

## **FACED WITH A FOOD & ENERGY CRISIS, HOW CAN SOCIETY IMPROVE ITS WELL-BEING?**

### **SUMMARY:**

The recent food and energy crisis has been haunting the entire world but its effects are far more pronounced in the developing countries. It is called per capita energy consumption. It badly jolted the developing countries. My country is a poor country. The well being of a society lies in the political situation of a given country. The government should be facilitating such researches to cope with food crisis. Rising oil prices forced many countries to work for bio fuels to ensure energy security to their countries. In a way to overcome energy crisis a new crisis was fueled.

The strategies that societies and countries must adopt to overcome food and energy crisis: general public awareness, technological advancements, solar and wind energy, and Investment in power generating fields.

### **ESSAY:**

The recent food and energy crisis has been haunting the entire world but its effects are far more pronounced in the developing countries. I for one am a witness for results it has, being a citizen of a developing country Pakistan. Food inflation in my part of the world has shot up to 27% in December 2008 alone for a country where 35% of people live in poverty and majority of them earning less than \$1 a day. This 27% food inflation can only result in acute hunger and starvation.

Energy crisis has been wrecking its own havoc upon the world. A few years ago the health of an economy was gauged by per capita income or per capita consumption. Today we have a new definition added for gauging well being of a society. It is called per capita energy consumption. Energy consumption is directly proportional to the growth of the economy. The more energy consumed the better is the economic growth. And we all know that economic growth benefits societies and the units of societies that are the individuals. When the oil prices shot up to the dizzying heights it shook the developed countries. It badly jolted the developing countries. As mentioned before being a citizen of a developing country Pakistan I was a witness to it. Rising energy demands and higher oil import bills has pushed the budget deficits of countries like Pakistan to new heights. Twelve hours of average power shut down has led to closure of thousands of mills and factories around the country, leaving numerous jobless without any pension and unemployment benefits. Clearly in my society one gets to see many "what shouldn't-have-been". It's in our kind of society where one gets to see all the gaps and holes in our government, policies, individual conduct and consequently collective conduct. My suggestions therefore result primarily from my own observations of the society I live in.

I remember it was from my marketing course that I first learned about proactive and reactive strategies and plans. Companies that plan well ahead are more likely to succeed and sustain their growth. Such companies can react better towards crisis like situations. Societies I believe are no more different. Societies that plan well ahead will most probably provide better for them and would easily tackle and un towards situations.

For a society's prosperity in the long run its every individual should be well groomed and educated. So that he can play his due part in extending the well being of the society on the whole. This is the proactive strategy I was talking about. "Educating your masses from the grassroots level. Let there be doctors, engineers and scientists who would help steer their society out of danger. It's the scientists and the engineers who would have to come up with new and innovative ideas. It's these same people who would be able to give new ideas as to how to produce more energy and where to produce more energy. There should crop scientists who would be able to come up with seed varieties that give more yield which are resistant to diseases and pests. So in any situation like the recent food and energy crisis it's the same units of the society, the same individuals who has been groomed and educated and who would steer their societies out of crisis like situation".

In my part of the world the concept of necessity of planning and implementations of plans is seriously lacking. My country is a poor country. Economical underdevelopment has bred many evils in my society. Poverty has been largely responsible for the illiteracy, lack of civic sense and absence of good governance.

Illiteracy has been the biggest evil and has been the cause of corrupt and incompetent government. Lack of accountability and lack of awareness of political rights have only helped in facilitating the sustenance of these corrupt governments. The well being of a society lies in the political situation of a given country. A good political leadership will ensure that better and concrete steps are taken to deal with any crisis including the pressing ones like that of food and energy crisis. Our government has been squandering taxpayers' money on ill-conceived plans and projects that never see the day of light. A government is responsible for the judicious use of a country's resources. But the developing countries have some serious issues such as the political unrest that prevents government from completing their food and energy projects so as to cater to their public needs. This political unrest also gives way to a technological block that doesn't allow societies to freely develop and create new means of manipulating their resources.

Crisis can hit anyone what counts is how well one is prepared for it and how well one can cope with it. This is where the reactive strategy and planning comes in. Reactions in my part of the world to the recent food and energy crisis have been pure panic. The poor of this country suffered the most. Our incompetent government couldn't handle it. Pakistan is an agricultural country and yet we are not self sufficient in food. We had no buffer stock of food grain since the government always relied on importing food grains from international markets instead of focusing on attaining self-sufficiency in food and agricultural production. More and more research is needed to produce high yielding and nutritious food items. The government should be facilitating such researches to cope with food crisis. More and more subsidies should be provided to the farmers. Subsidies need to be given on agricultural machines and equipments. More practical knowledge should be imparted to farmers to effectively produce, store and utilize food items.

This is the time when alternative energy resources are invested in. Nature has provided us with many sources that can be used with the right tools and equipments. Energy can be effectively procured from wind, sunlight, methane gas from waste materials etc. The wind and solar energy is comparatively very cheap, environment friendly and a very good source of energy. It's during these times when scientists and entrepreneurs need to be encouraged and helped to come up with new ideas. The government should provide the utmost to promising ideas and innovations. It is worth mentioning here that

ideas and innovations proposed should not have any adverse effect near to long term effects. One of the main reasons of food inflation in the international market has been due to increase in production of bio fuels from food grains and oil seed by USA and EU. Rising oil prices forced many countries to work for bio fuels to ensure energy security to their countries. In many countries including Pakistan and even the EU (European Union) this food inflation was the main cause of increase in overall inflation. In a way to overcome energy crisis a new crisis was fueled.

The strategies that societies and countries must adopt to overcome food and energy crisis: 1. A general public awareness about judicious use of food and energy, 2. Research, break through and technological advancements, 3. Cheaper alternatives such as solar and wind energy and better yielding crop varieties, 4. Investment in power generating fields such as oil exploration in seas, deserts, nuclear energy generation and brining not cultivable areas under cultivation through scientific techniques.