 there were around 31 gigawatts of wind turbine generating capacity in place around the world (ELLIOT 2003).

Attempts have been made by certain governments to promote the development of renewable and conservation by the use of financial incentives and there have also been proposals by the European Commission for carbon taxes that would penalise fossil fuel use and hence stimulate alternative energy developments. But not everyone is convinced that the problem of developing a sustainable energy system can be resolved by just throwing money at technology or by imposing broad taxes, what is mainly needed is a overall strategy to guide energy developments. Correspondingly the change over to renewable would take at least a century and it will have local impacts such as visual intrusion or disruption of local ecosystems. So there is a strong case just on resource grounds, for

using the remaining fossil fuels as efficiently as possible. However the first point to note is that the extraction of energy from natural energy flows does not significantly affect the overall thermal balance of the planet. In the same way in choosing, developing and deploying new energy technologies there is a need to avoid the use of fuels which will run out, improve the efficiency of energy generation and utilisation as much as possible and avoid extracting more energy from natural flows than the local impacts against global environmental benefits of technology(ELLIOT 2003).

Energy saving is only part of the aim, a new goal is trying to be achieved which is of green product design and clean technology development, involving the reduction of pollution, toxic emissions and environmental impacts generally. Examples include the green car where electricity is applied but to truly resolve these problems it would need overall changes in the transport system, for example more public transport, more walking and cycling and not to mention the most important thing recycling especially products like paper, plastic, glass and garden material as this will effectively reduce pollution and it will reduce rubbish waste being set on fire. That might also imply changes in living and working patterns by using more telecommunications and new spatial patterns of residential, commercial and industrial location so that access to work is less reliant on the car. There is a need for advice agencies to provide information to consumers so that grand schemes stimulate uptake, as there is a need for economic frameworks to allow more realistic comparisons to be made between the benefits of investing in new technologies opposing the investigation made in new supply technologies.

Only some technical fixes can be useful and even important in the future, but the only long term solution to global warming is to stop burning fossil fuels and find other more sustainable ways of meeting energy needs. In a presentation however on alternative technology, radical changes in lifestyle were referred but during the conference they realised that this concept will threaten some people and before becoming more widely acceptable the new types of living would probably have to be pioneered on the fringes of society as not everyone will be prepared to go to such extremes, because for most of us life involves relatively conventional careers and communities. But now changes are still occurring as contemporary economic pressures seem to be forcing changes in family and community. The central issue therefore for the future is whether a widely new acceptable new awareness can emerge from the complex social and political process of ideological renewal and if mankind can act before disaster strikes, due to the fact that some people might not change their ideas soon enough making the future for future generations grim. Looking at the other side some technological optimists or new age thinkers believe that the future can be resolved not by just natural systems but by cybernetic 'intelligent computers', some scientists even believe in re-engineering embryos to improve human mental capacities(ELLIOT 2003).

Looking at other extremes some people ask the question whether there is a need to change. But the realistic suggestion is that people should take the stewardship role in relation to manage the global ecosystem since it has disturbed earth's natural functions to such extent that it cannot sustain itself without our intervention. Still new age thinkers believe that mankind should abandon all pretence of being able to control the situation leaving everything to be resolved by the global ecosystem known as the form of Gaia, in this case nature knows best even if the result for mankind will not be beneficial.

## REFERENCES

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