

A New World Order

(An Uphill Task Ahead)

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There is today, total agreement in the world in which we live that sufficient technological, human and financial resources exist to meet the minimum essential needs of all, without exception. It is, therefore, a matter of great concern that in spite of these capabilities a large proportion of mankind lives in conditions of want, even destitution. This gap between capabilities and the fact further establishes that the manner in which the world is organized at present, both in its political and economic content, leaves much to be desired. And men of goodwill have to seriously sit together to analyse the causes of continued poverty of large majority of human population and arrive at and implement the remedies, thereof. Although some change in this direction is already taking place, but mankind which is today much more conscious of both its needs and capabilities is no more prepared to be patient and watch this change take place at its own pace. It is, therefore, anxious to accelerate this change.

It is the same desire to accelerate this change which is the motivating force behind concepts like the New International Economic Order or setting up of international commission like the Brandt Commission or committees and conferences such as the UNCTAD. Another facet of this awareness to bring about a better standard of living for all is the North-South Dialogue.

There is nothing new about North-South contact or the dialogue. It has been there, ever since. Only the equation of parties to the dialogue, because of certain historical reasons, was such that overtime North and South respectively acquired considerable relative advantage and disadvantage. This situation is now sought to be corrected through a more constructive and fruitful dialogue which makes better use of forums of diplomacy combined with international understanding and goodwill.

In the task that lies ahead some important structural changes that are taking place in today's world, among several others, are to be taken special note

of: These are the areas of: (i) Technology; (ii) Finance; (iii) Manpower; and (iv) Communication - both audio and visual.

Technological changes are taking place at great speed. These changes will either help mankind enough means to destroy the world or make it more worthy for human living. Besides, technology is helping the world "shrink" in size at great speed.

The tendency of the world to become a small integrated place for mankind to inhabit as one brother-hood is further strengthened by the fact that institutional framework has been created which enables easy movements of capital from one geographical area to another, at a very short notice. Thus by ensuring considerable mobility of capital all over the world it helps reduce the manner of functioning of the world economy of today to a parish economy of the yesteryears.

Further, considerable pressures already exist for the movement of manpower from one geographical area to another, seeking better standards of living and quality of life. These movements again suggest that the world is no more a set of geographical areas separated from one another by seven seas. It is more a conglomerate of localities.

We are in an era of instant news. In this era to keep aspirations and needs of one set of people under control while giving the best of everything to another set of people is not likely to be tolerated since it will immediately attract attention. Particularly, the visual media is having a major influence on the tastes, life style, expectations, in short, total value systems of the people. In this context media managers have to ensure that a certain balance between expectations and available goods and services is maintained for all households and the gap is only such as is within tolerable limits, otherwise households individually and collectively may tend to force changes in the world order not necessarily through peaceful means alone. In a world that is undergoing such structural changes at great speed mankind has to reorganize itself for a new set of management tasks. The essential management task, however, is how to make best use of the

available world resources for the benefit of mankind at large. In particular, to ensure a minimum standard of living for all.

Management of the New World Order

In the performance of this management task an important factor to be taken into account is the territorial division of the world into several sovereign states. As yet there is no scope for abandonment or dilution of the concept of sovereignty of the Nation State. This constraint, therefore, is to be built into the scheme of management that we may consider for establishing the New World Order.

The management of the World has also to take into account problems of attitudes. An important manifestation of this attitudinal problem is that more and more people are becoming 'self centred'. They are unwilling to surrender any part of their welfare or wellbeing in favour of the less privileged wherever they may be located. In fact, the underprivileged who are located at long distance evoke much less response in terms of egalitarianism.

As against this attitude of the people which is hardening everyday, the leadership of almost every country increasingly swears by international cooperation. It talks more and more of international use of resources, including increased reliance on the United Nations. In this perspective leadership appears to be unable to carry the public with it.

In this struggle between the people and their leaders people seem to have an edge. Leadership is increasingly accepting a more parochial approach to development. Even smaller geographical entities, and communities within them, seek to maximize their welfare in complete disregard to the welfare of others. Thus there is today, an intense search for establishing sub-optimal equilibriums which meet the needs of the few even, if necessary, at the cost of many. An aggregation of all sub-optimal equilibria will seldom add up to the 'welfare' that can be obtained or generated from a national or global equilibrium. It is in this

manner that considerable "loss" occurs in terms of human welfare. This loss needs to be quantified. This quantification may be done by a secretariat. It is still not known, in quantitative terms, what will be the benefits of an alternative scheme of management of world resources, physical, financial and human. This needs to be known, at least in macro magnitudes, so as to be convincing to all as a programme for action. An action programme, the benefits of which are not known in somewhat quantitative terms will not inspire the necessary degree of confidence, which is essential for global action on the part of Nation States.

An important objective of the new world order or world management system is that it should ensure the survival of the world (or globe) as an entity capable of sustaining human life. It is easy today for the mankind to endanger the survival of the globe through atomic or chemical weapons or through environmental pollution or damage. The possibility of such a contingency is to be minimized if not eliminated.

The second task that the new scheme of things has to set before itself is that of meeting minimum human needs of food, shelter, clothing, education and medical aid for all irrespective of location, colour, caste and creed.

These two tasks if performed, the system may provide for equity, freedom and efficiency; equity to ensure equal opportunity for all; freedom to ensure growth technological change and general human development through competition, freedom of thought, expression etc; and efficiency to eliminate or minimize waste in world resources, at any place or in any circumstance, and advancement of self through competitive work effort and requirement, the minimum social economic needs of all having been already met.

To achieve these objectives the management system may take into account inter-dependence, both in terms of resources and needs, focus on trans-territorial issues, organize participation of best minds, make optimal use of known resources and make greater use of quantitative planning in the global context. An important area of global action is standardization of as many articles of production as

feasible including mother machines, machines, consumer durables and industrial consumer products. Standardization will pave way for mass production and thus for mass consumption. It will also, to a considerable extent, eliminate wastages.

Another area of action is that of changing the utility functions of individual households. It needs to be impressed that one refrigerator is a convenience and two can be a nuisance in terms of maintenance, time and costs. Likewise, a car which does ten kilometres to a litre is a convenience whereas one that does five kilometres to a litre can be a nuisance in terms of parking space required, fuel bills to be paid and other attendant problems. If large majority of households realize that they can improve their welfare by re-arranging their utility functions more consciously keeping in view their specific needs and in the process reduce their total outlays on direct consumption and consumer durables, there will be considerable saving in world resources which can be utilized to improve the wellbeing of the underprivileged. This race for keeping up with the neighbours etc. has given a majority of households a utility function which does not reflect their specific needs but more the value judgements of the society. If the individual households free themselves from this hold of value judgements of the society, and also consider that improving the welfare of the have-nots also contributes to their own moral, social and physical wellbeing, we shall have a new world in the making.

To these tasks all governments and their organs should attend, both through available collective forums and as individual Nation States. And in this task, journalists, the world over, have an important role to play in bringing about knowledge, awareness and practice of acts, a series of which, when taken with sincerity, shall bring about a New World Order.

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