

# India and the Politics of Climate Change

Sony Pellissery,  
Institute of Rural Management, Anand  
Gujarat, India

# Emergent economy & energy

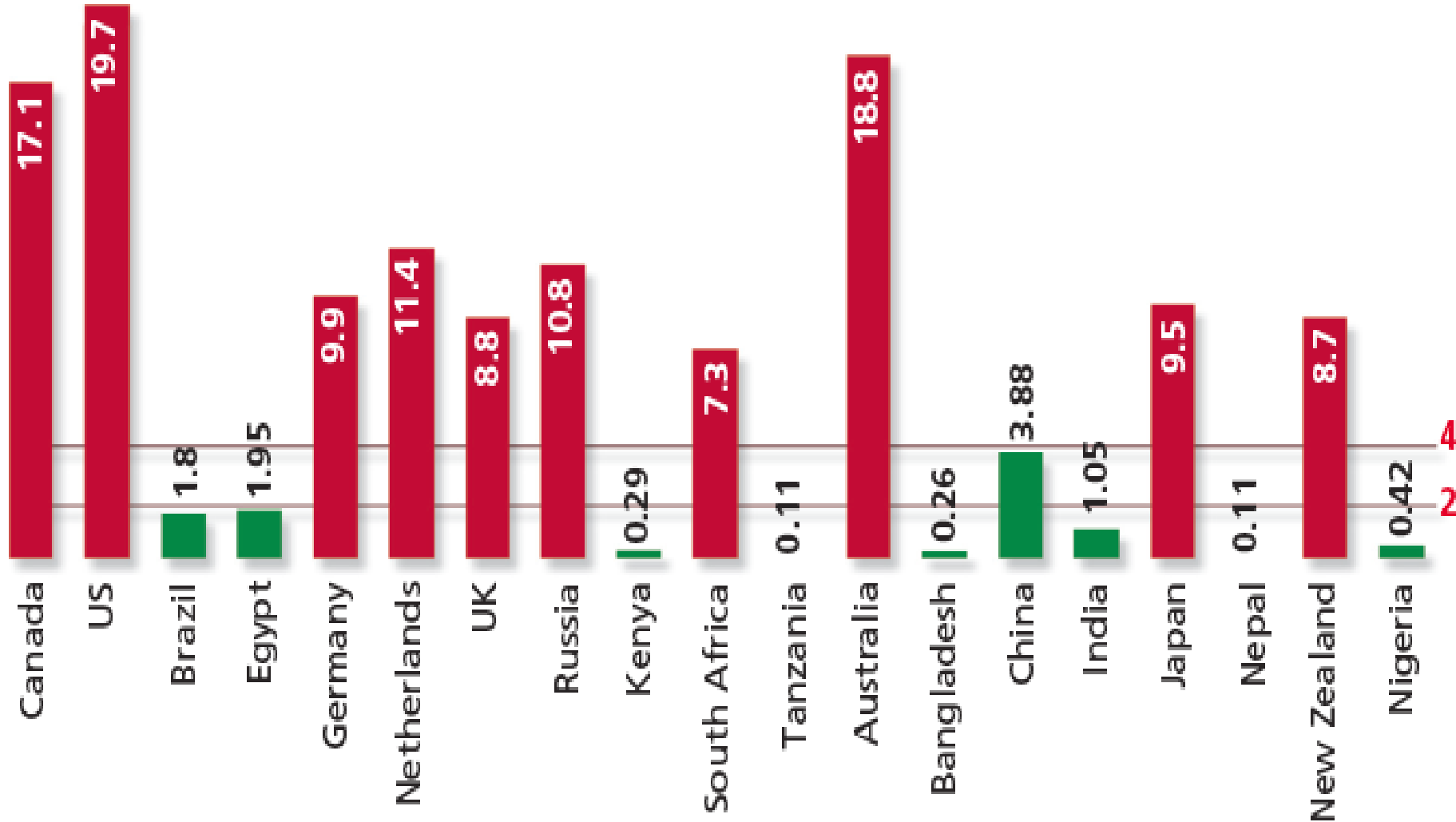
- 7%+ Economic Growth rate in past decade.
- Hugely informal economy (90%) and young population (median age of Indian is 25.1).
- India's GHG emissions are growing at 5.4% annually (5 times more than that of U.S.).
- In this context, politics of climate change is not merely of the present, but of future.

# Diverse concerns from climate change

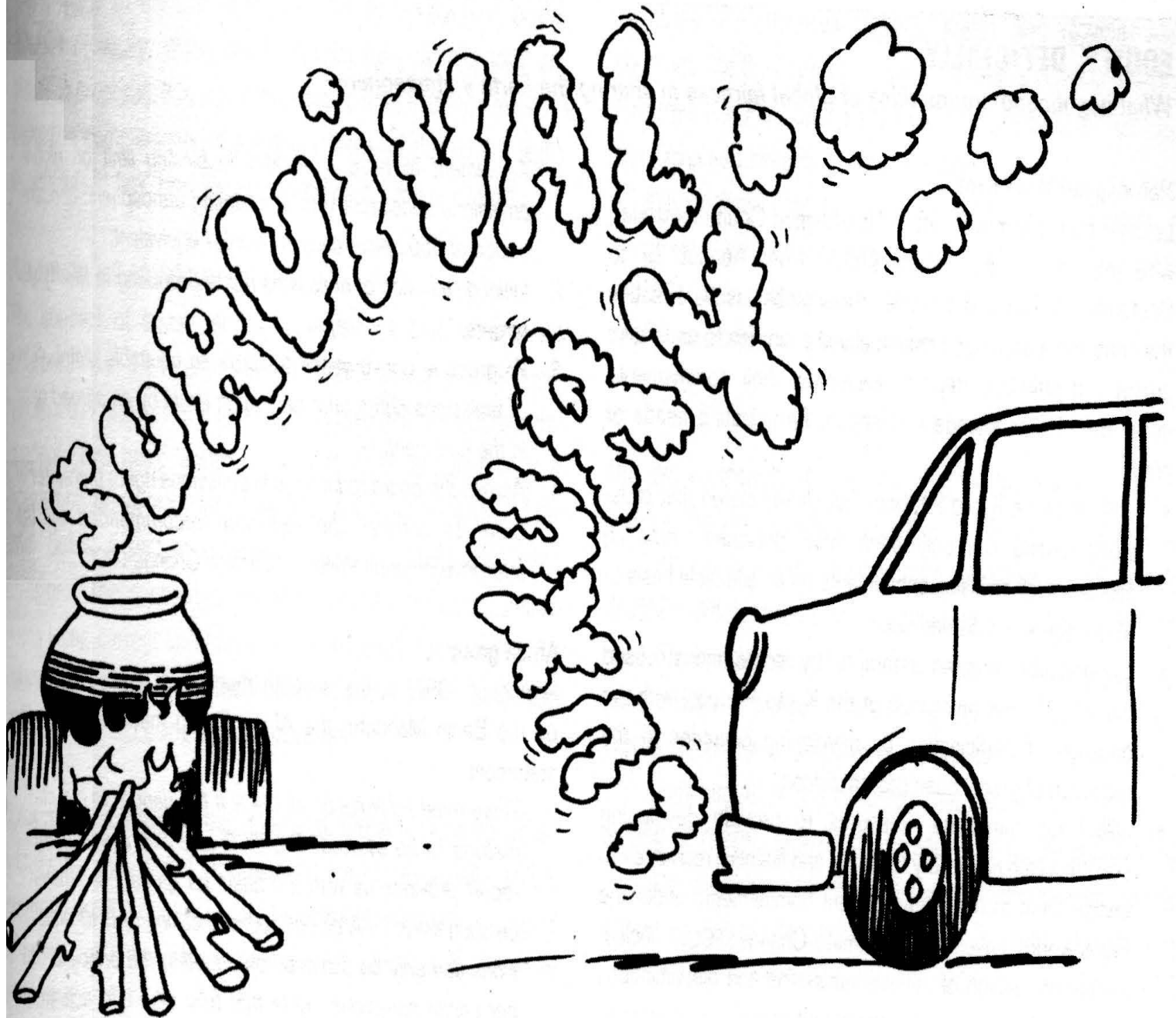
- 13 agro-climatic regions (flood, drought, coast, sink lose etc).
- Vulnerability (thus adaptation) to be central issue than mitigation.
- Environmental migration from neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh.

# Climate injustice: per capita emissions in the world

## Increase to converge climate justice



39% of  
India's  
primary  
energy  
comes  
from  
renewabl  
es –  
because  
of  
chulhas  
of poor



Equity question:

Is not asking the right to pollute,  
But asking the right to development.

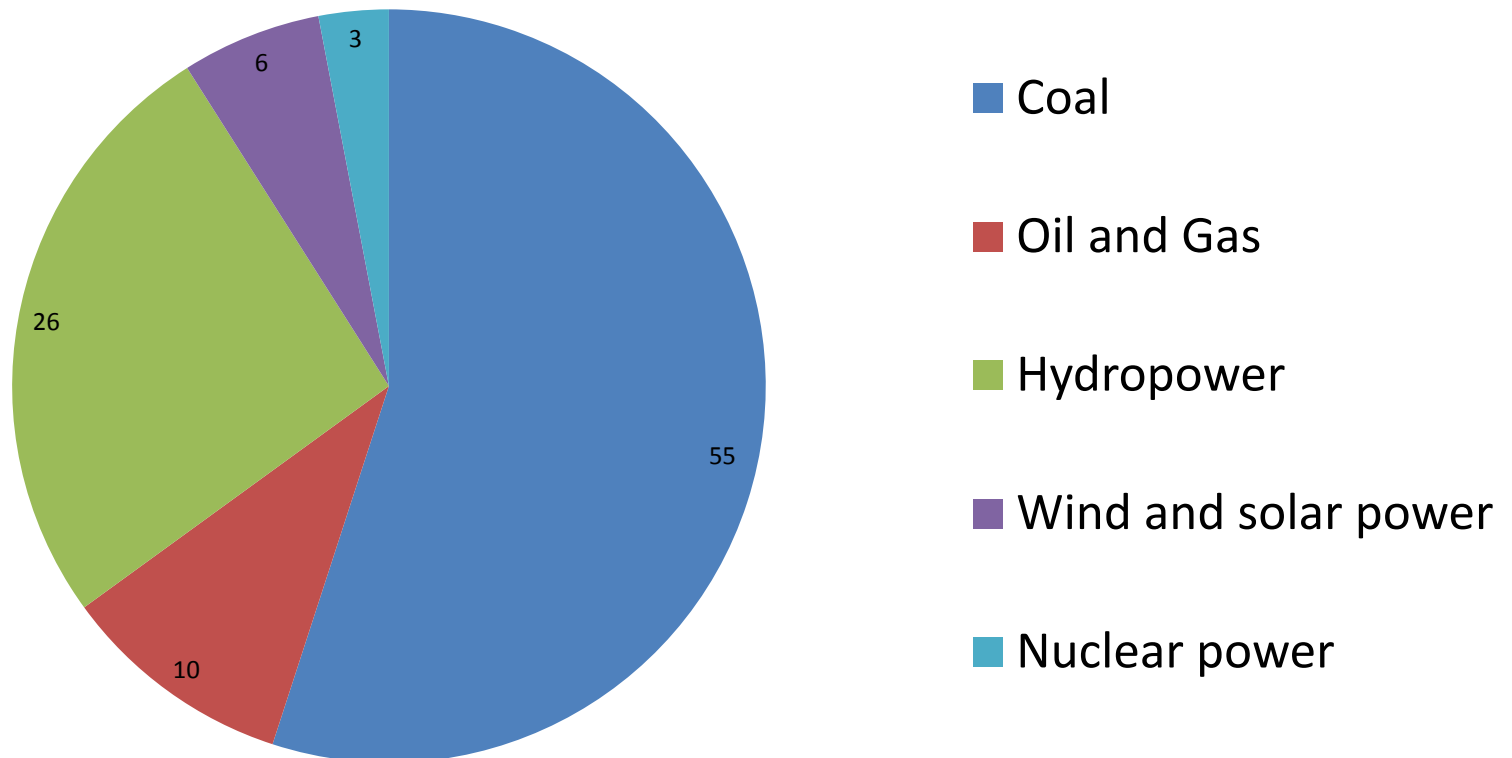
Freezing of inequity is not  
acceptable.

# Huge inequality in the country

- A citizen from the highest income group in India comprising just 1% of the population emits four-and-a-half times more CO<sub>2</sub> than a citizen within the poorest 38% of the population.
- So, India's 'per capita emission' argument has been termed as 'hiding behind the poor'.

# 'Is poverty the worst polluter?'

- Huge recycling culture (average rate of 70% compared to that of US' 30%).
- 44% Indian live without access to electricity.



# Where is the clean technology?

- CFL bulb when introduced in India 20 years ago priced Rs.1000; today Rs.100.
- Chulha 10% efficient; LPG 40% efficient (technology to gasify biomass?)
- But, will clean technology reduce industrial pollution in India? **No.**

# Future of transport in India

60% use bus

20% use car+2-wheeler

20% cycle

Car takes 80% road space in cities.

But cars have not replaced the bus, the bicycle or walking.

# Dimensions of climate change politics

- In most of the western countries, political compulsions are how voters perceive policies.
- In India this is hardly an issue. Rather politics of climate change can be divided into four types:
  - 1) Take India to alternative future: suspect negotiations.
  - 2) 'Growth-first' : suspect climate science.
  - 3) West is making use of India's stand for not reducing emissions: so, be opportunist.
  - 4) Political party dimension: get your work done using climate change agenda.

# National Climate Action Plan

- Development of Solar energy, (1000 MW in 2009 to 20,000 in 2020).
- Energy efficiency,
- Sustainable habitat,
- Water use efficiency,
- Sustaining the Himalayan ecosystem,
- Building a 'Green' India (afforestation),
- Sustainable agriculture and
- Generating strategic knowledge for climate change

# Global-Local

- Global negotiations assume that local governance will carry out the mandated mission from global negotiations.
- But, in India the 'intermediate' class with huge local political clout is less likely to respect the global negotiation.
- Pressure from below is completely missing.