

CLEAN AIR: CRYING NEED FOR BANGLADESH**M.F. Chowdhury, A.H. Chowdhury***Institute for Environment and Development Studies, Dhaka, Bangladesh*

The inhabitants of Bangladesh capital Dhaka are extremely anxious since mid nineties till when the whole Metropolitan, above of 9 million people appeared as an enormous gas chamber. A layer of smog, created by the black smoke emitted from the vehicles mixed with the dust, suspended in the air of the city round the clock. The scientists from the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC) declared the level of lead in Dhaka's atmosphere as the highest in the world. Industries and automobiles are the main sources of air pollution here and the pollutants that have been found out so far in the air are dust particles, sulphur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen, hydrocarbon, carbon monoxide, lead and ammonia. There is no quantitative air monitoring station in Dhaka but a few scattered studies show the alarming situation. The Environment Department describes that Suspended Particulate Matter (SPM) in the air is between 1000 and 2000 microgram, four to five hundred per cent higher than the acceptable level. More than half a million motor vehicles ply in Dhaka most of those harmful automobiles imported in the name of "reconditioned cars". In recent years due to reduced tax these cars have conquered Bangladesh market. Brick-producing plants in and around Dhaka are producing one of the worst hazardous emissions of this planet. Apart from the destruction of valuable topsoil and palm and bamboo trees of the country, a highly poisonous mixing procedure has been developed by the brick-manufactures for the furnace at the cheapest cost.