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The Global Warming Scenario, Thema 2005, pp. 219

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The Global Warming Scenario is a collection of sixteen essays on different aspects of much talked of climatic change, individually dated and written between November 2003 and January 2005, and rearranged in a logical sequence for the book. One may expect under this title a technical book on climatology. This is not the case. The author, a social scientist, has keenly studied the ongoing discussions, conflicting ideas, different perceptions and future projections related to global warming. The purpose of his book is to broaden the understanding of the general reader on the far reaching implications of a changing environment and enlighten him on the complex political and economic issues involved.

Chakraborty based his essays on websites, journals like *Science*, conference publications etc.; these references are given in the text itself, enabling the reader to consult a number of relevant websites. However, one does not find an index or bibliography at the end of the book nor illustrations within the body of the text. The book is written in an easily readable, sometimes colloquial language and uses appropriate comparisons to underline certain facts or to explain them to the general reader. Each essay has a number of subtopics which are also listed in the contents.

More than half the number of essays deal with physical aspects of global warming encompassing themes like greenhouse gases, ocean salinity, polar ice shelves, shrinking glaciers, endangered rainforests, declining biodiversity, pollution and likely biological response to these changes in the global weather system. Scientific facts have been simplified to make them understandable to the general reader and thus have sometimes got blurred. The longest chapter in this book is devoted to 'Protecting Agriculture'. It starts with the question, what if the Kyoto Protocol is suspended and the desired reduction in greenhouse gases is not achieved? It then looks for alternatives to face globally rising temperatures or changed rainfall pattern and discusses appropriate adaptation strategies in the agricultural sector. The discussion throws light on possible changes in the nutritive value of grains as a result of lower nitrogen levels in faster growing plants, shortfalls in the world grain production, rising prices and the benefits of agro-forestry.

The other group of essays deals with planning strategies like water harvesting and pollution control, and with the economic and political implications of global warming. This includes five essays which critically examine the Kyoto Protocol, like the stand

taken by different nations, and especially the role of Russia, the tasks facing India, the question of the ratification of the Protocol, greenhouse gas trading and required changes in the economic systems.

The author appeals to the scientific temper of the reader requesting him "to not believe that one or the other proposition is an unassailable truth". He follows it throughout the book by continuously questioning different aspects of global warming and elaborating different viewpoints, without taking a particular stand himself, thus, leaving it to the reader to form his own opinion. The author, however, cautions that the threat of a global warming should not be taken lightly. Besides discussing certain global phenomena, the

author has taken special interest in observations at the micro-level, the role of a tree pollution control eco-farming and health studies. He has also looked at global warming from the perspective of developing countries and their day-to-day problems.

The book is neatly brought out with a well designed flexi-cover, and at a price of Rupees 80.00 it is quite affordable. *The Global Warming Scenario* is an eminently readable book, written in a style that suits the general readers and scientists alike, and successfully informs the reader on the contemporary debate of the theme.

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