

Chapter 1

Wealth and Well being

**Compassion, the child born of love grows
Under the care of the rich nurse, wealth.**

Thirukkural (76:7)
(Original in Tamil about
two millennia ago)

Introduction

Desire for well being is perhaps an universal driving force. What is 'well being', is not an easy question to answer. The perception of well being varies from individual to individual even within a small society. Also it is time varying even at an individual level. Richness of the contents for the understanding of one's well being and the intensity with which it is felt by a person or a group, are much deeper questions. Such explorations have led to philosophy, arts, poetry, sciences and even political movements and revolutions.

Despite these complexities, it is possible to understand the broad contours of well being in the context of our present period of history. Maturity of human explorations and experiences through the twentieth century is leading to a more holistic approach towards human beings and society. Even while the digitization at physical – technological levels bring together huge levels of information from the past and present, many human minds, all over the world, have been released from narrow 'digital' (YES/NO) approaches to question of human destiny. Richness of diversities of cultures and resulting ideas of life and world at large, are much better appreciated. No doubt there are serious and often violent challenges from extremist thoughts and actions. We, however, see a number of brighter aspects in today's world, which can substantially enhance human well being at the individual and collective levels. We will explore them, as we progress through this book.

Well being has several components. One important component is the feeling of security. Experience has shown that security cannot be ensured by defensive and offensive weapons, alone. Compassion that extends beyond one's own kith and kin and the members of the

society one is familiar with, is perhaps universal need for stable security.

Environmental dangers have also taught the humanity, the need to extend the compassion (at least the consideration) beyond human societies alone. Human well being in an ecological sense is also tied up with the ecology of the earth. There are many other subtler issues as well.

We will explore some of these issues in detail in this book in other chapters.

In this chapter we will explore a relatively simpler but important aspect of human well being, namely wealth.

In the world today there is hardly any person who will question the importance of wealth. Generation of wealth is considered to be an important human activity, irrespective of the governance system adopted. Equally accepted principle is that wealth alone is not adequate to ensure well being of the humankind while wealth is essential.

Though a large part of the twentieth century was strongly influenced by socialist ideas there are only a very small percentage of intellectuals who would now argue that individual wealth is against the general well being of the human kind. Hossbaum well known historian and a champion of leftist thoughts accepts this aspect of wealth generation as a part of twenty first century realities (Ref.1). Modern societies even the so called least developed countries and developing ones have evolved many complex systems ranging from taxes, selective subsidies to insurance schemes to tap the individual or corporate wealth for ensuring the delivery of well being to all the citizens. It is not easy to claim that these efforts are yet fully successful though a large number of human beings are covered under various forms of safety nets.

Famines are very rare today despite a very large increase in population. Within countries and between countries, humanitarian aid is rushed to avert large scale starvation deaths. Still some areas afflicted by civil wars are not easily approachable. Similarly collective

human actions through national, international and non-government bodies avert major epidemics, which may have otherwise wiped out large scale populations in any part of the world, even in the regions where population growths are considered to be very high. Also in action is mutual help at times of natural disasters. We have several examples during the year 2005 itself.

But beyond crises situations, each country (government and civil societies in each country) has to deal with its own questions of distributive justice when it comes to well being of all its population. The organization such as World Trade Organisation (WTO) have global rules regarding trade, finance and other forms of transactions of wealth generation. However wealth at individual levels are left to the 'market forces' and local governance systems. Growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country as a whole, and even the growth of per capita GDP are not adequate to ensure well being of all the citizens, especially in terms of concepts of the "well being" as roughly captured in various developmental indices evolved during the late twentieth century by international organizations and non-governmental entities.

It is in this context it will be useful to explore briefly the human history over the past few millennia, especially in terms of how the macro picture of wealth of the humanity progressed as a whole.

EVOLUTION

The human desire derived from the biological past is, to be satiated and to have conditions created for feeling safe and secure. As the human beings evolved, they left or destroyed the primordial forests and built up civilizations. Their feelings of satiation, safety and security took new dimensions. Human needs were no longer so simple as it was in the distant past. The invention of agriculture by women and men altogether altered human concepts of safety and security. They were no longer food gathering nomads ever afraid of new terrains and possible new predators. The food security offered by agriculture also led to a rise in population and a longevity of human lives much beyond what existed in the early years of human evolution. The human society no longer considered death as a natural pre-destined happening for the members of their community.

Human beings explored methods of saving the persons who fell ill or who got wounded. Therefore human well being was no longer derived from food and a secure habitat alone. Availability of rudimentary medical treatment, including the comfort derived from the tribal practices were important for human safety.

The culmination of these complex advances in human lives led to revolutionary concepts about human well being. Accumulation of grains and other tools to make their lives easier and more productive, increase of domesticated animals with individual human beings led to the concept of wealth, never known in the early food gathering tribal societies.

Human advances since then have been fast in many areas. The practical possibilities of enjoying leisure albeit for a small percentage of human beings who became more powerful in the newly organized societies, led to new sophisticated forms of arts, music, literature, philosophy and early explorations of nature. Others whose main activity was hard physical labour throughout the year created their own art forms such as folk music, clay arts and simple designs in their clothes. Over a period there were mixture of these art forms taking different shapes. Most of these in turn led to religions and other forms organized human activities, including governance of societies.

Developments during the past three centuries have unleashed the power of modern science and technologies (including in medical fields) as well as in terms of newer forms of business management. These activities are far different from that of earlier from centuries of subsistence agriculture, artisanal hand made goods, animal power for locomotion and early forms of trade which went beyond barter deals. Correspondingly the governance systems have undergone many changes.

Advances during the later half of twentieth century in science, technology, medicine, education and global business were so huge and so fast that for the first time in human history, a single generation had to adapt to several disruptive changes in their methods of living all through their lives. The concepts of wealth and well being have also been changing equally rapidly. It appears that for the first time in

human history all the human beings populating the earth can be assured of reasonable level of wealth and physical well being, as defined in the modern context (which is very very high compared to the levels which could even be conceived of about a millennia ago). Other aspects of human well being appear to be still elusive, though better understood and practiced partially in a few human societies.

The fact that wealth creation and its enjoyment for assuring better lives at the societal level and at individual levels are now possible for most of the human beings, is a significant landmark in human evolutionary history. Not having reasonable wealth at the levels of all individuals had been a serious problem in the past and even now continues to be so in many parts of the world. However for the first time in human evolutionary history there are tools available to bring prosperity for each individual.

HISTORY OF HUMAN WEALTH

[Nature has endowed many treasures on the earth. But it took the evolution of human being to convert them into a great wealth. Human ingenuity has been growing over the past many millennia.

During the first millennia after the common era (0 A.D or ACE to 999 AD or ACE) the world population grew six fold. There was no change in the per capita income during this millennium. In contrast, over the past millennium (1000 AD or ACE to 1999 AD or ACE) world population has grown by 22 fold over what was at the end of its earlier millennium. Per capita income increased by 13-fold and world GDP grew nearly 300 fold! An additional detail within our past millennium is worth nothing: from the year 1000 to 1820 advance in per capita was very very slow. The world average went up only by 50 per cent because most of the economic growth during that period went to accommodate a fourfold increase in population. (That means that the well being of most human beings had a much better growth than the wealth generation). Post 1820 though population had a five fold increase, per capita income raised more than eight fold (Ref 2)

Since per capita income is not the only indicator of wealth available for each individual human being (as it is a large scale average of the wealth of the poor and rich persons) let us look at other factors. In the

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year 1000, the average infant could expect to live upto the age of 24 years. Only two thirds of the children who were born could survive beyond the age of one. Rest who survive beyond one year will die of starvation, epidemics and natural calamities. Look at year 2000: a newly born infant can have an average life expectancy of 66 years (Ref 2). Please note that this average age will increase to much higher level as they grow up in the 21st century due to continuing new developments in nutrition, sanitation, modern health care, as well as the concepts of social justice.

However it is common knowledge that the economic growth or growth of human wealth is not uniform all over the world. All countries of the Western Europe, USA, Canada, Australia, Japan, Korea and a few smaller countries like Singapore, Israel, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates have achieved high levels of per capita income (as well as substantial wealth in the hands of all the citizens) and also a good degree of individual and social well being. So much so that people from other parts of the world like to immigrate to these countries even by having a status with lesser political rights. These countries who have developed very well in economic and social terms are also growing very slowly now in terms of their overall economy and population. A small percentage of their citizens face problems of unemployment and resultant vagaries in their quest for good life. Also there are various forms of insecurity and violence in these societies, some relating to the unemployment, some relating to the immigrant minorities and some due to various other reasons including affluence.

In other parts of the world like China, India, Brazil, South Africa, Malaysia, Thailand, Russia, East European countries, Arab countries and Central Asian countries, the picture is very complex. Some of these countries are growing very fast but their wealth and resultant conditions of better lives well being are not uniformly distributed (Nor was it uniform when Europe or USA was growing fast during the 18th and 19th centuries). Some of these countries face difficult political dilemmas in balancing the needs of wealth generation and the provision of distributive social justice in terms of better living conditions to all their citizens. (Such political dilemmas and even conflicts have not altogether disappeared in the developed world as well!).

Countries in Africa and some other parts of the world have further serious problems in terms of wealth generation as countries as a whole and naturally the well being of all their people. In addition many of them also suffer from serious internal social violence not often connected with wealth generation and its distribution amongst of peoples. They relate to the emotional aspects of tribal associations or religious divisions or personality conflicts, or external interference though some of these conflicts may be couched in modern terminologies of wealth creation, wealth for individual poor people and well being of people.

QUESTIONS

There are many questions before the human kind. Let us address first those relating to wealth. A major question is whether these large disparities between many countries (and therefore between many human beings - a large number of them, in billions) can be bridged? For example the divergence of growth in wealth or well being between USA and African countries is very large and the gap is accelerating. However the growth of Asian countries (who had similar problems before) during the past few decades in terms of wealth generation and spread of better living conditions to their large populations, gives humanity a hope that the gap can be bridged. There are also signs of faster economic growth in some of the African countries in the recent years.

Even when the world population reaches a figure of about 8 billion around the year 2020 it appears feasible that wealth and better living conditions can reach all people. But is it a simple linear extrapolation? Can it be achieved through market forces of globalisation or economic reforms within the countries and through the extension of large scale aid to the underdeveloped parts of the world? What about the programmes for universal education for every human being in the world and providing a health cover? Will they lead to better wealth creation at the individual level? Do the present day wealth generation strategies, assure 'win-win' situation for all? Or are they zero sum games ? Can all keep on growing? In other words will the current wealth generation strategies leave behind a number of winners and losers? Can the losers hope to win in a reasonable period within their

lives or will there be a permanent set of losers left behind in the high speed march of modern societies?

There can be many other questions added to these lists as a flow of logical thought or emotional enquiry. Readers of this book may also attempt to try to think of more questions. We have addressed answers even to some of the questions not written in this section in the later chapters.

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Answers to all these questions are not simple. Perhaps newer and deeper questions may have to be raised. Other forces in the human society such as value systems (ethical and moral), religious beliefs, and respecting and being with nature (ecological consideration), may have to be understood better. During the phase of acceleration of science and technology, modern economics, business and trade, many of the other elements (not fitting into the rational and scientific methods of analysis but still) present in the human societies have not been given enough attention. It was even thought by many influential thinkers and practitioners that these older elements would disappear through the progress of science, technology and economic policies.

Another set of questions may arise. Are not many of these elements antithetical to each other? How can the universal spirit of science (or humanism whose ascendance was mostly during the period of rationalism) coexist with a cultural particularism or a particular religious belief? Can we totally ignore the findings about human behaviour and attempt an universal and equal pattern of human actions? This book is an attempt to address many of these issues, arrive at a few answers or approaches to answers and perhaps leave behind many relevant questions for the readers to think about, talk about and write about.

WEALTH AND WEALTHY

In today's world with about 6.5 billion people populating the earth, about a billion people can be considered to be reasonably rich. If one were to define rich and wealthy people as those who are billionaires (US dollar terms) then the number will fall down to a few hundred thousands. Such a type of rich persons are spread throughout the globe even in the developing and underdeveloped countries. Often

such billionaire-rich persons are also powerful in almost all countries including in democracies. They influence economic, social and governance issues directly or indirectly.

The emergence of modern society in its current form (mostly the result of industrial revolution and growth of science and technology in Europe) has been primarily responsible for the unprecedented growth of wealth in human society. In particular the later part of the twentieth century witnessed economic growth in many parts of the world earlier termed as the third world (mostly the ones which continued to be agrarian societies without the benefit of industrialization). Many of these countries also had huge populations. In the beginning of the twentieth century the Eurocentric views of most thinkers assumed that peoples of these countries may not be able to cut through their centuries old stagnation to master 'modern' methods of wealth generation. Hence their remarkable economic growth was termed as 'miracles'. Such 'miraculous' growths in a few countries have led many others to follow their methodologies.

A closer look at the growth of wealth in these countries will indicate that it was not at the expense of the already developed countries and their peoples. There was a mutual dependence in the growth. The already advanced countries gave away the lower types of wealth generating activities to these newly emerging economies and for themselves they took up the high value (i.e. higher wealth) generating activities and business. In this process the business of the developed countries grew bigger leading to the emergence of huge multinational companies with their span of influence around most parts of the world. They created new markets for their products and services. With their prowess of technological skills, they were (are) setting the pace of the future markets (and thus future businesses).

In such a process of globalization which was (is) further accelerated by the modern high speed transport and communication wealth generation in already developed world also increased tremendously. Most of the peoples of the developed countries inherited riches, which were unthinkable during the first half of the twentieth century. In addition to large number of individuals, and became billionaires.

In the rapidly growing developing countries also, a fair amount of billionaires have emerged (and are emerging). In addition a good percentage of the population moved away from the state of poverty in which they or their ancestors lived for centuries. And a number of them have a good amount of surplus wealth to spend and to enjoy and also to invest; such persons are termed as middle class'. They are prosperous though they may not be millionaires.

The description of this process in such simple terms as well as the current realities of some of the emerging pressures in developed countries from those who are unemployed, would lead to a few questions about the role of the wealthy persons in society.

Revolutionary thoughts and activities against rich people in Europe grew almost simultaneously with the growth wealth in Europe (during the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries). They went parallel to the growth of modern types of rich persons in their European society. These rich persons were not dependent on agriculture and the appropriation of the wealth created from the agricultural produce. Various industrial methods of transforming material into new products and services (broadly termed as manufacturing) gave them wealth.

There is some parallel to the mistrust against the wealthy persons in human history. When the tribal republics were being overtaken by the large scale cultivation of agriculture, newer forces emerged. They were the monarchs and kings. The transition of people to the newer forms of monarchical governance and economy, was not easy especially in the (their) newly forming urban areas. Many powerful philosophies and religions that emerged before the common era reflect these painful transitions. In most parts of the world, solutions were found (through religions) through inner personal disciplines of people. On the long run the monarchic systems found their roots and the agricultural economy dominated most of the peoples and the world (barring some people who lived as tribes)

During the transition from the agriculture dominated economy to the (then) newly industrializing economy in Europe during the 18th, 19th, 20th centuries, the pains of the transition were directed against the pioneers of the industrialization, the newly emerging rich persons. Many of the socialist, humanist and existentialist thoughts had

somewhat of a similar role as philosophies and religions played for agricultural transitions.

Such a cryptic summary of the complex processes of many centuries of history may rise several questions and invite many criticisms. Such a summary is done to focus the attention on wealthy persons and wealth generation.

ROLE OF RICH PERSONS.

Recent historical experiences be it in the former Soviet Union or China or India, have shown that the process of wealth generation is impeded severely when the wealthy (millionaire –billionaire type rich persons) are eliminated or are drastically controlled from their wealth seeking activities.

Similarly middle-class type rich persons also appear to be essential in propelling the modern industrial and service economies.

Wealth seeking (and therefore wealth generating) activities or enterprises by millionaire – billionaire type rich persons (MB rich persons) as well as by middle class rich persons (MC rich Persons) are required to make the “wealth generating machine” productive and growing in its output. In that process of growth, it appears to “suck in” many more persons into the category of MC rich persons (For example in USA, Europe, Japan and Korea a large majority of people will be in MC rich persons). A question will immediately arise: can this process go on and sustain, so that we have society made only of MC rich persons and MB rich persons? Let us reserve the discussion on it to a later section.

Let us now look at another socially beneficial role of the wealthy persons (MC and MB types) other than being merely investors, consumers, business managers and professionals.

Rich persons hold the key to new innovations which have large scale spread effects later. While the intellectuals and skilled persons are required for innovations, all innovators require somebody to provide financial support before innovation. (With considerable risk of non-

performance!) and to support the innovation after it has occurred for entering into commercial production.

In most of the developed countries a large part of research and development (R&D) in universities and laboratories are supported by private sector industries and sometimes by philanthropic private foundations.

New products and services are often very costly. Only the rich can afford them. But continued use by growing number of rich persons (especially MC rich persons) provides the scale of economies required for mass production.

A dramatic example from the past when aluminum was invented in Europe, a unique (unique in the world) plate of aluminum was presented to the Mughal Emperor of India by an European trader. The emperor who was born with silver and gold plates very much appreciated the gift, as nobody else in the world has been possessor! During the early part of twentieth century, aluminum is a common man's product. In India, even a beggar can afford it now and may go for other materials like plastics !!

Look at many products of domestic use or medicines. High initial cost and a few rich customers. In a few decades it is a mass manufactured to reach everybody.

Such a process of spread of innovation is not necessarily philanthropic! It is a part of modern capitalistic market economy! All the same without MB rich persons to invest in R & D, and to support early commercial production and a few MC rich to consume new life style products (part of their pride!), the process of innovation spreading to all people appears to be infeasible. In some cases as in health and other very new and risky areas, Governments may take the role of the persons to support R & D and to a limited extent even to support initial commercial production. But recent experiences in the Western world, former Soviet Union, China and India, clearly show that large scale spread of such new innovations also seem to occur only when rich persons take them up as a part of their wealth seeking activities (i.e. business)

Just as the kings and monarchs had a role in stabilizing the irreversible transition to agricultural societies and led to large scale human creativities (had also growth of human population), the rich persons (especially MB rich persons) appear to have a key role in the modern economy which is driven by the wealthy persons, has many successes in creating wealth for large number of people (unknown in human history before) and also given a much better a living conditions to a large number of people all around the world. It holds further promise to spread the benefits of wealth creation to all people.

HOW LONG ? HOW MUCH?

In exploring the contours of human well being, we have accepted a premise that wealth is an important component of well being though there are several other important components as well. Having briefly surveyed the history of wealth generation in human evolution, we have come to a conclusion (albeit tentatively) that rich persons play a crucial role for generation of wealth in the world, countries and societies and for its spread for all peoples. We have also expressed the hope that the modern economy holds the key for reaching wealth to all people soon, for the first time in human history.

Having said these, it is important to address some of the questions: how many persons in different countries (including the developed countries) would left out without wealth, without opportunity for wealth creation or without capacities for wealth creation? Already one finds in the developed countries the percentage of unemployed persons is growing up; even in the countries like Japan which believed in full life employment, the unemployment rate is going up close to 5%. There are voices being raised in many developed countries in Europe and USA against the outsourcing of the economic and business activities to the developing countries. They believe that the unemployment in their countries is due to cheap labour available to the multinational companies (MNC) in developing countries. Thus their unemployment is due to MNC's greater profits. Prima facie, these appear to be a reasonable proposition. But if the outsourcing is stopped, unemployment occurs elsewhere, in addition to the loss of economic efficiency to the MNC Company concerned.

Loss of economic efficiency to this company may mean its defeat in the global competition and its eventual closure of some of its divisions. Note, this means eventual loss of employment in the developed country which was earlier protected from outsourcing by keeping the jobs inside their own borders to decrease unemployment!

It is important to remember that the entire process of globalising economy has many interconnected elements. Mere short term protectionist measures may hurt the whole process of wealth generation. For example loss of outsourced business by the companies of developing country means lower economic growth, lower wealth generation in that country – which means eventually loss of market for high value products by the MNC companies of the developed country in such developing countries who get into lower wealth generation status. Loss of markets means loss of business and profits. Eventually that MNC company will lose out and jobs will be lost in the developed country. Just imagine for a while China shutting itself from all imports. Many US, European and Japanese companies will shut down many operations. So is with emerging Indian markets. As we have described earlier in this chapter, the rapid growth of wealth in the developed countries and developing countries particularly during the second half of the 20th century is a mutually dependent or interdependent process. World economy appears to be inextricably linked. The continual search is for new markets, new levels of labour productivity, new levels of economic efficiency, newer products and services,..... yes it is a continuously changing competition where so many actors big or small work independently and also are independent on some process.

The question therefore is not about short term palliative measures. The question is where will the modern economic processes (with its global interconnectedness) take us? Will it require a lowering of living standards for some people especially in the developed world in order to sustain reasonable levels of wealth for everybody? Or it is possible to find win-win solutions for everybody in the globe? i.e. no loss of living standards for those who already enjoy a good living compared to many others in the world while at the same time most of the poor people in the developing world move towards a reasonable level of MC rich status? In other words, can the current process of modern economy sustain itself to provide wealth for all individuals in the

world? Is a sustainable economic prosperity for all human beings in the globe a feasible proposition in a few decades from now? If the answer is: "NO, it is the survival of the fittest in the globally competitive world, there will be some persons who may be left out unless they adapt to flexible labour standards, improve their infrastructure, improve their human resources etc. types of conditionalities, ifs and buts, and may be then there will be serious problems about the sustainability of well being for the vast majority of people who are much more prosperous than any time in history. The left out majority (or even a sizeable minority in an arithmetic sense !) are likely to become nucleus of instability in the system. Security of well – to – do individuals especially the vast majority of persons in MC (middle class) rich category will be a question mark! The aim of the thinking humanity should not be to resign itself to a concept of "economic Darwinism"

WHAT ELSE?

Now a question may be posed to us: well, if you want an answer that sustainable win-win situation is possible for all and there need to no "left –outs" either in the developed world or in the developing world, then how can you achieve it? What path (s) and process (es) need to be adopted? We do not have cut – and- dry ready – to-cook answers. But as you would see in the coming chapters of this book, solutions for realizing the present day potential by humanity as a whole and for renovating the problems of "non-inclusive" economic benefits would require a holistic approach to the life. Our proposition is that human well being cannot be achieved within the reductionist frameworks of economic policies and the applications of science and technology. While these human inventions and tools (i.e. economics, science, technology, business management and governance system) are initial components of human lives, more subtler aspects of human values are crucial to mitigate the ill effects of these powerful tools. Value systems would have to influence and modify the tools so that the "residues" are not formed within human society.

Every human being will then be utilized in operating "the economic machine" and the governance system even when the human population may touch about 10 Billions by the year 2050.

It is also our proposition that a holistic understanding of human well being (its constituents, process, variableness etc) will unravel a number of elements of the value system beneficial to humanity. Human evolutionary process did not merely contain elements of competitive survival but also compulsive needs of cooperative altruism. The later aspects have to be rediscovered to have sustained well being for all human beings. Wealth generation then becomes a useful element to nurture compassion with its universal connotations.

It is with such an exploratory agenda we will now enter into the next chapter, which is titled "Value Systems".

CHAPTER 2

VALUE SYSTEMS

There is a sensual consciousness, enormous and potent, and then there is Mind. Mind in the function of abstraction from sensual experience and in abstraction it established another world of reality for Man.

D.H. Lawrence, 1978

HUMAN LIFE AND VALUES

It is true that human beings evolved millions of years ago from apes. The earlier years of existence of the hominids, world has been strongly driven by the necessities of survival, resources for good and reproductive success. As can be seen from very ancient literatures in different parts of the world, human mind had started maturing many millenia ago with ability for abstraction and generalization of empirical experience self – identity in human being developed far beyond the requirements of simple biological processes. An excellent treatment of the evolutionary process of self-identity, mind and consciousness from an ethological preservative is given in a book (1980) by John Hurrell Crook (Ref 3) A quote from the book: "The self – process lies at the root of all human interaction and provides it with the special quality of projective inter – subjectivity whereby one person can say that he knows what it is like to be another. The self –process converts

the human organism into the human persons. It is species wide universal and implies not only complex cognitive functions in adults but also an elaborate development process. It always operates within a complex social setting". Roots of human value system and the potential of these value systems to be universally inclusive, emerge from the nature of the self process in the human person. This self process is not an isolated experience of a few human beings in seclusive surroundings. It unfolds and expresses itself within a complex cultural setting.

The human person is not merely a consuming organism, or a being bound within the sensual process and environmental compulsions. The human person no doubt consumes; enjoy sensual pleasure; works on the external environment perceived by him or her. But there is a world of reality beyond all these activities in his or her self processes. Fuller development of human well-being can emerge only when the self processes of all the human persons at the individual and collective levels are harmonious. Thus fuller development of human life is closely linked with the self-processes, which in turn are intertwined with the value system of the human person and the society.

In a globalising world (not merely through trade and markets but also through high speed transport which make human beings very mobile in different cultural contexts, and communications which enable large scale exchange of high quality audio, visual and other forms of information and therefore sharing of experiences and value systems), the cultural context available to the human person is very large and highly time varying. No one is thus an island any more.

Rediscovery of the value system inherited in different social and cultural contexts and inventing newer ones corresponding to the contemporary global contexts are vital for enriching human life. Let us now explore how human value system express themselves in different situations of human life, in order to understand them more closely.

GOVERNANCE

It is amazing to look at the evolution of the complexities of modern governance systems especially during the past five centuries. About 10 millenia ago human societies were relatively simpler. There were rules for intratribal interactions. While there were many altruistic value systems applicable to the members of the same tribal group, between tribes there were a number of aggressive actions. Such aggressive actions against members of other tribes were accepted human value systems. The self processes of the individual human being, were fairly well adjusted to these value systems but around 2 to 3 milleria ago, human societies in different parts of the world started developing monarchic systems and also evolved many religions and myths. It was great progress forward towards to an universal outlook for all human beings. The preceding period saw many great philosophers and thinkers. This period is called the "Axial Period". Thoughts from the 'axial period' still continue to influence many human minds albeit in various changed forms.

In the modern human organistions, ideals of individual freedoms and liberties (universally applied to all human beings) are the dominant value systems. Equality and equity are also important components of the value system ever while individual freedom is accepted. Often individual freedoms are circumscribed within the framework of equality for all equitable distribution of social benefits.

While such broad ideals are accepted at the conceptual or abstractional levels as can be seen from the UN charter, there are multitudes of variations about the concepts of freedom. Many countries in the developed world and a number of countries in the developing world define availability of freedom and liberties in the context of democratic institutions – open and free elections; separation of legislative, executive and judiciary; free press; many other statutory independent bodies which ensure that no individual or group can develop autocratic powers etc. Countries with such democratic governance systems are only a small percentage of the total number of countries in the world. There are diversities even amongst them.

There are many countries with severe limitations to the above-described democratic systems. There are countries which have monarchies; dictatorships; there are also some countries which

attempt to go away from the above mentioned universal ideals of equality, equity, human dignity etc; there are some countries attempting theocratic governance. Each of these countries have their own justifications for their governance systems and tend to describe them in terms of high principles of their own value systems. It is quite likely that the self-processes of many people in these countries may not find serious conflicts with actions based on such value systems.

Even while many of the countries differ in their own internal governance systems, most of them have accepted at least partially the rules of (and therefore value systems of) global free market economy as reflected in the membership of WTO. There are a number of people who believe that free market economy flows from the principles and values of electoral democracy. But in practice the world has witnessed that a number of political dictatorships and totalitarian systems are successfully adopting free market economy and deriving benefits of global trade as well! Also how 'free' is the free market varies. Even democratic countries assert the need for limiting the freedom of the markets and enact laws.

There are some optimists who believe that high level of free market economic development will develop pressures for individual political freedoms as well, thus leading to emergence of democratic institutions all over the world. It is not easy to go along with such an optimism. World, in recent times, has more examples of democracies becoming dictatorships rather than emergence of democracies from political dictatorships.

With plethora of such governance system existing worldwide, is it possible to propose or hypothesise or even conjecture that democracies are the best of the human value systems? Some of us have been born and brought up in systems which were basically democratic and tolerant of others' freedoms. It is difficult for us even to imagine alternate modes of living where one may not have freedom of expression or freedom of association or freedom for beliefs. But can we categorically state that only method of full expression of human value systems in the current human history, is through democratic institutions? Even assuming that this were so, the number of people in today's world governed by such free democracies are not in a large majority. There are no easy methods

of converting limited democracies, dictatorships, theocracies, autocracies, and monarchies into democratic systems. Modern nation-states have powerful espionage systems and more powerful coercive machinery especially in countries where individual freedoms are given a lesser ranking in the governance systems.

We may postpone such discussion to a later part of this book. Democracies appear to offer a more open system for expressing the values of human persons and also there are many successful examples of functioning democracies over centuries and decades. We may therefore first understand the adequacies and inadequacies of democracies in the larger context of human value systems as applicable to achievement of universal prosperity and well being of each human being on the earth, the objectives which have been discussed in the last section of the first chapter of this book.

DEMOCRACIES AND HUMAN VALUES

There are many positive aspects about democracies – parliamentary types or presidential ones or several other systems successfully functioning in the world today. We need not describe about them here. We would rather analyse those areas where there are deficiencies especially in the context of emergence of universally applicable human value systems.

One of the major problems in electoral democracy is about the right balance between long terms benefits to human society and short terms gains for exclusive groups. Electoral success is somewhat akin to winning short term access to the markets.

Stoking the passions of exclusive identities in groups to gain more votes or seats; proposing populist measures though they may damage irreversibly either ecology or economy or even harmony between various groups; appealing to nationalist jingoism which may over a period develop into hatred between communities – these are a few examples. How does a practicing politician develop courage to stand for long term values which are well understood in theory or accepted even during common discourse to be universally beneficial?

Politician cannot sacrifice himself or herself totally when he or she sees an opponent winning.

Another serious problem exhibited by a number of democratic countries is about the cost of elections themselves. Costs of electoral victory and uncertainties in case of failures at polls, compel many practitioners and even parties to institutionalize corruptions of various forms. In some cases compulsions of short terms gains in free market economy, make companies to get intertwined into political corruption.

It is also found that the sacred principles of freedom of expression have also got corrupted due to the ideological make up of the media owners or due to the free market economic compulsions of getting advertising contracts. Freedom of speech is also used for short terms gains in the political – electoral system by using the media to publish scandals against the opponents. Trade and economic lobbies using media against their opponents are also well known.

Well a simple answer can be: let the opponents or affected parties also use such methods. Finally the truth will win! Who is going to pursue truth? How many persons can afford to do so? What about the damages caused by short term public memories, swinging events in an unfair manner?

There are those who talk about civil liberties; consumer rights; right to information. Well they are important. But it is well known that those who are hell bent on using any method to defeat or annihilate their enemies (persons; institutions; ideas; market access; etc) can use the complexities and slowness of the democratic institutions to gain short term gains in unfair manner. If at all they are exposed, it may be after they enjoy a full life of “illegal” power or advantages of position and fame.

Let us look at another facet, namely public reactions to police actions against terrorists or suspected terrorists in democratic societies. If the police is overcautious in terms of cross checking all facts, often they may miss catching a suspected terrorist. There may be a bomb blast and loss of civilian lives. Public outcry spearheaded by media and instant security analysts will ask for enquiry against police inaction. May be a few police personnel would be suspended from service and

enquires ordered. On the other hand, if police is overly keen to avoid loss of civilian lives, they may react speedily and chase the suspected terrorists even at the point of shooting in some cases. The human right groups again spearheaded by the media will raise a hell for the police force.

What are the value systems by which the governance of police at the operational level should function?

All democracies have been plagued by the above mentioned problems and many more problems not given here, during the later half of the twentieth century and they are continuing. On the other hand, it is ironical that during this period, the economic growth as well as large scale spread of benefits of science and technology have reached a large number of people in the world (not merely within democratic countries).

Should we accept these deficiencies in the democratic functioning, even large scale ones, as deviations or as a part of the chaotic functioning? Well don't worry about the day-to-day or year-to-year details but see the overall picture. But how do the day-to-day events affect the human psyche? Do they increase the general alienation? One answer can be that most people do not care and can accept these happenings with a cynical humour. Perhaps a small percentage may feel troubled. Again it may be a question of a small percentage of "residue" in the society left over because of the mismatch in value system with the actual functioning of the democratic systems.

Is this group (that is the small percentage of troubled persons described above) the same one as those who are "left-over" in the economic competition? Perhaps not! What about the value systems of those who are "left over" in economic competition? Do they care for human values as understood in the free democratic systems? No doubt academic researches address these issues. But often the samples sizes are small. These are many debatable data points. However they are useful. But what about answers to the operational functioning of value systems for policy makers, leaders, managers, opinion makers etc.? More importantly how does each human person adjust his or her self-processes with what is happening in these free societies?

As a positive aspect, bulk of the people (may we say silent majority) appear to enjoy the free society, prosper and enjoy – more so in the developed world which has achieved some basic minimum standards for most of its people. But one may say it is also so even in the totalitarian systems. Bulk of its people adjust to the constraints of loss of freedoms. But most important positive aspect of democratic systems is that it allows even a very small group to protest. Some problem (physical or mental) felt by a group gets a public attention. Normally it is only in the open democracies famines and deaths due to epidemics are avoided. Politicians, activists, media, philanthropists – many step in as if there is a national crises. This aspect is a major gain of the democratic governance. Even a small group people can protest; they can demonstrate against overwhelming decision taken by the Parliament, or Cabinet or a President.

Thus, democratic systems have a special institutionalized methods for minority view; protests; for non-conformance. There is also a feeling of security against unforeseen calamities like famines, epidemics; even for that matter sufferings due to loss of jobs; even a suspected criminal cannot be punished without due processes. It is not so with totalitarian regimes or with those which limit democratic rights. For reasons of prestige or for generating a better image for attracting investments, non-democratic regimes often suppress information about natural calamities, famines and epidemic deaths. They can ruthlessly suppress any protests, even legitimate ones where livelihoods of people have been seriously affected or where their belief systems have been seriously intruded upon.

But an irony arises especially in the era of competitive media coverage. Internet pages, television and even films are filled with terrible happenings in free societies even though they are miniscule compared to the sizes of the society. But about totalitarian regimes even large scale indignities inflicted on a large groups of people are never reported. A young person in a distant country surfing internet daily will come to a conclusion that free societies are abominable and their own illiberal societies are lot safe and secure! We will revert back to this important fact, in the later part of this chapter. Let us address a few other elements briefly.

JUDICIAL SYSTEMS AND VALUES

In a broader sense, judicial system reflect how well the value systems are respected in a society. Humanity has moved away from the simpler tribal systems. Societies are complex. Human transactions are complex. Modern legal and judicial systems are continually innovated upon to meet the demands of the newer situations: be it intellectual property rights (IPR's); same sex marriages; medical ethics; narcotic trade; etc. On the flip side judicial systems have also become the new swords of the modern civilized human being. Instead of pulling out the swords for challenging a duel, people file cases. Free democratic societies are also becoming litigious societies. There are long texts with legal content even in toothpaste being sold! Medicines are sold with long texts hardly intelligible even to those who have some training in science!

But that apart legal and judicial systems also protect the weaker segments of the society. Governments in free democratic societies cannot bulldoze a house of a person since it looks ugly and spoils aesthetics of a place or displace poor people at will by using force. Even when such displacement has to be done in a larger public interest such as expanding a narrow road, or for building a hospital or even a commercial complex, laws in free democratic societies provide for adequate compensation for those who will be displaced.

However access to legal systems is not easy for the poor. The entire process of law (due process starting from filing of a complaint with police to various other processes) requires specialist attention. Each step is expensive. Also the powerful and rich can hire very capable legal consels who can delay the whole process of litigation to several years. The poor person may have to resign to his or her fate. Also the complexities of the legal process and finer points allow many powerful persons escape from their crimes.

There are free democratic countries with fully functioning free political democracies but the poor have not been freed from the tyrannies of rich and powerful using the legal / judicial system due to the above mentioned problems. But for occasional dramatic cases, the laws are not seen as saviours. Often when the law enforcement

systems especially in developing countries (be it for tax collection; or pollution control or such public interest government inspection systems etc) are intertwined with ubiquitous corruption, laws themselves become problem against the well being of the people. These are real issues especially in number of developing countries which have fully functional free electoral democratic systems.

We do not discuss the totalitarian or restrictive regimes because in these countries, free legal systems do not exist. One does not therefore expect any justice to be done. People have to learn not to get into the clutches of laws- autocratic or theocratic or ethnocratic etc! There are little value systems which have universal outlook. We therefore discuss only the legal and judicial systems within democratic countries.

Within the countries having free democracies, there are small variations. Examples are : capital punishments; extradition; same sex marriages; child labour; other human rights. Some countries have taken sometimes a "holier-than-thou" attitudes against other countries. When a free democratic country faces some problems of terrorism within its borders (through cross border export or otherwise) or when it has to deal with underworld criminal networks which have often linkages with terrorism or extremism, some of these countries do not cooperate to hand over suspected criminals for taking legal actions. They treat other countries not conforming to their standards as illiberal regimes, even though they are free democratic and have free processes and well organised legal, judicial systems. This is a clash of value systems though these are much closer to each other than with those of totalitarian regimes.

Also it is ironical that such countries which take higher moral grounds vis-à-vis extradition of a suspected criminal to another free democratic countries based on value of human rights, continue with (and even increase to) very good levels of trades and investment with totally illiberal regimes which do not have to implement any principle of human rights: no freedom for individual religious practices; no freedom of free speech; gender discrimination etc. They often do not

even have a semblance of modern legal & judicial system where the accused is allowed to argue his or her case.

Value system such as human rights are thus suspected to be subservient to individual national interest which are time varying rather than universal values for humanity as a whole.

By and large the legal and judicial systems developed in free democratic societies in different parts of the world, still possess many positive elements which can provide for an environment in which self-process of each individual could be both conservative and creative even while required balances between the collective and individual can be achieved through free consent of people. However it will require tolerant dialogue between the functioning free democracies. Sincere respect for other cultural contexts and understanding each other social dilemmas will be required. Narrow national parochialisms and intellectual arrogance may jeopardise all free democratic societies. Therefore a more tolerant unity amongst all those who believe in free democratic value systems is crucial at this point of human history.

ECONOMICS AND VALUES

There are major discussions on this subject: corporate governance; business ethics; laws on competition ' corporate social responsibility. Many of these details are important for day-to-day functioning of many corporates, working personnel; law enforcers etc.

World has moved away from the simplistic concept that the role of a business organisation is only for profit or seeing the bottom line of the dividend given to the stock holders. Experiments with socialistic forms of enterprises where profits were not considered important at all, have also failed all over the world. These basic elements of profits or returns on investment appear to be important, as they are equivalent to basic biological existence, survival, and reproduction. However, the human evolution has transcended these basic biological levels through the progressive development of the self-processes and value systems.

Economic activities which include businesses have to learn to encompass a much wider canvas of human value systems without, of course, losing the focus on the basic task of wealth generation. The value systems will encompass primarily all positive actions to include those whose are "left-out", who are "residues" in the onward march of efficient economic engine and to make them feel a part of humanity and to share the collective well being as well as to feel the well being themselves. Another important value system would be around the ecology of the Earth and its surroundings, which will include the planetary space as well.

Business and economic governance systems have to come together to accept a common value system (which are beyond the present day narrow approach to competitiveness) to integrate these human value systems (collective and individual). In such a search, since it is a globalising world in economics, science and technology, the businesses from the countries who are members of WTO may take the lead in evolving a global business and economic governance related value systems especially covering the two major elements mentioned above. Such value systems may even have to include considerations of limits to consumption, competition and minimum norms of common well being of all persons in the earth.

At this point it may be useful to read a quote from Murray GellMann (Ref.4)

Quote :

The apparently hard-headed practice of ignoring values difficult to quantify is often advertised as being value-free. Many economics and political scientists have recommended leaving fragile values to the political process. But if that is done, all the quantitative studies, with their careful calculations of what happens to easily quantified values, have to be weighed by decision-makers against qualitative arguments that are not similarly bolstered by impressive numbers. Nowadays the idea is gaining around of actually polling people to see what kind of value they would assign to such things as a given improvement in air quality or the preservation of a park or neighbourhood. In economic theory, people's preferences are often treated as

well-defined, fixed, and given. That is a point of view in harmony with democratic ideals. But is the fate of the planet just a matter of untutored opinion? Doesn't science have some insights to offer? Natural science would seem to be particularly relevant when changes are contemplated that are irreversible or nearly so. Does economics as presently formulated pay sufficient attention to irreversibility? In physics, the first law of thermodynamics is the conservation of total energy, and keeping track of energy in physics somewhat resembles the process of keeping track of money in economics. But where is the analogue in economics of the second law of thermodynamics, the tendency of entropy to increase (or remain the same) in a closed system? In both theory and practice, then there seems to be some room for improvement in the way economics addresses questions of fragile values, especially in cases where those values are in danger of disappearing irreversibly. Any improvement that are made can be particularly valuable in connection with the preservation of biological and cultural diversity.

Unquote.

CULTURE AND VALUES

With the word culture, we would cover many subtler aspects of the society: art, literature, languages, religions, lifestyles, myths, sports, leisure activities, food habits, festivals, norms of personal and social behaviours, etiquettes, as well as ethical and moral belief systems. In a sense culture as broadly stated above is the practical manifestation of the personal and societal value systems – many of which may not necessarily be in conformity with the conceptual forms of values such as governance, judicial systems, economic systems etc. That is the reason one often hears loosely defined words such as Western values, Asian values, etc. Many nation-states which do not have a uniform or near-uniform cultural contents for all its people are termed as multicultural societies.

Globalising businesses in search of new markets, new investment destination, and new work force have started appreciating the need to work with multicultural environment. The rapid growth of audio and visual media, also tend to enhance the cultural distinctions in some cases and also amalgamate many cultural patterns in some cases. New music and dance forms, new combinations of cuisines, new fashion designs etc are a few examples of these processes. Even languages are affected by these processes.

Some of the ancient societies have learnt to adjust to many (often conflicting) cultural patterns by developing various forms of eccletical coexistence. Symbiosis and synergies are taken advantage of while making such adjustments. Countries into which there have been large influxes of immigrants from different parts of the world either as colonisers or settlers or even slaves have also developed various eclectic forms of cultural adjustments. There are many such living laboratories with positive preservation of universal values even though many of individual cultural entities do not directly subscribe to a universal vision of human values. Some of the existing cultural systems in their basic world views may even be opposed to some of the gains of humanity with universal application, for example, science. It may be necessary not to force the issue through destructive debates. It is important to remember that cultures are deep rooted in belief systems of human beings. They are thus intertwined with their self-processes. These belief systems and their manifestations cannot be treated like an external bacteria (which have entered into human bodies) to be exterminated through antibiotics. Dealing with these cultural specificities (whether in free societies or even in totalitarian ones) require considerable sensitivity to the deeper processes in the human beings (at the individual and collective social levels).

Let us again read a quote by Murray Gell Mann (Ref.4)

Quote :

“But how do we reconcile the critical examination of ideas, including the identification and labeling of error with tolerance – and even celebration and preservation – of cultural diversity?.....

Yet the difficulty goes far deeper. Many of the local patterns of thought and behaviour are associated not with harmful error and destructive particularism but specifically with harassment and persecution of those espouse the universalizing scientific and secular, with its emphasis on rationality and the rights of the human individual. And yet it is within that very culture that one often finds people concerned, as a matter of principle, with the preservation of cultural diversity.

Somehow the human race has to find ways to respect and make use of the great variety of cultural traditions and still resist the threats of disunity, oppression, and obscurantism that some of those traditions present from time to time”.

Unquote.

The single most challenge for 21st century is going to be the ability to deal with multiple cultures and integrate them into a corpus of collective inheritance of the humanity. This does not mean demolition of individual cultures nor to identify winners and losers or benchmark superior or inferior. In this process, humanity may have to invest on some of the “lost” cultures. The integration is not through mechanical uniformisation of the externally manifested features of the culture: in dresses, etiquettes etc. It will be through better understanding the self-processes of human beings practicing different cultures (majority or minority in numbers) and providing for avenues for exchanges of experiences of the inner process and their external symbolisms. It is likely that newer forms of literature, arts, philosophy, music, dance, food, fashion designs etc may emerge. No doubt there will be many smaller adjustments and cumulative changes all around. But all those processes and changes would lead to human value systems which are much more sustainable for individual and collective well being of all of the humanity.

Addressing the above tasks, does not mean abandoning of the major gains of humanity through science and technology and modern economic and social activities. In fact these areas will be enriched

with multicultural environment and resultant value systems described above.

At this point it is most appropriate to address education.

EDUCATION AND VALUES

Education is the very foundation, fabric and the façade of modern human societies. The above described cultural aspects are deeply interwoven with education.

Immediate concerns of the educational systems all around the world have been closely coupled with preparing the citizens (people) for coping with and contributing to the modern economy. Knowledge and skill bases are naturally strongly oriented to cater to these needs: be it in science, technology, humanities, languages, medicine, management, arts etc. There is a strong drive towards preparing people for utilising modern Information & Communication Technologies (ICT) as an important part of formal and non- formal education. Most of the developing countries are grappling even with the basic levels of simple literacy and numeracy.

Though there are considerable (several thousand fold) increase in knowledge and information during the past few centuries, a vast majority of human beings is not enjoying the benefits of higher levels of education: Though self-processes are in action even in illiterate and unskilled persons, higher levels of education allow human beings to advance quite rapidly with their self-processes. Of course, there are problems of depression and alienation in the highly educated persons as well. But on the whole "ignorance is bliss", cannot be the prescription for the humanity. Nor can humanity sustain itself by converting a large number of human beings to be delta-morons, a la Brave New World of Aldous Huxley (Ref.5), to be mere operators of the huge economic machine designed and operated by geniuses in economic, governance, science & technology etc. See also an article by Peter Drucker about the new knowledge society (Ref. 6).

Existence of different cultures with different religions, languages and therefore art and literature will ensure that such a monomonic world

does not come into existence! No doubt the knowledge and skills required for the modern economy are required for all human beings; in fact to provide them to all so that none is "left out" in wealth generation process is an important universal value system. But modern man or woman is not a mere hunter for food as his or her ancestor. There is so much to do beyond eating food and reproduction and in fact satiating the sensual desire. The Mind developed through human evolution demands a more holistic education addressing several multicultural aspects and value systems discussed in earlier sections of this chapter and to address many issues that will be raised in this book and also many other issues not even touched upon in this book or other books.

The second major challenge for the twenty first century is going to be to universalise such an education with due care for the diversities of languages, cultures, governances systems, local specificities civilisational heritages etc. There is a whole lot of human value systems to be discovered, recreated and practiced in such a process of universal education.

En passant

Starting from the quote from D.H.Lawrence, we have addressed many creations of the human mind over past many million years and also more importantly during the past many millennia. These are value systems. We have addressed a number of important elements like governance, judicial systems and economic systems. We have taken a view that free democratic systems are likely to be the better path for evolving value systems in which all human beings can prosper and also find better avenues for enriching their self-processes. However taking into account the existence of other forms of governance, we have given a few suggestions about areas in which people from all countries can work together. We have also suggested areas in which free democratic countries ought to work together in a tolerant manner in the interest of preserving the gains of freedom.

We also conclude or emphasise that a single most challenge for the 21st century is going to be the ability to deal with multiple cultures of

the world. We also suggest that a newer forms universal education to include the above task as the second challenge for 21st century.

However we have deliberately avoided discussion of defense and security aspects. The issues of nuclear weapons, arms race etc. No doubt armaments and warfare are also a part of the rich heritage of human evolution. These elements are intertwined with governance systems, economics, and even judicial system. In some cases there are compulsions of culture, history and ideologies which have often encouraged wars. The second half of twentieth century have witnessed (and world is still witnessing) many such wars and conflicts. There are newer forms of conflicts all around the globe. Countries, cities, citizens and corporates face death, damage, injury, insecurity, fear and trauma.

There are no easy or simple solutions to such dangers. It is not useful to be simple-minded pacifist. Tactical solutions need to be found by those who are more professionally qualified to deal with terrorist plots and attacks.

However, we believe, in the long run Homo Sapiens cannot survive through aggression, offence and attack as a part of their self-processes and value systems. They will have to find alternate avenues: different economic systems; multiple cultural models as discussed here; different governance systems or judicial processes; even various forms of educational systems ...

But in the overall the humanity has to learn to live together with these multiple forms in symbiotic or synergistic or eclectic or hybrid or emulsion forms or any other forms.

The whole thrust of this book is to explore and if possible suggest various avenues to reach such a state where war and violence can become redundant. That is the true ultimate goal of universal human value systems.

Chapter 1

1. Ref. 1 : The New Century
2. Ref. 2. The World Economy.

Chapter 2

3. Ref. 3. Evolution of Human Consciousness
4. Ref. 4. Quark & Jagnan Murray Gel Mann
5. Ref.5. Brave New World : Aldous Huxley
6. Ref.6. The New Society : Peter Drucker – The Economist