

World Environment Day 2014 *Raise Your Voice Not the Sea Level*

**Seminar on
Political Economy of Climate Change**
Date: 19 June 2014 Venue: The Daily *Purbanchal* Dialogue Center
Khulna

REPORT



Submitted by

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Background

Political economy of climate change is an approach that applies the political economy thinking of collective or political processes to study the critical issues surrounding the decision-making on climate change. As the issue of climate change reaching the top of international agenda, the complexity of the environmental problem in combination with various other social political challenges have put great pressures on the scholars to explore a better understanding of the multiple actors and influencing factors that affect the climate change negotiation and to seek more effective solutions to tackle climate change. Analyzing these issues from a political economy perspective helps to explain the complex interactions between different stakeholders in respond to climate change impacts and provides broader opportunities to achieve better implementation of climate change policies.

There are a number of policies that governments might consider in response to global warming. The assessment of such policies involves the economics of global warming. Global warming is a long-term problem. One of the most important greenhouse gases is carbon dioxide. Around 20% of carbon dioxide which is emitted due to human activities can remain in the atmosphere for many thousands of years. The long time-scales and uncertainty associated with global warming has led analysts to develop "scenario" of future environmental, social and economic changes. These scenarios can help governments understand the potential consequences of their decisions.

The impacts of climate change include the loss of biodiversity, sea level rise increased frequency and severity of some extreme weather events, and acidification of the oceans. Economists have attempted to quantify these impacts in monetary terms, but these assessments can be controversial. The two main policy responses to global warming are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (climate change mitigation) and adaptation to the impacts of global warming (by building levees in response to sea level rise). Another policy response which has recently received greater attention is geo engineering of the climate system (e.g. injecting aerosols into the atmosphere to reflect sunlight away from the Earth's surface).

One of the responses to the uncertainties of global warming is to adopt a strategy of sequential decision making. This strategy recognizes that decisions on global warming need to be made with incomplete information, and those decisions in the near-term will have potentially long term impact. Governments might choose to use risk management as part of their policy response to global warming. For instance, a risk-based approach can be applied to climate impacts which are difficult to quantify in economic terms, e.g., the impacts of global warming on indigenous peoples.

Analysts have assessed global warming in relation to sustainable development. Sustainable development considers how future generations might be affected by the actions of the current generation. In some areas, policies designed to address global warming may contribute positively towards other development objectives. In other areas, the cost of global warming policies may divert resources away from other socially and environmentally beneficial investments (the opportunity cost of climate change policy).

Despite the inherently political nature of international negotiations on climate change, much of the theory, debate, evidence-gathering and implementation linking climate change and development assume a largely apolitical and linear policy process. As the issue continues to dominate agendas, it is timely to propose a new political economy of climate change and development in which explicit attention is given to the way that ideas, power and resources are conceptualized, negotiated and implemented by different groups at different scales.

We argue that in balancing effectiveness, efficiency and equity, climate change initiatives must explicitly recognize the political economy of their inputs, processes and outcomes. Political economy is defined here as the processes by which ideas, power and resources are conceptualized, negotiated and implemented by different groups at different scales. In applying this definition to climate change and development, we broaden the analysis from state-focused environmental politics to encompass interactions between the state, non-state actors. The growing importance of climate change in the development arena and the frequent assumption of linear policymaking and apolitical, techno-managerial solutions make the development of a new political economy emphasis vital to determining efficient, equitable and effective responses.

Description of the seminar

A day long Seminar on Political Economy of Climate Change was organized at 19 June 2014 in the Daily Purbanchal Dialogue Center by Initiative for Right View and Bahirab River Area Water Partnership with the support of Bangladesh Water Partnership. Dr. Tarun Kanti Sikter, Director, Department of Environment was present as Chief Guest and Anwarul Quadir, Executive Director; Sundorban Academy was present as special guest. The paper was presented by Professor Dr. Shahnewaz Nazimuddin Ahmed, Khulna University. The seminar was chaired and facilitated by Gourango Nandy, Sr, reporter, Kaler Kantho.



At the very beginning all the participants honored the departed soul of the late Advocate Firoz Ahmend, conveynor, Bahirab River Area Water Partnership keeping one minute's silence.

On behalf of the organizers marina Juthi delivered the inaugural speeches. In her inaugural speeches she welcomed and expressed thanks to honorable guests and participants of the seminar on behalf of Bangladesh Water Partnership and Initiative for Right View (IRV). She expressed her gratitude to all level of participants like journalists, Civil Societies representatives, Academicians, Individuals, Government officials and NGOs representatives have present in this rainy morning. Like any other developing country Bangladesh has been suffering and facing vulnerable situation due to climate change. But today I don't talk about climate change only. There are many experienced participants who will share their opinion. From the very begining of my speach I like to remember and pay homage to environmentalist and freedom fighter late Asraf-ul-Alam Tutu and freedom fighter late Advocate.Firoz Ahmed. I learned about climate change from Ashraf-ul-Alm Tutu since 2002. In this I also enriched my self by reading Ad. Firoz Ahmed's article *Kalabogi to Cancun*. They passed away from us. But it is our responsibility to carry forward their long cherished incomplete activities. You know that Advocate Firoz Ahmed was the Convener of Citizen Manch for Conservation of Coastal Environment. I request you all and hope that from next year with collaboration of all can observe the World Environment Day under the banner of Citizen Manch.



After that Professor Dr. Shahnewaz Nazimuddin Ahmed, Khulna University presented his paper on **Political Economy of Climate Change and its impact on Developing Country**. At the very beginning he portrayed the unequal world system. How rich countries are dominating the world decade after decade. After the Second World War whole political economy of the world had changed. In stead of war they are using the economy capturing the countries sovereignty. Colonizing the weak countries they extract natural resource following no mercy to nature. Now a day the world reached it top of development by destroying environment. On of the out put of this destruction is climate change.



Now a day's whole world has been facing climate change effect. World is balance less due to natural and man made initiatives. The intensively of natural disaster like drought, cyclone, flood, earth quack, river erosion, reduction of under ground water level, erotic rainfall has been increasing.

He shared that in the last 100 years the sea level has been raised 15 cm. to 25 cm. which was 10 time higher from the last 300 years. Environmental scientists apprehended that if this increase goes on in the next decade the seal level will be raised 30cm to 40 cm. Due to global warming every year 5 lakh people will die till 2030. 10 percent of people of the planate will face extreme natural calamity.

Unconscious Human development activities make risk for agriculture, forestry, fisheries resources and biodiversity. The rapid climate change process will made this risk more acute. We have not enough time. We need to raise our voice. We should take initiative to reduce the emotion of harmful gases.

After that he discussed on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and "Conference of the Parties" – COPs). On 12 June 1992, 154 nations signed the UNFCCC, that upon ratification committed signatories' governments to reduce atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases with the goal of "preventing dangerous anthropogenic interference with Earth's climate system". This commitment would require substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (see the later section, "Sabilization of green" Stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations".

After the signing of the UNFCCC treaty, Parties to the UNFCCC have met at conferences ("Conference of the Parties" – COPs) to discuss how to achieve the treaty's aims. The first UNFCCC Conference of Parties took place in March 1995 in Berlin, Germany. It voiced concerns about the adequacy of countries' abilities to meet commitments under the Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI). He discussed that the last COP was organized on 2013 at Poland. As part of the Bali Action Plan, adopted in 2007, all developed country Parties have agreed to "quantify emission limitation and reduction objectives, while ensuring the comparability of efforts among them, taking into account differences in their national circumstances. As part of the 2009 Copenhagen negotiations, a number of countries produced the Copenhagen Accord. The Accord states that global warming should be limited to below 2.0 °C (3.6 °F). This may be strengthened in 2015 with a target to limit warming to below 1.5 °C. The Accord does not specify what the baseline is for these temperature targets (relative to pre-industrial or 1990 temperatures). According to the UNFCCC, these targets are relative to pre-industrial temperatures. He shared the decision of the entire 19 COP from 1995 to 2013.

Open Discussion

In the open discussion Mahfuzur Rahman Mukul, Divisional Coordinator shared that we should consider both economic and political perspective of climate change. We should also consider the international and national situation. Sunderban is very important for carbon trading. The market of carbon trading is now pessimistic. Who will take the responsibility of sea level rise? Not considering the future we are importing battery driven vehicle, constructing jik- jak brick knell. Developing countries like India, Brasil and China are under pressure to reduce carbon. So they are seeking scope to divert this pressure. India is going to establish coal project in collaboration with Bangladesh to avoid the pressure



Zakia Akhter Hossain emphasised on people's mobilisation and movement. She recalled the contribution of Advocate Firoz Ahmed for the environment conservation of the south west coastal region. He can take the leading role against any misdeeds against environment. The coal project at Rampal will be harmful for Khulna. Wind of the khulna come from the south of the country where sunderban is situated. It the coal project establish there wind will be polluted and we will be affected. We are against establishment of any industries and factories in our south. Double stand position is not good.



Ashok Kumar Shaha, Coordinator, BLAST, Khulna Unit shared that as industrialized country India and China will not reduce producing carbon. Gradually talk about climate change is reducing. We can understand that the developed countries will not agree to reduce carbon emission. Developing countries should raise their voice. Lobby for compensation is going on. Climate change is effecting all over the world. We observed that Europe also experiencing climate change effect. Developing countries like Bangladesh also severely affected by climate change. Agricultural production is reducing. Salinity is increasing. Bangladesh is trying to be reached as mid income country. Its industry is growing. If Padma Bridge is constructed lot of industry will be develop in the south west coastal region of Bangladesh. The coal project for producing electricity at Rampal will destroy the environment of the coastal areas.



Tapan Kumar Roy, General Secretary, National Awami Party (NAP), Khulna, said that governance is very important. Environment department should be stricter to give any permission to establish any factory or brick kiln. More transparency and accountability of concerned authority can help protecting environment. Padma Bridge will be a prospect for Khulna. It will increase communication facilities that help increasing industries in these areas which will open the job opportunities.



H. M Sahadat, President Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) Khulna expressed that we are destroying environment of profit we are not considering the sustainability. Padma Bridge will be constructed. We need coal based electricity project. But we should consider environment establishing these infrastructure. We need electricity but it should be established in appropriate places.



Palash kanti Haldar, Project Officer, Concern world wide, Khulna said that Bangladesh is in good position for climate negotiation. In comparison community has better knowledge regarding adaptation. But in perspective of research India is in progress. Regional coordination among Asian countries is important for climate negotiation. Due to climate change Koyra has been suffering from water logging. Farmers of Maharajapur did not cultivate rice. Fund for compensation should be distributed equally.



S.M Salim Bulbul, Executive Director, Conscience shared that every thing is included with economy as well as with politics. Research is important. For negotiation research findings should be the evidence. National level advocacy, lobby and consultation are important. We should be patriotic.



Jahangir Alam Lecturer, Phultala Girls collage expressed that developed countries are creating the climate change crisis. The international initiative is pessimistic to solve climate crisis. Political initiative is necessary to solve the problem. Appropriate representatives should be selected for negotiation. Political contentious is very important. Developed countries are more or less united for their interest. Developing countries should be united to demand their right share.



Gautam Kundu, Lecturer, Phultala Girls collage shared that people of the developing country cannot understand. We need to make them aware and raise their voice for demanding justice. Movement is necessary. We will be affected if coal project established at Rampal. We all know that. Some groups are trying to make aware about the negetive effect of the project but we are unable to include mass people for this initiative. We also protested against brining water from Phultala to Khulna. This project will decertify the fertile Phultala.



Sanjit Sarkar, Unit manager, DSK shared that it is important to make people aware about climate change through disseminating information and capacity building.



Advocate Kaniz Fatima Amin, shared that political leaders and partcles should be aware and raise their voice for the interest of the common people and also for the interest of the country.



Khandakar Shawkat Ali, President Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Narail District expressed that global worming increase the sea level. We apprehended that if this trend of sea level rise goes on most part of Bangladesh will go under water. Climate change hampering our agriculture. Crop production reduced drastically. Rivers are dying. We have no water. We are losing sweet water from the upstream. Increasing saline water destroying our mangrove forest. Political parties should come forward to help the community.



As special guest **Anwarul Quadir**, Executive Director; Sundorban shared that we have enough food to feed our country but we have not enough arrangement to quench the greed. He said that problem is not in sea level rise, problem in rising belly. The inequality between north and south is increasing. Coal project in Rampal was not necessary if we do not need electricity. We do not need brick knell if we live in bamboo and nipper leaf made houses. In the 90th century people of the Somalia experienced famine. In that time rat destroyed 400 million tans of grain. Insufficient food is not crisis, problem is in unequal distribution. This is called political economy. We should address the root. Environment and development cannot go side by side. Development activities more or less destroy environment. If we can control our population we can help conserving environment.



Not considering sustainable development we destroyed our environment introducing polder system in late 60s. We introduced shrimp farming in water logged polders areas. Climate change also helping destroying our nature. We should demand compensation for the herm in which we have no contribution. There are two kind of fund one is reliance and other is trust fund. We also not are utilizing the fund properly.

Carbon trading is related with reduction. Country to country CDM is forming. Carbon trading is reducing. Present rate of 1 ton is 4-5 dollar. Government is losing their interest to do this business. Bangladesh has the opportunity to do business for Sundarbans. Everything is happening for profit and greed. The land formation of this area is going on. Farraka Barrage reduced the upstream flow of water. The northern part of Bangladesh is not link with Farraka but why their environment is deteriorating.

Chief guest Dr. Tarun Kanti Sikter, Director, Department of Environment agreed with all the discussion. Increased population is one of the causes of the destruction. We hope that larger area then sundear bon will rise. If temperature raise up to 60% production of rice will increase. We should go with the global system. We should raise our voice. We are only talking about the Rampal coal project but we did not say anything about Padma Bridge. Urgently we should conserve the inter environment. Development initiative destroys environment. Individual initiative for conservation of environment is necessary.



As chair and facilitator Gourango Nandy, Sr, Reporter, Kaler Kantho concluded the seminar by giving thanks to all



Recommendations

- National level appropriate representatives should be selected for proper bargaining for climate deal
- Proper evidence of climate change loss should be find out through research and based on that evidence bargaining will be conducted in global level
- Developed countries should be bound to provide compensation and product support.
- The compensation should be provided directly to the affected country.
- There should be no intermediate between this compensation deals.
- We should not only aware about the reduction of carbon but also raise our voice against tricks of carbon business
- effected community, civil society voices should included in planning