

CLIMATE CHANGE 'TRIDENT SOLUTION THEORY' BY MOFE A. MENE

COVID-19, Climate Change and the World Economy - Mofe A. Mene

It is quite unfortunate that the COVID-19 pandemic currently ravaging the world has led to an unforeseen drop in carbon emissions in major cities, e.g. Italy (Florence), India (New Delhi and Mumbai), USA (New York, Los Angeles). What this means is that the only way the reduction in carbon emissions can occur is when there is a sharp drop in human economic activities around the world. This is borderline impossible because the only way humans have enough to survive as well as be able to afford life's basic amenities of food, shelter and clothing is to work for profit especially in capitalist societies.

Climate Change is a natural process, as natural as humans taking in oxygen and producing carbon dioxide in return (respiration). Climate change is bound to happen; the reason for the alarm over this issue is that we are feeling its effects sooner and more intensively than we are supposed to.

Our current actions and inactions are making this earth very uninhabitable for ourselves and for future generations to live in and this just might be the catalyst for humanity being wiped out. Consequently, the current COVID-19 pandemic has also shown how quickly nature can recover from the erasure of humans from the planet.

The truth of the matter, however, remains that human beings cannot stop working or 'living' just to ensure that the effects of climate change are staved off. The average person's (especially in developing countries like Nigeria, India, etc) reason to live is to be able to feed or clothe themselves and they are willing to do this by any means necessary. This could be seen as a hindrance on one of the solutions later propounded under this theory, as the average man or woman in these developing nations is more religious than educated. It is also my opinion that different religious organizations can contribute to mass education of their members on climate change.

Therefore, speaking to this average person in these places will prove quite futile as their major concern will be where they can find money to eat. They could even cut short your attempt at educating them and ask about the financial benefit attached to this. This is also the case with more affluent individuals and big corporations around the world.

What I believe citizens of the world can do at this point is to strike a balance between the looming effects of climate change and economic activities/growth. This balance can be achieved via these means:

1. Education/enlightenment of the masses;
2. Renewable energy; and
3. Mass planting of trees/Restoration of forest reserves.

There exist many wonderful quotes on the importance of education in the world but I would like to use two to drive my point forward.

The first one is:

Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself- John Dewey

Also, **Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today** -Malcom X

The need for education cannot be overstated. I believe that educating/enlightening the masses will lead to the improvement in the use of energy and care for the planet in the long run, as you can't expect people to address a problem that they do not even know exists. It is also most important that these enlightenment efforts be taken very seriously in schools beginning from primary school to university levels, marketplaces, religious houses and places of business.

It has been argued back and forth that the fossil fuel industry has done more harm than good in the world. Shell, Total, Exxon Mobile and other oil exploration companies have been major contributors to the pollution of the planet with environmental degradation levels spanning land, air and sea. Renewable energy, however, provides a cleaner alternative to the production and use of energy as the sources of this energy are easily and readily available, e.g. solar (sun), wind, water, etc.

However, transitioning from fossil fuel energy to renewable energy at this time is heavily capital intensive, which is why most countries are hesitant to invest heavily in it. It is trite that I state at this point that both 'Education/enlightenment of the masses' and 'renewable energy' will work well hand-in-hand, as education tends to open the minds of individuals especially as human beings are prone to finding solutions for difficult or tough situations.

The third solution out of this theory is the mass planting of trees or the restoration of depleted forest reserves. I like to call this the 'Green Fleece Initiative', trees are beneficial to humanity; providing shelter, clothing and food, providing medicine, paper and many other useful materials needed to survive.

Trees also have a symbiotic relationship with human beings; when trees produce oxygen, we take in the oxygen and in turn, produce carbon dioxide that the trees use to grow, reproduce and perform other tasks that living things do. Consequently, trees are needed to help earth absorb carbon from the atmosphere and help us "breathe better".

We have all watched via various news outlets, the devastation of the Amazon rainforests and the Australian Bushfires where hectares of land were destroyed by fire. It is also estimated that about a billion animals were killed. These bushfires put the world at risk because without enough trees to absorb carbon from the atmosphere, it sets off a negative chain reaction of events that could lead to the eventual wiping out of humanity.

As stated at the beginning of this write up, it is quite unfortunate that a sharp decline in the economic activities of the world led to the reduction in carbon emissions needed to mitigate the effects of climate change. These solutions listed above can strike a balance between the economic growth of the world and reducing the prematurely felt effects of climate change.

These three-pronged solutions are both macro and micro solutions in the sense that they can be embarked on in both small and large scale, especially the first and third solution.