

From the Editorial Desk....

"The environment is everything that isn't me". – Albert Einstein

Almost a century ago Einstein understood the essence of the problem of environmental damage and related sustainability challenges. And again a few years back the same was realized in the theme for World Environment Day 2012: "Green Economy: Does it include you?"

Environment and environmental products possibly present the most apt example of the 'free-rider' problem. Unless the problem is addressed at each level: international and domestic, government and private, society and individual, as producer or consumer, rich or poor it is hardly likely that it can be tackled. Either the issue has to be freed from being of the 'free rider' category or it has to be handled effectively like other such cases by state provision. Easier said than done.

Environmental challenges have hit the world economies in an all pervasive manner. Today there is hardly any region or living species that is not adversely affected by the changes in climate that are a consequence of the problems of global warming, pollution of air, water and land. In spite of continuous and significant technological advancements meteorological predictions are more inaccurate as historical patterns are broken; increasing the perils of natural disasters. Respected scientific organizations such as the National Academy of Science, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and World Meteorological Association (WMO) have all identified climate change as an urgent, real threat **caused primarily by human activity**.

"The need for urgent action to address climate change is now indisputable." National Academy of Science.

Burning fossil fuels, such as coal, oil and natural gas, to generate energy, deforestation to create infrastructure for meeting the needs of mankind and economic progress are widely recognized to result in deleterious environmental effects. These are however, the natural economic outcomes and not the cause. It is known that the bursting populations and/or the higher standards of living, can read as materialism and consumerism, in many places across the world create the economic need to undertake these 'non-sustainable' activities.

While it may be too late to reverse those decisions and events that have already resulted in threat to survival of life on this planet, but as we attempt to adopt 'sustainability' in our regulatory mechanisms it is essential to appreciate that to make a meaningful impact on this global problem a change in thinking, lifestyle preferences and habits at the individual level are also, required.

It is now high time that we acknowledge that mechanisms towards economic sustainability are not enough. We must focus on the ecological perspective, that is: sustainability must involve limits on population and consumption levels. While humans may appear to evade them for a time, they must ultimately accept the boundaries of a finite planet.

We at JRIM dedicate this issue to the cause of environmental protection. We urge you to own this planet. It is ours and it is our responsibility to keep it alive.

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