

## Power Up

Dear Readers,

Another month. Another issue. This time around, we are seeking to focus on an area that is of critical importance to the nation, to her sustained development and growth. Yes, we are talking power – in all its facets, save the obsession of politicians and bureaucrats for it.

In the 19th and the 20th centuries it was easy – the Europe and America could fuel their growth by wantonly burning fossil fuels. First it was coal that fired the engines and created superpowers, then it was petroleum that shaped and reshaped the new world order. Dig. Drill and prosper was the motto as Europe and America went on the splurge mode – bigger cars, conspicuous consumption, dreams that fed on itself to grow larger by the hour ...

Global Warming was unheard of, “Peak Oil” was considered a term used by alarmists and mad cap scientists who made a living predicting doomsday. Reserves of coal and other resources were expected to last forever and more. Naturally, in those days of plenty, scant regard was given to either conservation or efficient utilization.

Now in the 21st century – widely billed to witness the emergence of China and India into economic superstardom – things are totally different. The Kyoto protocol is ancient history. Melting ice caps, rising temperatures, water levels that are inching upward and global weather patterns that are making predictions increasingly difficult, the rich cousins, having had their fill of fun are becoming guru's of green, their collective voice becoming shriller and shriller.

Copenhagen, collective response, emission norms, cap on usage of fossil fuels, social cost of development, the climate conundrum ... terms are being bandied with ceaseless abandon. Terms, that in effect, are akin to asking India and China to stop their respective long marches forward. For, those who created the holes in the ozone layer are today its biggest apologists, seeking to bury in the din of the noise created by them the fact that it was they who are responsible for all the suffering .

It is in this background that one must see the larger issue of India's development of her desire to generate enough power – not only to fuel her economic growth but also her effort to pull the teeming millions, and some of them in abject poverty, across the North South boundary into the promised land of prosperity.

Alternative sources of energy and the efficient usage will be the two key factors that will emerge in the years to come and how best we brace ourselves up to meet the challenges will be one hell of an interesting story. All this, by a nation, where transmission and distribution losses make for a sizeable chunk of the energy generated.

Happy reading,

With Best Regards,  
**Suvabrata Ganguly**