

It is often said that little drops of water make a mighty ocean. Such is the case where little acts of change reflect massively on a big picture. This approach is one which society must take in order to seek to improve its well being; faced with today's food and energy crisis.

Almost every time a solution to this crisis has been contemplated, the focus has been on Governments. International humanitarian organization, Action Against Hunger, in June 2008 released its measures for the G8's consideration in addressing the global crisis. It admonished the G8 to shoulder much of the responsibility for current global conditions and asked them to take active steps to alleviate the problem. But there is just so much Governments can do. Responsibility must be shared and a shift must now be made towards society. Society may not be able to fix the problem but it certainly needs to play its own part for a chance at not just survival but improved living. Two major areas that can be checked quite easily without huge investments in funds are: waste and procreation. If society sees the control of these factors as a massive influence and engages in actively pursuing them, then the goal may be heavily impacted upon.

Food waste in the UK is a major cause for concern. The Waste And Resources Action Programme reports that a third of the food bought in the UK is thrown away.

Technically, this implies that the food produced for the 60 million people in Britain could be reaching 20 million more elsewhere and that British households could be saving a third of their grocery shopping money for use on other things. It may also imply that less food could be produced annually resulting in natural resources being tapped less and therefore stretched for longer. This could also see us saving on the amount of money Britain spends on waste disposal annually.

As for energy, the Institute of Mechanical Engineers believes that household waste can be used to produce a fifth of Britain's energy needs. Still a significant amount can be saved by curbing waste. Lights and appliances left on when not in use contribute to energy waste in the UK. Especially in the City of London, a high number of lights and appliances are left permanently on in office buildings outside of work hours. If electricity waste is minimised then true energy needs will quite easily be established and Britain can now produce less energy for its actual needs.

Households stand to gain a lot from cutting down on their food and energy waste. Saving on their grocery budget and their electricity bills, they are able to stretch their incomes a little further in these turbulent times.

The key word here is: Awareness. Britain needs to be made aware about how individual behaviour impacts on society as a whole. From toddlers to pensioners everyone must understand the extent of the crisis and how their bit makes things better for them and everyone else.

From the procreation side of things, Professor S.Gopalakrishnan of the Department of Community Medicine at Stanley Medical College in India is convinced that slowing population growth will help improve living standards and buy time to protect natural resources. He reports that in most developing countries population has been growing faster than food supplies. Giving an energy perspective, Chief Executive of Exxon Mobil, Mr. Tillerson claims that to quite a large extent, aspirations of people in developing countries are creating a surge in the demand for energy. Noting these two scenarios, if a check is placed on procreation, population growth can be partially controlled to place less demand on these sources. This is not a suggestion to enforce a policy like the Chinese one-child policy but a call to see family planning as a means to avoid a decline in living standards in these times. Families must think more seriously about family planning and what effects it will have on their current living conditions.

Although there have been a number of speculations and conspiracy theories regarding its origin, what is important is that the crisis is real and we need to work out how to survive these times. The suggestions given may appear overly simple in the light of genetically modified crops and wind farms, but they will produce immediate and medium term consequences which may continue to birth positive results. Adopting these changes to our everyday living would see us coping at least a little better. Minimising waste will not only reflect on our disposable incomes it will also impact positively on our environment. Also, with proper family planning we avoid unmanageable additional responsibilities which will be extremely daunting in these times. In taking on these changes, society will find itself better placed to thrive amidst these crises.

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