



# 3D... IBA JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP

**Theme:**  
**Balancing Life, Nature & Businesses in 21st Century -  
Evolving Resilient Strategies for Survival**

*Guest Editor*  
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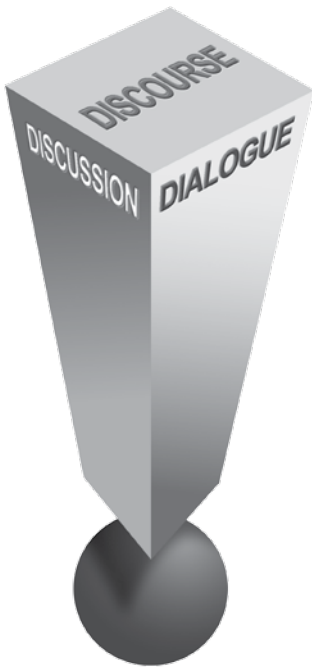
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## Guest Editor's Note



The advent of 21st century signalled an era that opens into tomorrow with crises that are tumultuous and with no promise of a solution. Starting with the first crisis of the century, termed Y2K, that redefined the way IT industry functions and how global citizenship responds at individual level, organisational level, government level and larger societal level, the last twenty plus years have faced crises of gigantic nature and highly expensive in terms of human life, ecosystem as well as economics of almost every country.

Shortly after the Y2K crisis, the disaster of Tsunami in 2004 changed the way world reacts and responds to colossal damage to life and nature across the globe.

The Housing recession that affected all countries during 2008-2010 changed the macro and microeconomics of all countries and the resultant debacles of corporate giants, banking sector world wise turned the direction of banking and finance services.

The closely followed second Tsunami of 2011 destroyed economies of companies, ecosystems and the aftermath for people is a long-drawn process of healing.

Disaster Management overtook every other aspect of development management, to gear up the capabilities and preparedness of people in several ways different from the earlier times.

Along the lines, the communication technologies, processes, and molten barriers for freedom of speech resulted in social media becoming a game changer in connecting people and offered never earlier opportunities for societies to bring change, revolutions and also in several scenarios swift retributions in social change.

Businesses continued to evolve, moving along the paths of technology, zeal of entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity and much larger pull of ambition to achieve. Each crisis, change and debacle brought forward a new dimension in the wake of doom looming large, offering a new path to break through and a new dimension and direction for humanity to seek tomorrow.

Even as the world assumed a rebounded economy by 2018, 2019 brought a larger challenge in the name of Covid-19. During March 2020 till March 2022, the Covid-19 pandemic jeopardised every country, every community and every social thread was stretched to the limit, and also resulted in colossal human loss.

The near stalling of human life and waves upon waves of debilitation of human activity and restricted action in several phases across the world for almost two years changed the way society functions today in any country

and any community. A carefully treaded restart of social and economic activity led to re-acceptance of conduct of business in almost all sectors from March 2022 onwards. The opening up of economy and society to a post-Covid life offers us today, a cautious yet promising life forward, with the hopes of a resilient world becoming a near reality after the heart-wrenching unfolding of three waves of the pandemic across the world.

Finding such a silver line to the Covid clouds prompts us to look at some of the disparagingly encouraging, assuring, but at the same time disturbing phenomena that brought pain, misery and mirth together to the humanity over the last 20 plus years in various forms and to various degrees, some hurting deeper than others, however, leaving a very bitter and deeply wounded lives. The mixed bag of life brought us cheer, hope and an assurance that in near times humanity and the people led ecosystem will continue to override the disruptions and thrive as usual. Human life has taught us the salience is both providential and manmade at the same time – prompting us attempt learning from each of these perspectives.

It was proposed to try to examine these issues from a range of perspectives and discuss and debate and articulate what could be discerned from the pursuits, experiments, experiences, and drives of multiple forces during the last 20+years, addressing a range of crises across the globe, by people, organisations, leaders and societies in their own unique ways. Especially, the current volume desired seeking articles touching one of the below sub-themes and discussion areas.

### ***Balancing Life, Nature, and Businesses in 21st Century - Evolving Resilient Strategies for Survival.***

The theme was configured from the dimensions of three distinctly different but inter-related sub-themes. They were expected to be studied through empirical studies or through social theorisation of the phenomena or the experiences lived through and pursued.

#### ***Sub-theme One: Breaking the Adversity for survival:***

The first sub-theme is a reflection of what, who and how of overcoming any of the crises that a region/ country/ community faced and overcame - at macro and micro levels of society and individuals. A quick reflection of how different countries addressed the governance of their land during these crises showcases how varied means and approaches brought the same goal of protecting the human and other life forms during this period.

How do people in different economies, different cultures, different ecosystems geared up to facing these crises across the last twenty years of this century and succeeded with what societal outcomes and economic results. The theory that might emerge from this perspective might help articulate and describe human salience in testing times and stressful situations and pursuits of individuals as well as leaders in working to pursue and build resilience.

#### ***Sub-theme Two: enduring human values to drive social change***

The second sub-theme is aimed at understanding how human values become forbearing when life is challenged in collective terms and how such a threatening scenario offers hitherto unavailable opportunities to introduce and inculcate social change. Study of Social behaviour, economic behaviour lifestyle behaviour and business behaviour of individuals, communities, and organisations – both government and non-government (including private and corporate organisations) in facilitating life to thrive, is the key research motto. Three key human values are intended to be studied – education, healthcare and protection of human life and examining the dynamic changes in the minds of people, organisations and governments in re-orienting themselves to each of these and other values from time to time, and the causalities therefor.

### **Sub-theme Three: Re-engineering for value creation and value protection – value in terms of financial capital; human capital and ecological capital.**

This sub-theme proposed examining the covenants of entrepreneurship and their significance in terms of flourishing or otherwise during the fast emerging and evolving times of the 21st century. It intends to study the successes and failures from sectoral and entrepreneurial perspective to find out whether entrepreneurship gets scuttled or opens; gets capped or released during the testing times in a society. The observations of blooming of unicorns from the neighbourhood during the peaks of the critical crises that world faced during the last two decades, leads to examining such entrepreneurial conduct.

The Journal received manuscripts from across the globe sharing their experiences, insights and chronicles from a range of domains and expert areas. As a result, some of the articles were in first person, some as bio-notes and some as case studies, thus making it a rich repository of chronicles of human endeavour and saga of pursuing resilience.

The issue presents nine articles, that touch upon the theme and the three sub-themes.

The opening article by A Suresh and Ramana Acharyulu titled, “Balancing Life, Nature and Businesses in 21st Century – Salience to Resilience – Pursuits of a Spiritual Organizations” sets the tone for the theme of the current issue. It offers few distinct perspectives on economic, social and emotional infrastructure that a spiritual entity pursues to build in a commercially driven global economy. The saga of one of the most difficult disasters the world faced in the early years of the 21st century offers a treatise on multiple facets that a business can lead and push the envelope in areas that were not attempted earlier. Till date, this is one disaster world was taken unawares and shuddered to face – The Indian Ocean Tsunami and the attempts of a spiritual organization to help communities overcome the adversity in a gradual but fundamentally redefining social resilience forms the basis for further discussions on the subject of this issue.

The second article by Sanjay Panigrahi titled, “A Tryst with “Myself”” deals with a gritty account of a hard-working, ambitious young man overcoming a series of adversities across several decades – both before 21st century and also during the 21st century, and offers insights and understanding on the true meaning life and salience, in his words and experiences.

The third article by Prashant Sharma, titled, “New Perspectives in Strategic Management – “From Gana-Tantra to Gun-Tantra”” addresses issues related to governance and their evolution and pursuits of policy makers to re-interpret and define afresh what and how a nation state faces adversities and overcomes them by gaining insights on how people in a state-nation perceive the conduct of civic society, political and social leaders, public servants and commoners. A fresh outlook that draws on the forms of government seeking to move ahead of adversities, offers a fresh perspective on policy making and running a nation on the basis of principles, ideologies and values.

The fourth article by Rishikesh Sharma et al, titled, “Pandemic Crises of Covid-19 vs. 2008 Economic Crises” addresses the dimensions of two major crises of this century and the layers of adversities that unfolded in these two decades, affecting lives, businesses and the global understanding of nature and life, vis-à-vis businesses. The article argues the dimensions of financial crisis that impacted the world vs health crisis that crippled the world, in unequivocal terms. It offers insights that are articulated with scientific precision and articulated to make sense in related life to economic systems and nature, offering multiple managerial perspectives.

The fifth article by Tejinder Singh Bhogal, titled, “Dosa of Success” addresses the issues of modern day values and how they shaped up human salience, from a first person account. It is built using a metaphor of Dosa and relating it to the concept of Success. addresses the silent pursuits of an individual in finding roots to face adversities – known and unknown, using common sense and natural instincts to deal with nature and lead success as way of life.

The sixth article by Ramana et al, titled, “OLabs – a technological innovation addressing challenges of education during Covid-19 Pandemic” articulates how an idea to enhance education through digital innovations lead to ready to scale up platform that became readily available during the Covid-19 crisis. It describes the role technology plays in silent and cryptic ways to offer founding pillars to social resilience, especially in terms of education and schooling and parenting, using a plethora of technological tools and platforms that worked in sync, offering solace to millions of school going children during Covid times.

The seventh article by Subroto Roy, titled, “Leadership and Management Style for 2023” deals with the issues of challenges of globalization and the adversities that are entrapped in the lives of globally mobile population and their survival pursuits. It revisits some of the path-breaking management ideologies of 20th century and traces how these were systematically destroyed by the technological innovations management and relates them to Indian philosophies of a person’s life and karma; a highly thought provoking article that rebuilds the definitions of leadership to face adversities of 21st century.

The eighth article by Mathew Cherian, titled “Evolving Resilient Strategies for Survival and Sustenance” deals with the silently emerging social change from longevity paradigms that better health and economic development brought with them as challenges and adversities on one side and the approaches and perspectives that are transforming the society into a totally unexpected equilibrium of millennials and flower generation in offering a new world order of a different kind, that eloquently speaks of salience of human life.

At the end, in the ninth article, Subhash Sharma caps the issue with social theorization that encapsulates the journey of life, both in terms of normality, in terms of adversity and in terms of facing upheavals from a social and business perspective. His article, titled, “Broad Basing Process for Socio-Economic Transformation” taken with kind consent from the Author, being published in a forthcoming book, addresses some of the root causes that result in societal adversities and their interlinkages to management of businesses, governance of state and nature’s own interpretation of how human actions are received and responded to, in a slinet. Way.

The sum of these articulations hint at human endurance and its ability to overcome challenges – small or big, and find ways of circumnuting them, even if they may get qualified as resilient approaches or simple ways of life leading life. The articles are presented herewith, for your thoughtful reading, critical analysis, strategic inferences and helping with future mode pathways for sustenance.

With Best Compliments From,

**A.V. Ramana Acharyulu**

*Guest Editor*

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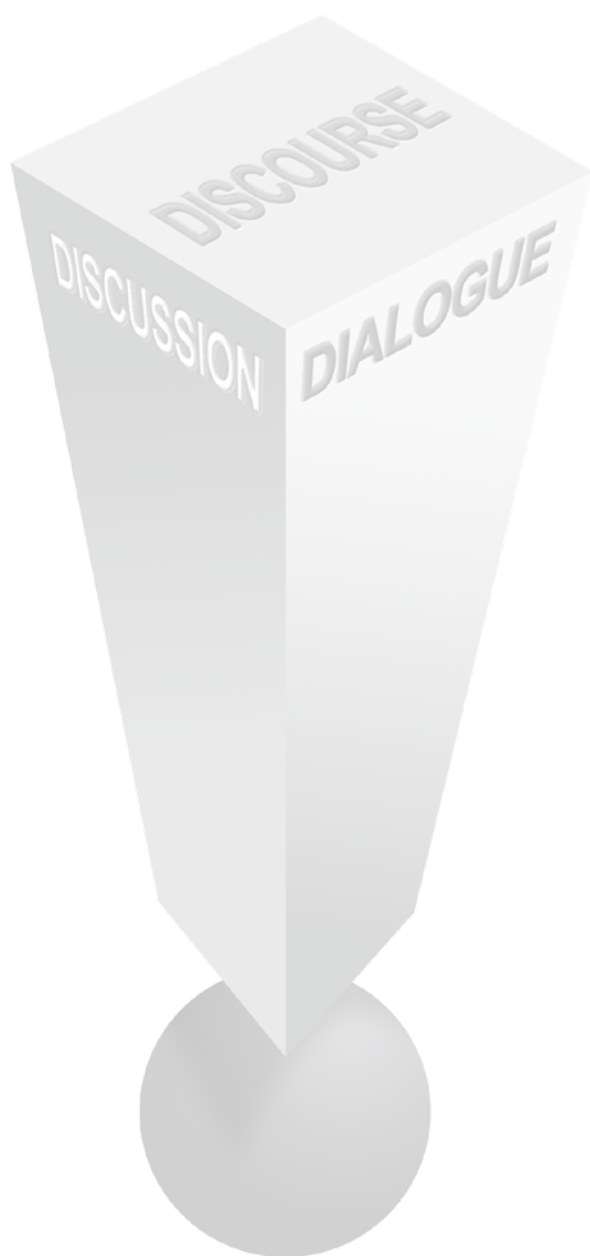


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# Balancing Life, Nature & Businesses in 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Salience to Resilience – Pursuits of a Spiritual Organization

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## Introduction

The advent of 21st century has brought with itself, three distinct changes in society. The first, a fervor and zeal to increasingly turn to spiritual pursuits by common man; the second, adapt and adopt the most dynamic technological shifts in society and the third, to embrace nature – in its good, bad, and ugly facets and continue to pursue life. At one point of time during 20th century, the trend to move away from spirituality and religion and increasingly adopt both western and oriental thought towards a free and unaccounted lifestyle, breaking away from the traditions, rituals, religious beliefs and pursue an egalitarian and equality centric ideologies swayed. Marxism on one side, flower children on another side, new world order lead by American consumption models confused and torn the mindsets of people across the world, with Americanism

dominating for most of the time and bringing in the most influencing mode of capitalism as the way of society. From such scenarios of 60s and 70s, the 80s showed an impasse and stagnation in the ideologies of people, as the economic hardships overpowered all other ideologies and lifestyles and seeking an aspirational lifestyle and economic well-being took the front seat. As the countries started to move away from poverty, and started to realize better socio-economic conditions, the human mind once again started to look towards inner self in search of peace within. That manifested in various forms and approaches and in traditional societies and cultures, a revival of religious pursuits, seeking spiritual salvation started to drive lives of people in various ways and manners.

In India as well as in other countries, recognition, and realization that economic

well-being and success in livelihoods should go hand-in-hand with spiritual well-being as well. As this became prominent, the emerging middle class became the lead for society and their embracing a religious and spiritual path for better and meaningful life has started to manifest. Initially, the pursuits were to find an inner self, but later, these pursuits also became guideposts to good to humanity, to the larger social spectrum and find a very delicate balance between physical, economic, and spiritual pursuits, thus leading to a harmony across humanity. A realization of harmonious social system paves way for facing unexpected situations, emergencies, and human as well as natural disasters. In the current essay a brief is presented on how a spiritual organization attempted weaving a thread of knitting the human suffering with natural processes of building livelihoods to face adversities with peace and calm rather than get engulfed in sorrow and spirals of distress through its spiritual leadership.

As we all remember, the close of 20th century started signaling the impending nature's fury to the unscrupulous exploitation of nature for economic ends by way of increasing natural disasters and calamities, occurring in several parts of the world. Especially, the last decade of 20th century had been tumultuous in every corner of the world, and India is no exception. Especially, the frequency and intensity of natural disasters and their aftermath continued to grow, leading to increased human misery. A website monitoring the occurrence of disasters worldwide reports there were 4212 reported disasters during 1980-1999, while the period 2000-2019 reported 7348 disasters. Around 1.19 million deaths reported during the first period and 1.23 million in the latest two decades. These disasters affected 3.25 billion people during 1980-1999, while the disasters during 2000-2019 affected 4.03 billion lives. The report further elucidates that the increase in the numbers is largely due to a steep rise in the climate related disasters, including extreme weather events. The report also stresses that

there has been a rise in geo-physical events including earth-quakes and tsunamis which resulted in more deaths than by any other disaster.

Mata Amritanandamayi Math, lead by Sadguru Mata Amritanandamayi Devi involved itself in facing and bracing these disasters and helping people cope up with the tragic losses and involved in building resilience in mitigative approaches. In the current article, few aspects of how spirituality and spiritual leadership offers solutions that are beyond economic and technological and public policy measures, providing a wherewithal for long term sustenance of human life are articulated and documented.

### **Incidence of natural disasters and providence of disaster relief**

The disasters watchdog, The Watchers listed the top ten disasters of the world from 2000-2019, and two of them are reported from India; the first, Earthquake of 2001, that killed 20005 people, at 9th position, and Earthquake and tsunami of 2004 of Indian ocean, at number one position, that killed 226408 people. While the data on disasters and their affect on human lives is documented and policy makers build on creating frameworks and approaches and response initiatives in an organized way, their approach had been of governance and social welfare in an equitable fashion. When such disasters affect those near and dear, it is the human effort and initiatives of people known and unknown that matter in the hours of darkness and grief, much more than administrative measures. At this juncture, the work done by Mata Amritanandamayi Math, led by Amma offers an insight into how societal preparedness towards unexpected, towards grief and towards rebuilding life as a sane future looking and peace seeking individuals and as communities as well. In the words of Amma, "our work begins with immediate aid, but it doesn't end there. With our commitment to long-term relief, we're helping vulnerable communities get back onto solid ground. This

aid comes in the form of food and medical aid, as well as scholarships, vocational training, and permanent shelter.” While the physical relief gets attention, draws numbers and gets statistical recognition, what is not spelt but felt is the solace that Amma offers to a grieving person, no matter how young or old one may be and how economically placed one may be.

### **2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami**

On 26 December 2004, an undersea earthquake occurred off the coasts of Indonesia and resulted in one of the largest tsunamis ever recorded in the world. A series of huge waves traveled across the Indian Ocean and hit several countries, causing havoc and destruction across Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India, among others. According to official estimates of Indian Government, 10,749 people died, 5640 went missing and thousands of people became homeless. The disaster hit fourteen regions of the country, badly affecting Andaman Nicobar Islands, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Puducherry and affecting Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal to slightly lesser extent, but the toll was paid in almost all regions covered not only by Indian Ocean, but also by Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea.

Mata Amritanandamayi Math, located on the shores of Arabian Sea, on a stretch of islands between backwaters and Arabian Sea in Kollam District of Kerala, not very far off from Indian Ocean, some 100 km away, and many villages on the sea belt of Kerala faced the brunt of the Tsunami on that 26th December 2004 early hours. People inside the Ashram as well as in all villages and hamlets around the Ashram in Alappad Panchayat faced the devastating Tsunami waves, subsequent high winds and a sudden eerie calm that pervades such unprecedented disasters. The Ashram was the first to respond to the tragedy and led by Amma, everyone started to understand, fathom, and come to the grip of the scenarios, and started with reaching out to people in the village, adjacent

villages and went on spreading across the entire sea belt of neighborhood. What begun as a solace offering visits of Amma, quickly moved towards a concerted relief work, meeting the immediate food and medical needs, mapping out the tragedy across homes and reaching out to every family. Sanyasis, Sannyasins, brahmacharis, families that are living in the Ashram, volunteers, and all those working with the institutions associated with the Math, begun a concerted effort in addressing the three major relief and rehabilitation dimensions: the food and medical aid; immediate shelter to those losing their homes and boats; rebuilding livelihood avenues. The initiatives quickly spread beyond the Kollam region and Amma’s volunteers started reaching out to all locations that became affected by the Tsunami, including the entire Tamil Nadu coast and Puducherry, besides Kerala Coastal localities on the western side.

In the words of Amma, every aspect of the survivors’ lives was considered and improved, by way of a holistic and concerted approach. The relief and rehabilitation work focused towards developing and deploying multi-faceted, comprehensive, and sustained disaster relief measures that continue even into 2022. The initiatives taken in design and building of long-term solutions for housing, boating and nurturing lives of people by even training children of villages with skills of swimming, to face emergencies into the future. One may look at the extreme range of human suffering – from the simple but excruciating hunger pangs and deprivation of personal and emotional belongings to the most complex emotional suffering of losing near and dear, losing livelihood, losing hope to the future, due to known and unknown causes present a heart wrenching scenario unfolding as the event moves into the past and days start turning in. Offering solace to the suffering at multiple layers of human life and proving a helping support in multiple ways becomes the job of a Guru and Spiritual Leader, which was unfolded in the days and years that unfolded subsequently.

The focus with regard to housing on the aftermath of Tsunami took a fresh outlook and was termed sustainable recovery (Arlikatti and Andrew, 2012). The efforts were majorly focused on achieving long-term recovery through active involvement of both local communities and policy makers in planning, decision making and implementation stages of post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation endeavors.

### **Disaster Management – role of Relief and Rehabilitation (R&R)**

When disasters strike, people are affected in many ways – loss of people result in trauma for their kith and kin, loss of livelihoods and loss of personal resources and support mechanisms. Many organizations involved in disaster relief measures work with people to help cope up with the disaster and lead them to work towards mitigating the impact of the disaster, over a period of time. As such, every effort starts with meeting the challenges of loss of access to food and water and thereafter, to health and medical support. The first level relief measures need to address these, irrespective of their location, thus making it the biggest challenge to reach out in the shortest possible time. Many a times, the R&R teams need to even work creating the access and approach – in terms of physical movement, and thereafter, communication. These get followed by restoring electricity, transport, and water supply, but in no specific order, depending upon the severity of the impact a community had, on these. Helping people endure the calamity and face the grief happens to be the second most priority. These will then offer avenues to look for long term sustainable livelihood restoration and recovery.

Sustainable Recovery, as a strategy when adopted, requires addressing multiple domains of a community or a region. They need to attend to rebuilding three platforms:

a. physical infrastructure for food, clothing and shelter, more emphatically, the livelihood infrastructure;

- b. reconstruct social infrastructure – weaving the individuals, families and communities into stronger and closer networks; and
- c. develop emotional infrastructure – offering hope in real terms and practical ways, so as to offer strength to individuals to work with social and physical infrastructure and address the economic challenges into the present and future.

The breakdown of physical infrastructure affects the whole community, while the poorer and marginalized sections of a community additionally face the difficulties of accessing communication systems, transportation, health support systems, employment, and education as well. In multiple diasporas existing in small diverse communities further lead to breakdown of social systems in a violent and disturbing manner, disrupting the social fabric of the larger society. If these are recognized, articulated and addressed in a range of strategies by various agencies that involved in R&R, the challenge of recognizing and addressing the emotional infrastructure could happen only with the emotional bonding offered through the spiritual support and heart-to-heart connection built by Amma, through her healing services. In one of the most touching instances, when women who lost their children, seeking help to recreate their families once again, by being able to conceive a child once again. Deeply touched by the emotional distress of the women, Amma helped offer medical solutions to offer hope to them to construct their families once again.

Scarcity of natural, economic and technological resources further create caste systems in implementing equitable outreach. India, on the aftermath of 2004 tsunami, faced each of these in multiple forms and multitude of impacts across the country, with challenges ranging from logistics to law and order in distributive justice. Government, along with civil society organizations, NGOs – local and international, Developmental Organizations, and voluntary effort by locals. Needed to be

put in place in concerted manner, so as to ensure people's suffering is mitigated.

It is at this juncture, that the leadership of a spiritual organization become intrinsic and invaluable, as the solace offered by a spiritual leader takes away the grief from the mind and allows personal loss to be accepted. Such transformation, helps, not just individuals, but their families, their communities and finally the social systems to come to grips of how well recovery be made possible. Amma, with her personal touch to offer solace to every individual, worked with a deep support that went beyond emotional relief and offered much needed psychological strength to live through the agony. Thereafter, working on scientific and technological solutions, the relief and rehabilitation works focused on long term recovery. The initiatives went to the extent of developing early warning solutions for coastal communities for natural disasters and disaster preparedness using cutting edge scientific and technological innovations and working on collaborative projects with Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) to develop tsunami safe building material and construction methods, by working with teams of engineers of various research and development organizations, including InterGovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO, with the aim to develop Tsunami preparedness.

On one side the focus was on harnessing the advances of science and technology to create long term solutions; and on the second side, developing a framework for systematic approaches for recovery programs. It is in this specific area, the focus of the Ashram (MAM) had been on concerted efforts to document and analyze the issues in field level action related to R&R. As a result, a carefully studied approach for designing and constructing houses on a reconstruction initiative became a critical input and ingredient in the R&R activities of the Ashram. Involvement of local communities in designing core-housing units, especially, the focus of involving sustainable development framework into

the design, construction and use of material specifically relevant for longevity and long term sustainability of a house became relevant aspects of the housing reconstruction program. The concept of owner-driven approach in housing recovery program found significance in finalizing the approaches for housing development activity. These efforts lead to

- a. core-housing unit design, in terms of flooring, wall and roof materials.
- b. core-housing unit design, in terms of patterns of living space, ranging from single room to multiple rooms and space for living moving from large to small, but offering multiple amenities than basic amenities;
- c. changes to household amenities such as source of potable water, lighting source, toilet and wastewater system; and finally
- d. the proximity to the sea and water bodies vis-à-vis protection of uplands for the housing constructed.

The evolution of housing solutions offered models for other R&R organizations also to examine and adopt for their specific needs and demands of their situations and communities' requirements.

The experiences and learnings for the Ashram helped itself equip better for impending challenges. Mata Amritanandamayi Math lead the disaster relief activities anywhere in the world today, without hesitating in terms of difficulties and challenges that it may have to face. The Ashram rushed to take up relief activities in Gujarat after the 2001 earthquake, much before the 2004 tsunami occurrence. It set its feet in Philippines at the advent of 2013 typhoon; and it worked tirelessly in Nepal when 2015 earthquake occurred. The lessons learnt during 2004 tsunami came to help subsequently when Japan faced the tsunami in 2011, and its relief camps offered solace to Japanese communities just as the Kollam villages.

### **From being sensitive to salient and building resilience:**

As noted, the 21st century unfolds an increasing fury of natural disasters as we move into the future. The multiple layers of development in different regions in different eras of the century unfold a different set of challenges for resilience. Convergence of globalization forces and reverse globalization forces - led by the technologies and emerging overlays of how people commute, communicate, consume and control resources, experiences and pursue life - further jeopardize the balance across life, nature, and economics. On one side the tech-based services corner most of the incomes and resources of people and livelihood support and food becomes critical for those on the margins. In such scenarios, which are aptly termed VUCA scenarios, require people be lead with the support of a guidance and hand-holding that comes with a path of spiritual solutions to seek peace. Seeking peace from within needs to over encompass the physical and material needs, even as they become essential for life sustenance. It is in this context, that Buniyadi Taaleem, first introduced by Gandhi in 1917 and supported for more than a century by people who are living very close to nature in Champaran, becomes manifested in a sustainable form when children of seaside villages are taught swimming more as a lifesaving skill than a livelihood skill; when women are helped re-engineer their bodies to become child-bearing once again; when the deprived and disabled are helped to become self-reliant through self-help activities, a society dreamt a hundred years ago by Gandhi, becomes manifest through the resilience being built by the women and children of the fishery communities in the Malabar coast and Coramandel coast alike.

Connected to nature, relating livelihoods to the natural resources, deploying technologies for nature conservation, and managing commons inevitably become the founding pillars of sustainability, which offer people sustenance against man-made and nature

inflicted disasters. It appears the concept of sustainability gets redefined and relates to resilience in ways much beyond the global supply chains and connecting natural resources to manufacturing and consumption centers.

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## A Tryst with “Myself”

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I joined my professional career at the age of 22. From my B School IRMA, I joined AMUL as their Management Trainee and was given charge of opening its' Cuttack branch in Odisha and setting up a sales and distribution network in the state. I worked and grew in AMUL for 21 years when I became the General Manager at its Headquarters looking at multiple functions and geographies.

As I grew into Senior level positions, I realised that managing people and businesses was not that easy. It was not a matter of only functional skills of knowing how to do a job but also much more. Senior level roles are complex and demanding. Things are not always in your control. In your career you do not get subordinates and bosses to your liking. So, at the end of the day, it is all about how you manage people. That's it.

Sometimes in the early 90s when I became an Assistant General Manager of Amul for North India, I had to manage a large geography of a no. of states with good number of direct reports, distributors and retailers. I had a young and growing family... a wife and two small children. They demanded time

at home and business demanded working for extended hours and a lot of travel. My wife tells me that I used to virtually live out of a suitcase. No wonder to my liking I was promoted to the rank of AGM, and I was one of the fastest rising Senior leaders in the company at a relatively young age.

We had reasonable salaries in AMUL. It was difficult to manage a family in a metro like Delhi, but we somehow did. The crave for recognition, position, appreciation of the boss possibly made me blind to other parts of life which are equally important. The farmers' cooperative, working for the underserved class gave an ego trip like none and I used to put in more than 12 hours per day at work which included a good one and half to two hours in commuting.

In spite of my over attachment to the job and all inadequacies that came along with it, yet something was lacking I could not describe what it was but there was some kind of a vacuum inside. Beyond work, beyond family I yearned for something else.

In one of our leadership meetings, one senior colleague of mine told me “Sanjay do you

meditate?". I said, "No but what benefit does it give?". He said try it and then decide. He offered to take me to his home to teach meditation. I was waiting at the lobby of our guest house he never came or possibly was delayed. Another friend of mine Mr. James Joseph, who was into a meditation practice was passing by fortuitously and asked me what I was doing and said "if you do not mind come with me, and I will try to teach you how to meditate".

I went to James's home, and he gave me a "Sitting". I was asked to sit with closed eyes and if thoughts were coming not to fight them but to allow them to pass and give a suggestion that "There is a divine light in my heart". I sat for about forty five minutes which appeared to me to be not more than ten to fifteen. I felt like I was into a kind of thoughtless existence for most part of the "sitting".

The influence of meditative practice was immense. I meditated every day. I became calmer, more balanced and could look at issues confronting me with much more equanimity and clarity. Every day the meditative hours were like a balancing act which put my life in perspective. From that day till today for past 25 years I have been into this meditation practice which is known as "Heartfulness Meditation" ([www.heartfulness.org](http://www.heartfulness.org)) which tells us that like the two wings of a bird there are two aspects to human existence.... material and spiritual. Without this balance in your life, you are incomplete, your actions are suboptimal, and you tend to lead a life of inadequate joy and happiness.

Looking back, I realise that in today's world we live in an endless and perpetual pursuit for material possessions, power and greed. We hardly spend time with "ourselves". Many find it extremely difficult to close their eyes and even sit for two minutes in contemplation.... complaining of numerous thoughts bothering them. Where does these thoughts come from, what do they go?

When we meditate these thoughts arise, but

we do not give attention to them making them weaker and weaker. We have a unique practice in Heartfulness meditation known as "Cleaning" to be done in the evening after day's work is over. During this practice, we try to give a suggestion that "All complexities and impurities which we have acquired throughout the day are going away from our system from our back in form of smoke or vapour". Twenty minutes of this exercise makes us feel light and brings us back weakening the thoughts that trouble us including over attachment and over thinking on various facets of our material life which is the cause of most of the trouble. Daily an evening practice of twenty minutes of "Cleaning" is spiritually and mentally extremely refreshing.

In today's life, there is constant conflict if I may say between desires, needs, expectations, yearning for material gains like money, prestige, power on one hand and one's values, attitudes and discipline on the other. Meditation helps to create a balance and gives a purpose to life.

Coming back to my own experience, during those years in early 90s, Indian economy was getting liberalised. Amul was facing competition from many private players, and we expected a number of Multinationals to enter the market which we had created over a number of years through painstaking efforts. Amul embraced a "Change Management" initiative known as "Total Quality Management" (TQM), a transformational exercise to re-energise itself to fight competition by becoming more agile and prepared. TQM was a balancing people friendly initiative, at the same time demanding. It worked on team building, improving skill sets of employees and striving to excellence. A part of the TQM exercise was aiming at "Personal mastery." It asked some very fundamental questions like "Who I am", "Purpose of my existence" and "Need for achieving an excellence in my delivery wherever I worked". This was beyond business in its conventional terms.

Interestingly, through a cascade mode TQM philosophy was downloaded to our owners—the Farmers on one hand and the market, the distributors and retailers on the other. How many Orgs would even think of delivering such an ennobling initiative which is about “Personal Mastery”. Meditation became an integral part of TQM and in Amul, all our meetings used to start with a meditation for five to ten minutes which helped us to centre ourselves and took away the angst, the negative thoughts/feelings which otherwise we might carry into the meetings.

While Amul was a part of a very large community of milk producers’, employees, distributors retailers, it worked at “Self Mastery”, what do ourselves to excel using principles of TQM as its philosophy. One great learning from TQM initiatives like Kaizen, housekeeping, Small Group Activities was what I can do myself rather worry or pointing fingers at what others could have done. It was a very ennobling exercise. For a Coop like Amul in some way it has resonated well, and it is a 41,000-crore business behemoth today spreading its wings across states countries with its excellent products and benefitting millions of farmers distributors, retailers and employees. To say that a part of Amul’s success story is implementation of TQM would not be an over statement.

I joined the “Corporate” world after leaving Amul. Had my brush with the corporate leaders who came from different organizations, the race was brilliantly competitive, and everyone tried to showcase how they were more valuable to the organization than others and to prove their points. In the long term, this approach only produced bitterness with everyone aiming some time or the other how to occupy the higher chair. Saving grace was the “Owners” were quite balanced in their outlook while they encouraged leaders’ business excellence but did not allow unnecessary politicisation through creation of unnecessary and counter productive “Power centres”.

Comparing Amul with the corporates, it delivered business results at a much lower cost through higher employee involvement and a nobler purpose. Another learning was also that money is not all that motivates for a higher performance or attracting talent, though it was an important element to keep the firewood burning at home. When you are paid possibly a little lower, it makes you humbler and more grounded.

We face conflicts, differences due to competing values in the work place... values of self versus values of organization. We face conflicting goals, with multiple roles at home and work. It is not uncommon to have prejudices and biases. Indecisiveness also creeps in with too many roads ahead, roads that are popular, roads that are less travelled and roads that we “want” to travel....

But, at the end we are confronted with that ever-important question “What do we want from life or ourselves?” Is our goal power, health, success, family harmony? All this we try our best to achieve but usually we achieve some success but mostly frustration. The process is that of excitement at times but also of anger, stress and irritability.

After I started meditation such things such as over attachment to the job and lesser attachment to other important aspects of life like the family, the community somewhat reduced enabling me to take a more balanced view of life. Every day when you meditate, and you ask yourself questions and able to take a dispassionate view.

While the western philosophy has always emphasised on the important role of mind in human existence for its ability to solve problems of life, the big question remains that it is also the same mind which is the trouble creator. Is the mind a spoilsport or a saviour? What meditation does at the very basic level is to help manage and regulate our thoughts hence the mind.

The activity of the brain scientifically represented by brain waves which can be

measured by an EEG machine. The patterns of brain waves are

- *beta* ( $f=14-50$  Hz) When the brain is more active
- *alpha* ( $f=7-13$  Hz) Brain is quite and restful state.
- *theta* ( $f= 4-6$  Hz) and *delta* ( $f<4$  Hz) Dominant during sleep, deep meditative or creative states

Our level of creativity is influenced by the state of consciousness and our brain wave pattern is directly affected by it. The most creative state is being at the alpha or theta wave level where the frequency of the brain waves is at a minimum possible which can be attended by deep meditation.

At a basic level meditation helps us to achieve different levels of mind and states of awareness. It helps us to generate an inner state in which we not only experience the exuberant energy but also a flow of “intuitive knowing. It silences us from being impacted by our senses. When not managed well, they can lead to reactive, egocentric and stressful behaviour. When we meditate we are able to access a deeper level of consciousness possibly we are able to tune our mind to more proactive response which can be in

line with our “values” or higher-level goals. And, finally we are able to manage through “detached” engagement.

Yoga i.e., meditation (Yoga of the mind) is all about achieving a balance. Patanjali described the Yogic system as the way of “Ashtanga Yogas” or the eightfold path. Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and finally Samadhi. In the Heartfulness meditative practices, the Adiguru said that it was not necessary to follow this serially. And he started directly with “Dhyana” that is meditation. He also stated that the best yogic practice is achieved in the school of home or in a Grihastha ashram which teaches you all values that is necessary for a moral conduct and a detached living fulfilling the needs of the nature without getting overtly attached.

As I completed my 38 years of professional engagement out of which last 25 years were practising Heartfulness meditation practices, I kept wondering what life be it personal or professional would have been had I not taken up this practice? And, how beautiful it would be if we practised a yogic way of life in business and personal lives with our values and principles becoming the corner stones of our existence?



# New Perspectives in Strategic Management - “From Gana-Tantra to Gun-Tantra”

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## **Abstract**

Through this paper an effort has been made to provide new perspectives in strategic management for combating with the heartbreaking menace of Gun-Tantra to the nations where Republic form of government culture (GANA-TANTRA) prevails and which is transformed into GUN-TANTRA by spiking rise in gun-culture. Moreover, this paper also focuses on the societies most affected by the GUN-TANTRA (system or culture of guns) and primarily emphasizes on one of the largest economies of the world i.e. U.S.A which is affected the most by gun culture epidemic.

In this paper, the increasing inclination of individuals towards acquisition, procurement and use of highly sophisticated firearms has been portrayed as GUN-TANTRA which means the system or culture of guns. This drift of a society from GANA-TANTRA (A republic State) towards

Gun-Tantra is caused due to the lacuna in laws in such nations or States, political ill-will and various other factors. These factors are strategically dominated by the organizations engaged in the manufacturing, sale, modifying and transfer of firearms and ammunition business in order to achieve its objective of gaining larger customer base through making them addictive, showing fear of life, promoting guns as the means of safety, portraying procurement of firearms as a symbol of masculinity and power and earn much larger market share by penetrating the market, regulating the demand and supply for its products and services.

The strategic model adopted by such organizations is called the STM model (STRATEGIC TACTICAL MOTION or action) which has its own socio-economic and political implications. The FDI (Fear & fascination, Depression and Instigation) tools of STM model and the focus areas of

STM model (as discussed later) provide for the modus-operandi to this model to operate within a society and when such a model becomes successful, albeit it brings win-win situation for the organizations engaged in the business of fire arms or for other players of different industry which are correlated with the firearms industry such as online violent gaming platforms like PUBG or Battleground and other similar platforms and games, it eventually also gives rise to the opportunity for these players to develop a new market which is called the '*Violent market*' and encash upon the larger market share at the cost of *Health, Life and Liberty (HLL)* of the citizens, wherein the 3D transformation of a vibrant society towards the state of **DEVASTATION, DISHARMONY, & DARKNESS (3D)** starts spreading its roots and become an aspersion to that society.

The aim of this paper is also to suggest for the strategic creation and implementation of the arms laws by the nations or the States in a manner which on the one hand does not infringe the rights of the people of a particular nation or State and simultaneously on the other hand remove the redundant laws as per the changing needs of the society, so that the alarming increase in the despicable acts of individuals, organized and unorganized crimes can be reduced and this can be achieved through the positive and honest political will and cooperation, amendment and enactment of new stringent laws in line with the proposed **LAW (LEGAL AUTHORITATIVE WISDOM)** and **PEACE** model of governance and leadership, where *P-refers to Progressiveness, E-refers to the Efficiency, A-refers to the Action, C-refers to the Cooperation and E-refers to the Evaluation.*

## STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT- INTRODUCTION

Strategic management is not a modern conception, rather it is an age old concept. Gradually, with the passage of time rationality kept emerging and new paradigms in the field of technological advancements also

kept gaining acceleration. With the change of every YUGA (world cycle) and also with the gradual passage of time new creation as a result of rationality became the metaphor of success for the opportunist class that helped in the overall transformation of the various businesses, nations and the mankind. In earlier times the notion strategic management was regarded as "NITI NIRDHAARAN" which referred to the creation & implementation of plans, policies, activities and programs by the order of the king or the ruler of a particular State, Province, Nation or tribe or a clan on the advice of his council of ministers. This set of pattern is still in existence in all the democratic republics of the world including the States where anarchy rule is still prevalent. The main line of difference between the strategic management in earlier times and strategic management in today's competitive scenario is that previously in a State or a nation the Neeti or the strategies were formulated to restrict the entry of new entrants through stringent entry laws made by the king or ruler of the State or a nation, restricted accessibility of public to the diverse products and markets. This most of the times led to the situation of invasion by the king or ruler of another State or province, whereas in modern times with the facilities of ease of doing business, flexible laws and opening up of market for all has created all new paradigms for the world economies and has also transformed the nature and policies in geo-political and global circuit.

Strategic management is the process wherein the planning activity takes place after ascertaining the goals either by an organization for its product or service or for penetrating the market with existing competition or no competition, by the Nation or the State for formulating laws, procedures, programs and schemes for the development of its people and the nation or the State or even by individuals during the course of his/her normal life routine. Once the planning process in line with objectives is completed it is followed by the action plans and



subsequently by the evaluation process which gives the overall feedback about the progress of the said plan in context with the particular product or service after considerable measurement of its performance. It is through the process of strategic management only that the organizations, Nations and States come to know about the shortcomings, if any in its laws, policies or programs or need for improvement either in the quality or quantity of its product or service.

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL IMPACT

There are 2 facets of the term strategic management i.e. firstly, the Strategy which means to plan and secondly, the tactics which involves the tricks, wittiness and courage but may or may not include the element of honesty and wiseness. Thus, the concept of strategic management in the modern age can be described by “STM” model wherein *“S refers to Strategic, T refers to Tactical, and M refers to the Motion or action”* either by an organization, Nation or a State. This STM model has been rendering very productive results not only to the firearms manufacturers, dealers, or people engaged with such business but it has also been one of the major source of contribution to the government’s exchequer. Consequently, it brings serious societal implications for the innocent people and jeopardize their lives and liberty because of its very nature or symbol of POWER attached to it. The person in possession of arms considers himself to be a powerful person who keeps looking for the opportunity to exert his power upon the powerless. He considers himself to be in exercise of absolute power with the gun or firearm in his possession and in this process the acts of criminal misconduct such as mass killing or murder gets committed by him. Such insane despicable acts of destruction caused due to the gun culture justifies the doctrine that *“Power corrupts, but absolute power corrupts the most.”*

If we look at the socio-economic and political scenario at global level we can find that it

is only the bottom-line or the profits which the nations, States, and businesses look for in today’s world without caring and considering about the morals, laws, and ethics. The technological revolution has no doubt provided and contributed immensely in the progress of the nations and the world, but at the same time it has also opened wide opportunities for the organizations to whom only profit maximization is the only ultimate goal at any cost whatsoever. The unflinching rise in the procurement, possession and use of sophisticated firearms by the civil population in the federal democratic nations like U.S.A provides a clear illustration in this regard where easy and brittle firearm laws enables the fire arm industry players to explore and exploit the market opportunities and increase their market share. Such a mechanism also assist the players on other industry like online violent gaming platforms to design and strategize their product and market strategy and share the profits.

The introduction of violent games such as *PubG* and other such online gaming platforms with violent features are regularly becoming popular among the youth especially around the globe and is not only affecting their mental health but also playing a major role in the development of violent tendencies among them, as a result of which the new line of business market has emerged which is known as the **VIOLENT MARKET**. It is the continuous strategy and tactics by such organizations for increasing their market share that also allows them to attract their targeted audience. For example, the feature of purchasing the weapon(s) of one’s choice after completion of a certain level in the game, feature of voice conversation with the opponent etc. Such kind of continuous advancement, strategic and tactical moves in the features of the product on a continuous basis keeps the audience engaged with such games, attracts the others, and ultimately becomes the cause of committal of indecent acts or crimes by some. The main aim of such organizations is mostly to target the youth as



they are the most vulnerable ones and then making them habitual and tempted for their product. Such temptation when goes beyond one's prudence and control, then it leads to increase in certain crime(s) like firearm trafficking, murder, theft, suicide etc.

The corporate models of leadership like CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) or MSR (My Social Responsibility) which showcases the responsible nature of organizations towards the society or societal cause are actually like a Corporate Veil behind which the other reality distinct from what gets portrayed by the organizations exist. The true nature and color of such corporate bodies or entities engaged in such activities can be seen after lifting this corporate veil. For example, ban on the online games such as PUBG and various other games and apps of the like nature by the Government of India in the year 2021 due to the data breach, issues concerning national security, addiction to children, monetary losses, self-loss, suicide, murders<sup>1</sup> clearly reflects the self-interest satisfaction and dishonest nature of these entities engaged in such business. Such organizations constantly engage themselves in the attainment of their objective at the cost of health, life, liberty and privacy of the individuals.

Such models without any doubt also assist the organizations in attracting the prospective consumers for their product as it enables them to create or build a certain brand image about its offerings in the minds of the common masses due to which they become addicted and habitual of their product.

Similarly, the organizations engaged in the production or creation of firearms, highly sophisticated weapons and gaming platforms are reaping a lot of market share due to the continuous engagement of customers in need of such articles and also on the other hand by creating the demand for their product. In the countries like U.S.A such organizations

are constantly strategizing their market and product strategies to make their product different from its competitors. In the wake of winning the market competition most firearms manufacturers also provide the facility of customized firearms to their customers. In democratic countries like republic of U.S.A. the firearms culture is vastly prevalent from decades. The right to keep and bear arms is a fundamental right protected by the Second Amendment of U.S. Constitution. It declares that *"A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed"*<sup>2</sup>.

The highly sophisticated firearms, assault rifles and other deadly weapons can easily be availed by any citizen who has not even attained the legal age to procure and possess the same. It gives very high possibility to the fact that *"if you have the gun, it will definitely make the bullet run"* i.e. if there is an arm carried by someone, someday it will definitely be used. Although, such a right is not the absolute right but still it makes people to contend for the procurement of deadly weapons like assault rifles which someday becomes the cause of mass destruction. Such a deadly drift by the people of a democratic republican nation towards the weapons of mass destruction makes the nation to move towards ***GUN-TANTRA (System & culture of guns) from GANA-TANTRA (from Republic state).***

### **GUN-TANTRA- "A 3D SOCIETY"**

Gun-Tantra is the intuitive, cognitive and intentional approach of both the individuals and the organizations engaged in the manufacturing and selling of guns or firearms which is based on the their interactions with the firearms and this interaction is completely attained through their shared beliefs, thought processes, moral and legalities projected upon the guns or firearms. The prevalence of guns and firearms

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.indiatvnews.com/news/india/pubg-banned-apps-re-entering-india-without-govt-permit-latest-news-712075>

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<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second\\_Amendment\\_to\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_Constitution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Amendment_to_the_United_States_Constitution)

along with the incessant interaction between the individuals and entities having stake in the manufacturing, selling and dealing in firearms or guns business eventually gives birth to a new society where the societal interactions between the powerful (one with the gun) and the powerless (one without a gun) gets transformed in a reciprocal manner wherein the powerful considers himself to be in absolute power and develops the mindset and tendencies of controlling the acts of others. As a repercussion to this a new society which is emerged may be elaborated in the form of 3D which manifests the dysfunctional state of a particular Nation or the State where the unflinching rate in hate crimes like murder, dacoity and other organized and unorganized crimes become rampant and further causes **DEVASTATION, DISHARMONY & DARKNESS** in such a society.

This 3D societal transformation can be witnessed in one of the most civilized societies of the world and also one of the greatest economies of the world i.e. U.S.A from the recent incidents wherein mass killings have been committed by the perpetrators in possession of highly sophisticated semi-automatic fire arms.

Studies show that there were *1.5 million deaths caused due to firearms between 1968 & 2017 higher than the number of soldiers killed in every US conflict since the American War for Independence in 1775. In 2020 alone, more than 45,000 Americans died at the end of a barrel of a gun, whether by homicide or suicide, more than any other year on record. The figure represents a 25% increase from five years prior, and a 43% increase from 2010. According to the FBI, there were 345 “active shooter incidents” in the United States between 2000-2020, resulting in more than 1,024 deaths and 1,828 injuries<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, the latest incident in America’s epidemic of gun violence —at Robb*

elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, on 24th May 2022 left 19 children and two teachers dead. Last year alone, more than 1,500 children under 18 were killed by firearms. America’s gun scourge is not about mental illness. It is, and always has been, about the 400 million guns that remain largely unregulated on the streets and in peoples’ homes<sup>4</sup>.

*Data from 2020 showed there were 45,222 firearm-related deaths in the United States, as reported by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Among firearm-related deaths in the United States in 2020, about 54 percent were suicides and about 43 percent were homicides. Firearm-related injuries rank in the top five causes of death for United States citizens up to age sixty-four.*

*Assault by firearm accounts for 70 percent of nonfatal firearm-related injuries, while unintentional injury accounts for twenty percent. The vast majority of victims (86 percent) are male<sup>5</sup>.*

Such tragic incidents and data provide the evidence for the world that how a society deviates from GANA-TANTRA (from republic) towards GUN-TANTRA (Cobwebs of Gun culture) and the market players involved in the firearms business and other correlated business like violent online games or applications keep earning the market share strategically with ease and that too at the cost of health, life and liberty of the people.

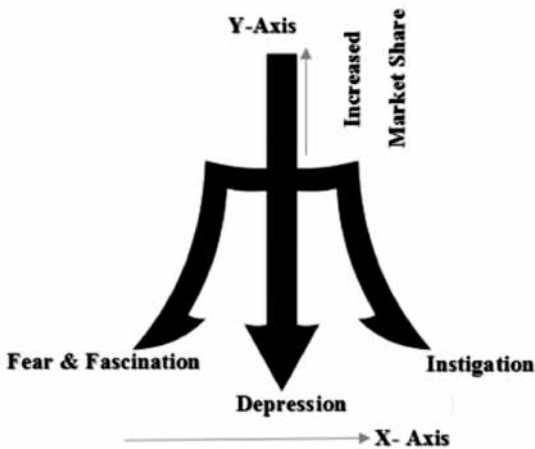
### **STM (STRATEGIC TACTICAL MOTION) TOOLS IN GUN-TANTRA (GUN CULTURE) ECONOMIES ADOPTED BY FIREARMS ORGANIZATIONS**

The strategic management tools which are adopted by the organizations engaged in the manufacturing, selling, repair or transfer of firearms or semi-automatic weapons of mass destruction may be delineated through Fig.1 as under:-

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-41488081>

<sup>3</sup> <https://theprint.in/opinion/how-to-start-solving-americas-gun-culture-problem/971335/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gale.com/open>



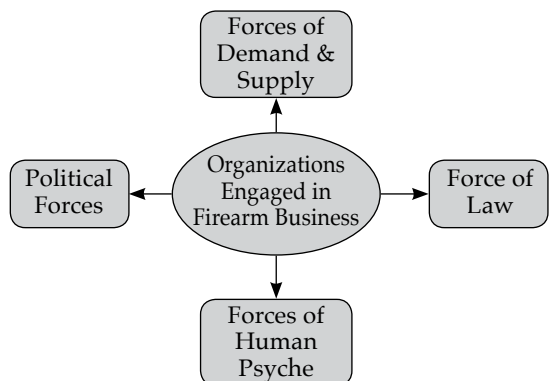
**Fig.1- Downward facing Trident Diagram Showcasing the FDI MODEL of Strategy creation and implementation**

The above diagrammatic representation under Fig.1 elaborates a Trident diagram which is facing downwards, as it denotes the symbol of a society where firearm corporates or those dealing in the firearm business penetrate the market of a society, induces and saturates the particular society with the culture of guns or firearms among the general public. In such societies GUN-TANTRA (Gun-Culture) reciprocates the GANA-TANTRA (A democratic and republic State) and leads that society towards distress, darkness and destruction. It further talks about the tools that are used by the organizations dealing in firearms business to increase their market share wherein, the X-Axis represents the FDI (Fear & Fascination, Depression & Instigation) strategic tools utilized by the organizations to penetrate or dominate the market and attain competitive edge in Gun-Tantra economies with the objective of only achieving the increased market share. This increased market share can be represented by Y-Axis.

The impetuous metaphors of success behind earning a healthy market share by the firearms industry apart from the other product strategies like product differentiation, customization, customerization etc are development of fear and fascination for

the arms in the human mind, changing the human psyche, especially that of youth and leading the depressed individuals or individuals suffering with trauma to attract towards their products, as they find a solution in purchasing and using them because of their ill mental state either or they find the possession or use of a certain weapon(s) to be a symbol of masculinity and power and would render or fetch the end or desired results to them. The last tool which is used by such organizations is instigating their target audience by attractive and powerful punch lines or slogans such as *"Dominate The Skies"* (by Benelli)<sup>6</sup>. Such slogans or punch lines have the capability of promoting the gun culture among the common masses like an epidemic and leading them to purchase their product, as they tend to associate themselves with the product offering after continuous hammering upon them either thorough ad campaigns on social media, print or any electronic media which consequently develops aggressive tendencies and behavior among them and further elicits their stimuli to acquire and experience the particular firearm(s) in reality.

## STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT FORCES IN GUN-TANTRA - Fig.2



- **FORCES OF DEMAND & SUPPLY**-In common parlance, there exist only two forces in every economy in the world which governs or regulates the market of a particular economy of a nation or the State

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.benelliusa.com/>

or business entity. These forces are called the forces of demand and supply. But, when we talk in terms of strategy creation, we can find that there are other forces (as shown in fig.2 above) as well which are equally focused upon by the organizations dealing the firearms business entities while developing any product and marketing strategy. There is the possibility of existence of demand in a limited and controlled way for the firearms, but once its demand is created by the organizations continuous efforts by using fear to one's life as a tool or constantly showing fear to one's life, emphasizing on the need for adoption and procurement of arms for self-defense, sporting purpose, portraying arms as a symbol of power through regular fascinating advertisements and slogans, ease of procurement of semi-automatic weapons due to the absence of stringent laws, using technology such as online gaming apps and other such violent games to induce the public and making them addicted, the firearm makers or companies dealing in firearm business become successful in regulating the supply of its product also along with the demand for its product in market, then such organizations succeed in their objectives of churning the market share by introduction of deadly or lethal products for the civil population also.

- **POLITICAL FORCES-** Strategic intention of an organization cannot be completed without the help of the governmental machinery. The government machinery in any democratic nation of State requires fund for the accomplishment of its objectives i.e. to win the elections and for getting their objective accomplished they rely heavily on the corporates who could assist them financially in the attainment of their objective. But as there exist no freebees in this world, in the similar manner corporates engaged in the business of firearms also have vested interests. If

they extend their hand of cooperation to the Government or a political party of a particular nation or the State or agrees to abide to the particular government's terms, it expects that particular government or the political party in power to give something in return. This 'something in return' is encashed by the firearm organizations in the nature of ease of doing business, free or easy licensing policies and easy accessibility with no restrictions to media platforms for promoting its product through online marketing in an unlimited manner etc.

- **FORCE OF LAW-** Law and society are the concepts which are interconnected and correlated with each other and there cannot be the existence of one without the other. *Law refers to the set of norms or procedures which is the duty of every citizen of any nation or state to abide by.* Even the minutest disbalance or the turbulence between the law and the society is sufficient to cause intersection with alarming negative effects in the societal order of a particular nation or the State. The business of arms and ammunition is a business which runs on various factors viz; Life, Identity domination, Symbol of masculinity and power, violent games addiction etc and in turn becomes the cause of turbulence in the society. The organizations engaged in the business of deadly weapons like assault rifles, semi-automatic weapons etc succeed in their policies of increasing the market share by capitalizing on the demand either created by them or existing in a limited manner or because of lack of stringent or brittle laws in a particular nation or the State governing the same.

The lawlessness with regard to purchase, sale and transfer, conversion of deadly weapons, ammunition, violent online gaming applications, and platforms exposes the particular nation or a State towards the gun culture and further leads the nation towards a 3D

state (Destruction, Disharmony and Darkness). Such vulnerable laws or non-existence of firearms laws in a nation become the part of strategy formulation for the organizations dealing in catastrophic products & services while designing their product & marketing strategy and also allow the organizations with other related products, but with a different usage like violent online gaming applications and gaming platforms like PUBG or battleground to explore the market opportunities and share in the bottom-line by making their target audience habitual and addicted.

- **FORCE OF HUMAN PSYCHE-** Human psyche with regard to any product or service refers to the unconscious phenomena, attitude or state of mind of human beings which is attained by them either from regular usage, study or personal experience of a certain product or service during the course of one's normal life. But, when it comes to the fascination towards possession, procurement and usage of semi-automatic arms and related ammunition like assault rifles it can easily be seen that if humans, especially the youth, the distressed & depressed class of individuals are exposed to the picture of some firearm(s), or even if they are exposed to its pictures or its usage through online gaming platforms or the like applications, then such weapons or its pictures or their experience of the weapon from online violent game(s) plays a pivotal role in developing violent and aggressive tendencies and behavior among them. In other words, it negatively affects their psyche and makes them feel fascinated for a certain weapon(s) or ammunition. Such aggressive behavior and tendencies directly elicit their stimuli and further arouse the feeling in them to actually enjoy the possession or use of the firearm in a tangible manner for which they feel fascinated. Further, the

ease of access to the firearms market and the products such individuals end up in purchasing the arms like semi-automatic rifles, guns, assault rifles and sometime land up in committing the indecent acts which are against the society and the mankind. Eventually the overall change in human psyche benefits the players engaged in dealing with the firearms as they succeed in selling their product and cash on the market share.

## CONCLUSION

*“Shastra (Weapon) and Shaastra (Knowledge)”* should always prevail in a balanced manner in a democratic or republican society. ‘Shastra’ means the weapons which should only be used by the security and armed forces of a nation and the States for safeguarding the nation or State against the enemies or controlling the actions of its citizens, whilst the ‘Shaastra’ i.e. knowledge should be used as a tool by the nations or states for educating its citizens and transforming them into noble and wise individuals in order to make them capable to contribute towards the overall development of the nation through their acts and wisdom. But when the culture of only possession and usage of sophisticated firearms by the citizens of any democratic nation starts increasing among the civil population, then the *shastra (weapon or gun)* culture becomes dominant upon the *shaastra culture (culture of knowledge)* then it tends to bring 3D negative transformation to that society and pushes such a society into the pit of DEVASTATION, DISHARMONY & DARKNESS.

It is a harsh reality that with the advent of rationality and technological advancement in global economies, various metaphors of success in various spheres of business have come into existence like increased marked access, large scale production, sales and distribution which provide basis for the organizations, nations and States to encash upon the market opportunities at the cost of **HLL** i.e. *Health, Life and Liberty* of the citizens and the **STM** (STRATEGIC

TACTICAL MOTION) model in this regard is one such model that helps the organizations, especially those engaged in the business of manufacturing, selling, modifying, transferring and repairing of firearms and ammunition. This STM model is further utilized by the said organizations in line with the other STM tools i.e. Fear & Fascination, Depression and Instigation along with the forces known as the STM Forces which consists of Demand & Supply force, Political force, Legal Force and Force of human psyche and plays the ancillary part in aiding and capitalizing the market share for such organizations.

Contemplating the factors discussed above which gives spike to the Gun-Tantra (Gun culture) in any economy, it becomes very evident that the said problem can only be solved by the force of law and by positive political will. For this purpose, the word law may be delineated as under:

- **L- Legal**
- **A- Authoritative**
- **W- Wisdom**

Law in any country comes into existence after anticipating and understanding the possible requirement for curbing down the indecent actions of the individuals in any State or nation. The objective behind the inclusion of any law in the statute book or law book of any nation or the State should be based on the strategic concept of maintaining of orderly '**PEACE**' wherein, *P- refers to Progressiveness, E- refers to the Efficiency, A- refers to the Action, C- refers to the Cooperation and E- refers to the Evaluation* of the laws framed in relation to protect the rights of all and maintaining a sacro-civic society. If a nation succeeds in designing strategies to attain its objective of maintaining law and order or controlling the acts of its citizens, then PEACE model of leadership and governance would become the most appreciated part of STM (STRATEGIC-TACTICAL MOTION) model.

The PEACE model together with **LAW (Legal Authoritative Wisdom)** provides a pathway for the political parties and law framers of a nation to design strategies and formulate laws which best suits the need of the people, the society, overall development of the nation, does not infringe the rights or the fundamental rights of its citizens and at the same time prevents a GANA-TANTRA (A Republic and democratic State) from getting transformed into GUN-TANTRA (Gun Culture). It also focuses on the efficiency, action and cooperation of the opposition parties and individuals entrusted with the job to fulfill their duties in a righteous and honest manner. Thereafter, once the laws regarding the firearms and conduct and operation of the organizations dealing in the said business are altered or new laws are enacted, they can also be evaluated over the period of time on regular basis after measuring its performance. The percentage increase or decrease in the crime rate or injury or fatal accidents etc due to the procurement and use of fire arms or increase or decrease in the crime rate after the ban on sophisticated arms and ammunition for civil population can be evaluated and further strategies can later be evolved based on the results achieved through evaluation process.

The "**Legal Authoritative Wisdom (LAW)**" is the authority of law creation or striking down of redundant laws, the authority which is delegated to the policy or law framers and its implementers with a responsibility of strategic application of positive wisdom in understanding the current needs or requirements of the changing society.

Considering the LAW (Legal Authoritative Wisdom) and the PEACE model of leadership, following recommendations may be provided which may prevent a Republic or democratic State from getting transformed into a complete gun culture or gun-tantra:-

- The firearm possession by any individual in any country should be distinguished as Prohibited Bore and Non-Prohibited



Bore as specified in Indian Arms Act, 1959. The PB (Prohibited Bore) includes fully automatic, semi-automatic firearms and some other specified types which can only be issued by the central government for certain groups of people. Non-Prohibited Bore (NBP)<sup>7</sup> includes remaining types of firearms and may be issued by central and state governments for ordinary citizens. Furthermore, the high capacity gun magazines for example with 15 rounds or more should also be completely banned.

- The State or Central government of any nation or State must should make it mandatory for the individuals to satisfy the licensing authorities about the genuine life threat to them. Further, upon the satisfaction of this clause the licenses should be granted to the persons who genuinely requires the same.
- It should be made legally mandatory for the licensed private firearm dealers in the countries like U.S.A to keep an up-to-date record of all the sold firearms and ammunition.
- There should be prohibition in carrying fire arms in public in countries like U.S.A where GUN-culture is widely increasing and it is legal to carry firearms in public.
- Anyone sentenced or convicted for any offence for more than 7 years including moral turpitude, should not be allowed to procure or use a firearm and his license should be suspended.
- Firearm dealers should conduct a criminal background check of individuals before selling any firearm to anyone.
- Proper trained individuals with stable mind should only be granted the firearm license.
- Raising the age bar from minimum 21 years to at least 55 years as an eligibility

criteria for an individual to become eligible for attaining firearm license or possess the same depending upon his/her mental and physical strength and stability.

- There should be a complete ban on the violent online games like PUBG or battleground or other similar games which makes especially the youth addictive of it and develops in them the aggressive behavior and further create elicit stimuli for possessing and use of certain firearm(s).
- There should also be regular legal checks and control on the over marketing of firearms.
- States must take proactive measures in order to make sure that all stocks of firearms including the firearms meant for the use by defense and law enforcement personnel, including those acquired and kept by dealers are kept safely and securely, in order to avoid the illegal trade activities of firearms or ammunition to flourish.

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# Pandemic Crises of Covid-19 vs. 2008 Economic Crises

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## Abstract

The 2008 and 2020 crises have entirely different origins, the former was a financial crisis where huge levels of debt had been taken which caused the financial system to collapse. It was compounded by a lot of households having payment issues. In contrast, the 2020 crisis is rooted in a health crisis with far-reaching, unexpected economic repercussions across the globe. This document will explore the causes and effects of 2008 and 2020 economic crises and compare the similarities and differences between the two crises.

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### Section 1: 2008 Financial Crisis Causes and Effects

It was the summer of 2008, and people were running to ATMs to withdraw money from

their bank accounts. Rumor has it, banks are running dry, and there is a cash liquidity crisis. One could see the amount in their bank account but could not withdraw it.



People wondered how the banks who held their money ran out of cash while waiting to withdraw cash with deposits displayed in the account; where are their savings gone? Mortgage loan applications were getting rejected, and lenders wanted higher down payments. How did we reach this place, where we could get a house for a zero down payment and minimum or no documents to not get a loan for closing a new house.

## Causes of 2008 Financial Crisis

### 1. Deregulation Mindset

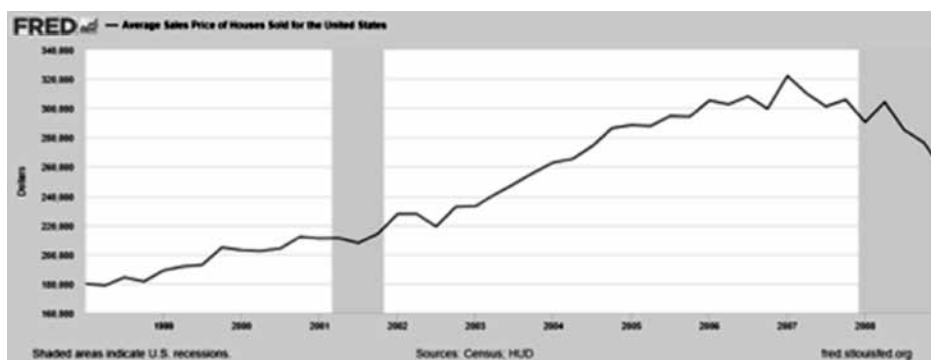
The US economy works on credit, meaning a company can borrow money on leverage based upon their credit ratings, assets, and other factors from financial institutions without cash on their balance sheet. In the mid-2000s, the Bush administration and Fed were in a “deregulation-mindset” and believed in free-market ideology<sup>8</sup>. Leading up to 2008, many years of minimum regulations encouraged investment banking firms to operate on high credits in the market. The complex US financial system helped companies hide their excessive borrowing and risky investments<sup>9</sup>, eventually causing a credit crisis when mortgages and mortgage-related securities shook the markets. The credit shortage affected the everyday operating needs for financial activities,

including loans and eventually shrinking auto and homes sales. The irregularities resulted in financial losses destroying trillions of dollars in wealth.

### 2. Housing Growth

The best time to be in the US real estate business was 2002-06 (Figure 1). House prices were increasing year over year, and Adjustable-Rate Mortgages (ARM) loans were at a historic low. Banks were giving out loans at meager interest rates due to Fed’s low-interest-rate on short-term loans until 2004, as a tool to fight deflation trying to recover the economy from the 2001 mini-recession. By reducing the rates to 1%<sup>10</sup>, Fed focused on a more expansive monetary policy to support the economy<sup>11</sup>. Americans took advantage of market conditions and purchased homes on too much debt and, as an additional source of income, refinanced homes several times to pocket capital gains. With increasing demand, banks and lenders started throwing money with features like low-interest rates, which ballooned after a year or two or even paid only interest and no principal<sup>12</sup>. Mortgage brokers earned commissions by getting people to sign, even with poor credit.<sup>5</sup> This was a win-win-win situation for lenders, homeowners, and banks.

**Figure 1: Average Sales Price of Houses Sold for the United States from 1997 to 2010.**



**Source:** <https://www.macrotrends.net/1314/housing-starts-historical-chart>

<sup>8</sup> (Blinder, 2013, Chapter 3)

<sup>9</sup> (FINANCIAL CRISIS, n.d.)

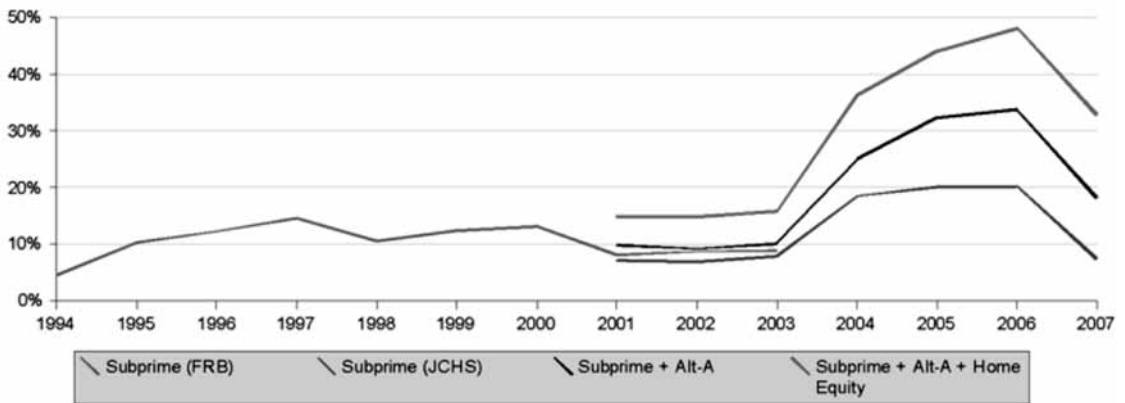
<sup>10</sup> (The Global Financial Crisis: Its Impact and the Recovery, 2018)

<sup>11</sup> (Federal Reserve Experiences With Very Low Interest Rates: Lessons Learned, 2008)

<sup>12</sup> (Rasure, n.d.)

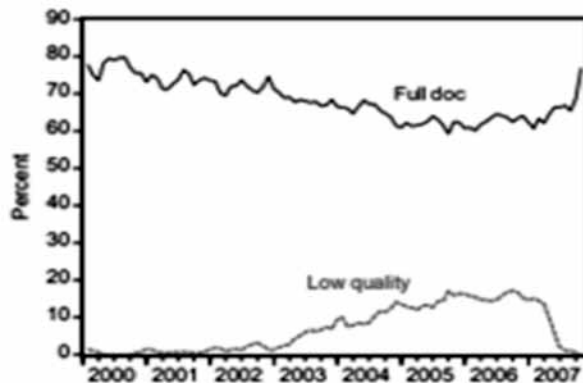
### 3. The Growth of Subprime Mortgages

Once in a lifetime housing boom encouraged builders to make more new houses, which peaked in 2005 and prices in 2006/07.<sup>5</sup> Real estate agents who pocketed high commissions by issuing loans started to put fraud values on people's affordability to catch the housing wave boom and low-interest rates. Subprime mortgages as a share of total mortgages originated during the year, increased from 5% in 1994 to 13% in 2000 and on to 20% in 2004-06. (Figure 2) People's mortgages with poor credit history were categorized into subprime mortgages, 1/3rd of which were loc-doc, no-doc, liar loans high-risk, classified as low-quality loans<sup>13</sup>. (Figure 3)



**Source:** Data from 1994-2003 is while 2001-2007 is from the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University from the Federal Reserve Board<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 3: Percentage of loan documentation at origination**



**Source:** <https://www.federalreserve.gov/pubs/feds/2008/200863/200863pap.pdf>

### 4. Mortgage-Backed Security-Securitization

Mortgages started to flood the market from lenders, who funded mortgages by repackaging them into pools sold to investors. Financial institutions grouped hundreds of subprime Mortgage-Backed Securities (MBS) into trenches by the level of risks and earnings<sup>15</sup>. Collateralized Debt Obligations (CDO) were created by taking the lowest-rated

trenches and repacking them with a AAA (highest ratings). This resulted in passing the consequence, making someone else worry, helping the CDO managers to make their commissions. Banks had the leverage of 10:1,

<sup>13</sup> (Blinder, 2013, chapter 3)

<sup>14</sup> (Lyon et al., n.d.)

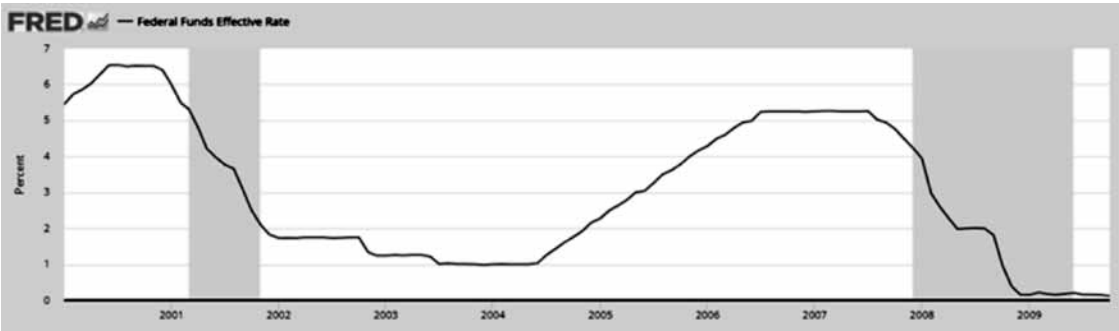
<sup>15</sup> (Duignan, n.d.)

but they showed artificial leverage boosting their assets by creating special Structured Investment Vehicles (SIV)<sup>16</sup>. Deposits and equity funds a bank, but investment banks fund themselves by borrowing and generally are leveraged 40:1.<sup>17</sup> Credit Default Swaps (CDS) found their way into the market where companies used high-risk bets to assess if a mortgage pool would exceed a certain threshold or if a company would default.

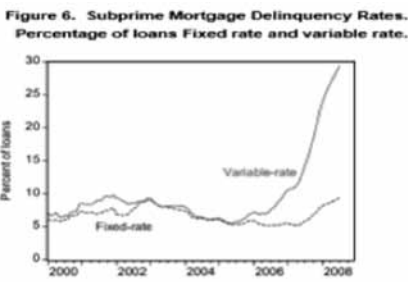
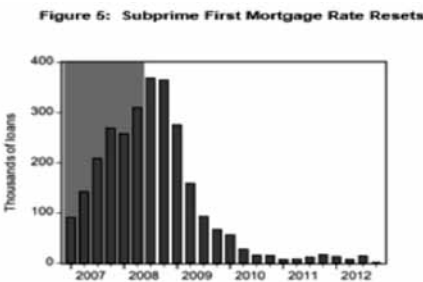
### 5. Raised Rates and Subprime Borrowers

As the economy started to improve in the mid-2000s, the Fed started increasing its rates, reaching around 5.25% in 2006 (Figure 4).<sup>18</sup> Significantly few people could pay a higher interest rate after the ARM expiry rate and refinance to a lower rate (Figure 5). In

February 2007, existing home sales peaked at an annual rate of 5.79 million, and prices had already begun falling in July 2006, when they hit \$230,400 (Figure 1).<sup>19</sup> The housing market began to slump. Due to the high leverage used by homeowners to buy unaffordable houses, in many cases of 20:1 or 10:1, a price decline of 10%-15% was enough to eliminate most homeowners' equity. Defaulting homeowners (Figure 6) had little incentive to pay off a house without equity they could no longer sell<sup>20</sup>. Banks would not refinance a mortgage that was upside down. Banks would not accept a house as collateral if it were lower in value than the loan.<sup>12</sup> A bubble had just popped and took down the biggest investment banks with it 'converting many US households 401k to 201k'.<sup>21</sup>



Source: <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/FEDFUNDS#>



Source (Figure 5, 6): <https://www.federalreserve.gov/pubs/feds/2008/200863/200863pap.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> (Blinder, 2013, Chapter 4)

<sup>17</sup> (Blinder, 2013, Chapter 4)

<sup>18</sup> (Fed Cuts a Quarter Percentage Point - Jun. 25, 2003, 2003)

<sup>19</sup> (Fed Cuts a Quarter Percentage Point - Jun. 25, 2003, 2003)

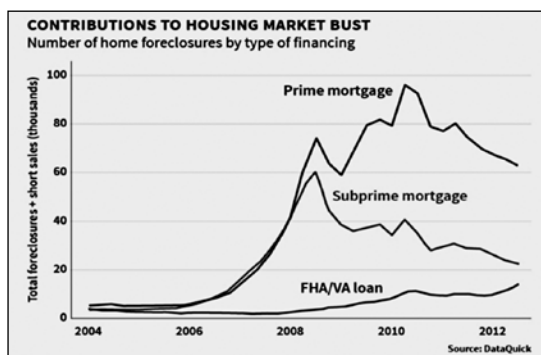
<sup>20</sup> (Rasure, n.d.)

<sup>21</sup> (Blinder, 2013, Chapter 1)

## Key events of the crisis<sup>22</sup>

Upon Fed's interest rate increase, subprime borrowers holding adjustable-rate mortgages (ARMs) had begun defaulting on their loans because many mortgage holders were "underwater" not able to refinance nor able to sell the homes. FigA6 shows an unprecedented default/foreclosure crisis in 2008-2011. The macroeconomic condition changed into a recession as the crisis spread leading to a higher unemployment rate. Reduction in household income contributed towards even the prime borrower's downward spiral during the second stages of foreclosure peak (See Figure 7, 2011).<sup>23</sup>

**Figure 7: Number of home foreclosures during the great recession period.**



**Source:** <https://www.nber.org/digest/aug15/us-foreclosure-crisis-was-not-just-subprime-event>

The banking sector faced a steep decline in the value of MBS that led to losses at many mortgage lenders, hedge funds and investment banks by 2007. Bear Stearns, which was among one of the prestigious Wall Street investment firms, exhausted its liquid assets and was then purchased by JPMorgan Chase. Freddie Mac & Fannie Mae, the federally chartered corporations that make mortgages available by guaranteeing them in the secondary mortgage market, were rescued by the U.S. Treasury Department to prevent their collapse. Lehman Brothers, the 168-year-old investment bank with \$639 billion in assets, filed the largest bankruptcy in US history in 2008 and its failure created lasting

turmoil in financial markets worldwide.<sup>17,18</sup> The Fed agreed to loan \$85 billion for American International Group (AIG), the country's largest insurance company to cover losses of their credit default swaps (CDSs). AIG was deemed "too big to fail," because its collapse would likely cause the failure of many banks that had bought CDSs to ensure their purchases of MBSs, which were now worthless.<sup>24,25</sup>

## Summary

Deregulation in the financial industry was one of the leading root causes of the 2008 financial crash.<sup>26</sup> It allowed speculation on derivatives backed by cheap, subprime mortgages available to those with questionable creditworthiness. When the Fed started to raise interest rates in 2004, the mortgage rates increased, consequently pressuring home borrowers' abilities to pay. This burst the bubble in 2007. As the home loans were closely linked to hedge funds, derivatives, and credit default swaps, the crash in the housing industry drove the US financial industry to near collapse as well. Together with the US banking industry's global reach, it almost pushed most of the world's financial systems to near collapse. The 2008 financial crisis was driven by loose credit, reckless speculation and too much debt in asset markets - the housing mortgage market - in 2008.

## Economic Effects of 2008 Financial Crisis

The 2008 financial crisis led to the propounding economic effect. Multi-million households lost their jobs, homes, and savings. According to the federal reserve report<sup>27</sup>, i) Unemployment rate went from 5 percent in 2007 to 10 percent in 2009 (Figure 8), ii) Home prices fell approximately 30 percent from 2007 peak to the bottom 2010, iii) S&P 500 index fell 57

<sup>22</sup> (Weinberg, n.d.)

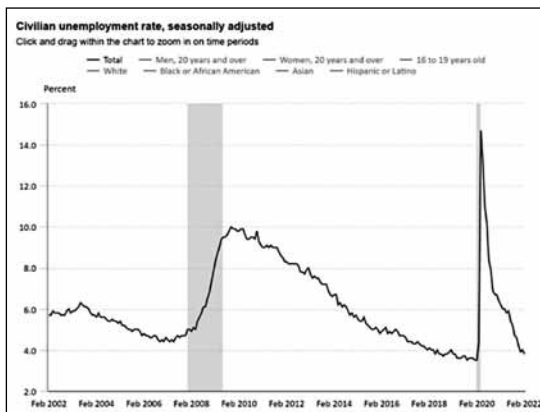
<sup>23</sup> (*The U.S. Foreclosure Crisis Was Not Just a Subprime Event*, n.d.)

<sup>24</sup> (Weinberg, n.d.)

<sup>25</sup> (*The U.S. Foreclosure Crisis Was Not Just a Subprime Event*, n.d.)

<sup>26</sup> (Rasure, n.d.)

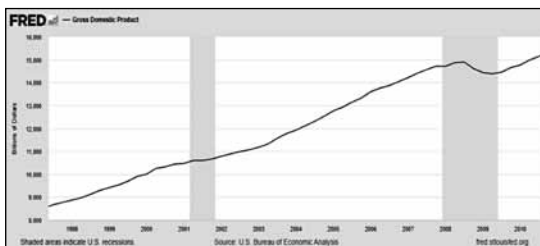
**Figure 8. Unemployment rate.**



**Source:** <https://www.bls.gov/charts/employment-situation/civilian-unemployment-rate.htm>

percent from its 2007 peak to its bottom 2009, iv) Net worth of US households fell from a peak \$69 trillion in 2007 to a bottom \$55 trillion in 2009 (decreased by 26%), v) US GDP fell 4.3 percent from its peak in 2007 Q4 to its touch time in 2009 Q2 (Figure 9), and vi) During the 2007-2008 period, the average annual inflation rate was nearly double the Fed's target at 3.8 percent and then upon 2008-09 period, it went to negative 0.4% in 2009.<sup>28</sup>

**Figure 9. GDP growth rate %**



**Source:** <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/GDP>

## 1. Effects on Public Sector - Growing Government Debt

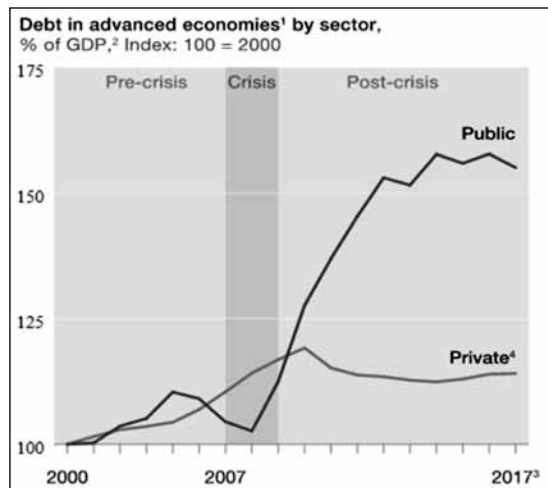
Central banks, regulators, and policymakers were forced to take extraordinary measures

<sup>27</sup> (Weinberg, n.d.)

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.shelvingrock.com/blog/post/history-of-us-inflation-since-the-2008-financial-crisis>

after the 2008 crisis. The United States enacted large fiscal stimulus packages that used different combinations of government spending, banking sector bailouts, and tax cuts to fight the Great Recession.

**Figure 10: Public Debt increased rapidly after the crisis in advanced economies**



**Source:** Link to the source

As a result, there was a surge in public debt in many advanced economies. The United States and other countries such as China enacted fiscal-stimulus packages, and some recapitalized their banks and critical industries. Consistent with history, a debt crisis in the private sector shifted to governments in the aftermath. From 2008 to mid-2017, global government debt more than doubled, reaching \$60 trillion (Figure 10).<sup>29</sup>

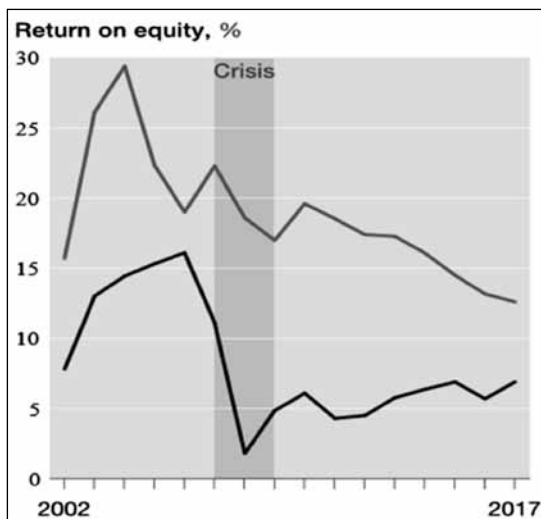
## 2. Effects on the broader economy

2.1. Banks scaled back risks and became less profitable

Since 2008, most of the largest global banks have reduced the scale and scope of their trading activities.

<sup>29</sup> (Lund et al., 2018)

**Figure 11. Banks are less risky and less profitable (Return on equity shown as %)**



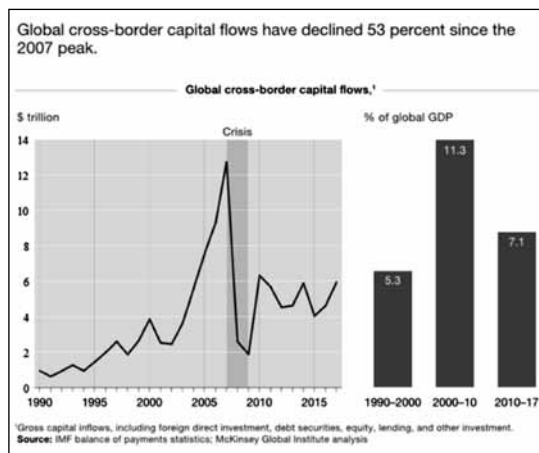
**Source:** <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/financial-services/our-insights/a-decade-after-the-global-financial-crisis-what-has-and-hasnt-changed>

(including proprietary trading for their accounts), thereby lessening risk exposure. Several banks went under became smaller (i.e., Citi bank), and others were forced into mergers with more vital partners (i.e., Bear Stearns, Merrill Lynch). The government had pushed US banks to become simpler and safer, if not always smaller. Return on equity (ROE) for banks in advanced economies has fallen by more than half since the crisis (Figure 11).<sup>21</sup>

## 2.2 Global financial system is less interconnected and less vulnerable

One of the biggest changes in the financial landscape is the sharply curtailed international activity. Since 2007, gross cross-border capital flows have fallen by half in absolute terms (Figure 12).<sup>30,31</sup>

**Figure 12. Global cross-border capital flows have declined 53 percent since 2007 peak.**



**Source:** <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/financial-services/our-insights/a-decade-after-the-global-financial-crisis-what-has-and-hasnt-changed>

Simply put, with less money flowing across borders, the risk of a 2008-style crisis around the world has been reduced.<sup>2</sup>

## 3. Effect on Consumers and Household

### 3.1 Households debt leverage reduced

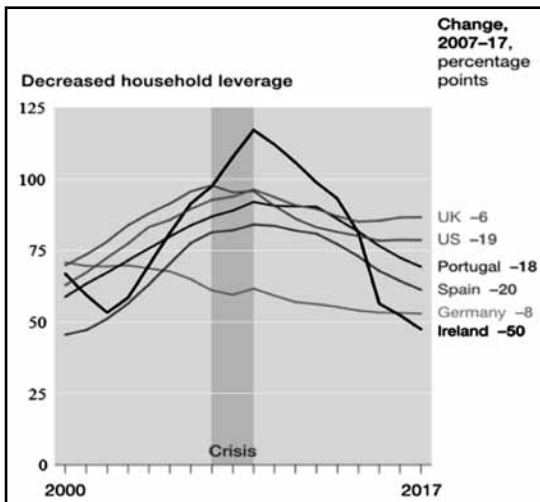
Unsustainable household debt in advanced economies was at the core of the 2008 financial crisis. Having slogged through a painful period of repayment, foreclosures, and tighter standards for new lending, US households have reduced their debt by 19 percentage points of GDP over the past decade since the 2008 financial crisis (Figure 13)<sup>32</sup>

**Figure 13. Household debt leverage was reduced.**

<sup>30</sup> (Corkery, 2016)

<sup>31</sup> (Lund et al., 2018)

<sup>32</sup> (Lund et al., 2018)

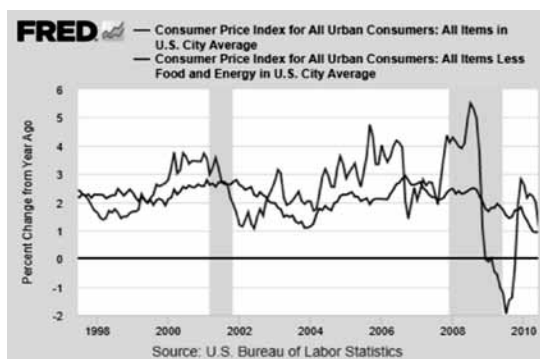


**Source:** <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/financial-services/our-insights/a-decade-after-the-global-financial-crisis-what-has-and-hasnt-changed>

Meanwhile, mortgage debt (non-foreclosure) has remained relatively flat, student debt and auto loans are up sharply.<sup>23</sup>

Households were forced to reduce consumption to pay down debt, and it also made the subsequent recession deeper and slower to recover, since consumers are not spending enough, affecting overall production of goods and services. In Figure 14, the Consumer Price Index dropped more than 7%. (Fig14, Blue line from 2008 to 2009).<sup>26</sup>

**Figure 14. Consumer Price Index 1998 to 2010**



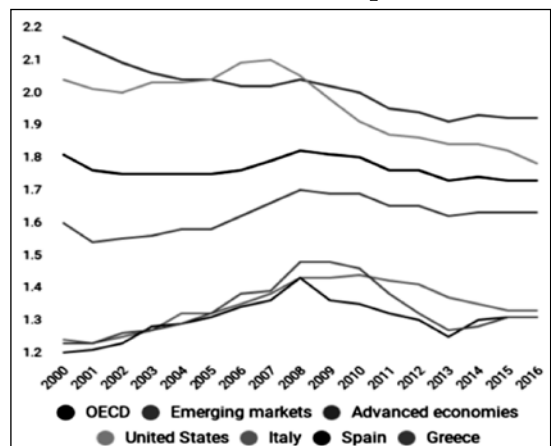
**Source:** <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/graph/?g=rocU> (FRED Graph - Download, n.d.)

Unlike prior recessions, the Great Recession is characterized by a decline in all consumption components, including nondurables.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the consumption level remained below the pre-recession level even 15 quarters after the start of the recession<sup>24</sup>, indicating the propounding and lasting ripple effects in consumers and household behaviors.

### 3.2 Households reduced the family size

The 2008 crisis may have had lasting effects on potential GDP and economic growth, and one of the areas was its impact on birth rate per woman. In the United States, the rate fell from a peak of 2.12 in 2007 to 1.8 in 2016 (Figure 15). Data from Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries indicate that the economic crisis led to higher unemployment, wage cuts, or income losses, were the most important channels through which the crisis-affected birth rates.<sup>25</sup>

**Figure 15. After the 2008 financial crisis, fertility rates declined in several advanced economies (number of births per woman)**



**Source:** <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/11/chart-of-the-week-bye-bye-baby-how-crises-affect-fertility-rates/>

This trend of decreased birth number per woman was in-line with the trend of the household debt reduction rate observed over the decade since the 2008 financial crisis (See Figure 13). Just a handful of the GDP

<sup>33</sup> (Corkery, 2016)

and economic growth challenges that these lower birth rates pose would be; i) fewer workers as working populations will fall, ii) fewer consumers, iii) older populations iv) as labor shortages worsen and the pool of labor shrinks, the need for automation will rise accordingly.<sup>26</sup> History may tell us how this declined birth rate induced by the great recession will affect the global economy.

### Summary

It is hard to estimate the economic cost of the 2008 financial crisis. The poverty rate in the United States increased, from 12.5 percent in 2007 to more than 15 percent in 2010.<sup>34</sup> The financial crisis was arguably the most significant event of the 21st century (excluding the COVID pandemic) and the most significant single economic downturn since the Great Depression. As a result, banks are more highly capitalized today, and less money is sloshing around the global financial system. Many of the changes in the global financial system have been positive. Volatile short-term lending across international borders has been cut sharply. The complex securitization products have fallen. However, some familiar risks of high debts are creeping back, and new ones have emerged, namely corporate-debt dangers. The Great Recession worsened the wealth inequality in the United States, which had already been significant<sup>35</sup>, and the reduced family size in advanced economies.<sup>36</sup>

We can almost hear the music stopping again. We are now facing an unprecedented COVID pandemic crisis affecting the global economy in every spectrum, mainly destroying the low-income families in the US and more. Our next section will discuss the cause and effect of the 2020 pandemic crisis and compare the financial crisis and the pandemic crisis. Will what we have learned since 2008 lead us to better deal with the damage this time?

## Section 2. COVID 19 2020 Crisis Causes and Effects

The COVID-19 pandemic is an extraordinary global phenomenon with widespread effects.

It has created both a public health crisis and an economic crisis in the United States and around the world. On September 20, 2021, U.S. viral deaths surpassed the 675,446 total.<sup>37</sup> Global economic growth shattered in 2020 beyond anything experienced in nearly a century and interrupted lives across the world.

### Brief Timeline of Spread of the Virus

In Dec 2019, researchers in China recognized a new virus that had infected people in the Wuhan district of China. Amid thousands of new cases in China, a “public health emergency of international concern” was officially declared by the W.H.O. Soon the virus started spreading in Italy, Iran, Latin America, and the United States. To combat the virus, many countries started imposing lockdowns, shelter in place, and travel restrictions. The Senate passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, providing \$2 trillion in aid to hospitals, small businesses, and state and local governments.<sup>38</sup> By May 27, 2020, more than 100,000 people were confirmed dead because of the virus in the United States. In Dec 2020, WHO issued the first emergency use of the vaccine. By August 2020, global deaths due to the coronavirus surpassed 800,000. According to *The New York Times* “By Sept 2020, The number of deaths linked to COVID-19 worldwide crosses the 1 million mark, surpassing the deaths caused by HIV, dysentery, malaria, influenza, cholera, and measles combined in 2020”.<sup>39</sup>

### Economic Effects of Covid-19

#### A. Impact on Industry

##### 1. Impact on Small Business

The COVID-19 pandemic had the worst impact on the small businesses, which represent most businesses in the United States and provide employment for half of all private sector

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<sup>34</sup> (Mukunda, 2018)

<sup>35</sup> (*Research: How the Financial Crisis Drastically Increased Wealth Inequality in the US*, 2018)

<sup>36</sup> (*This Is the Impact of the 2008 Crisis You Might Not Have Expected*, 2018)

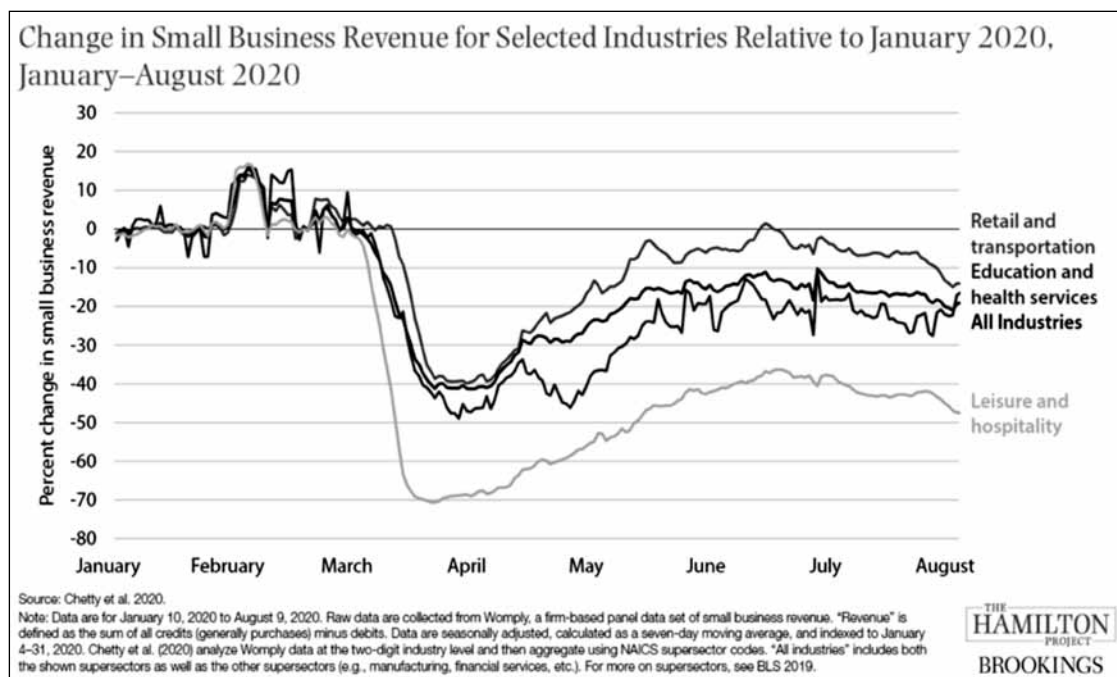
<sup>37</sup> (*Global Economic Effects of COVID-19*, 2021)



workers<sup>40</sup>. Below figure shows by sector how the small business has been affected, which highlights heavy declines in revenue among the leisure and hospitality, education, and health services sectors. Compared to January 2020, average daily revenue as of August 2020,

was down by 47.5 percent in the leisure and hospitality sector, 16.4 percent in the education and health services sector, and 14.1 percent in the retail and transportation sector; aggregate small business revenue across all industries had fallen by 19.1 percent.<sup>32</sup>

**Figure 16:**



**Source:** <https://www.brookings.edu/research/ten-facts-about-covid-19-and-the-u-s-economy/> (Brookings, 2020).

Immigrant business owners suffered a large drop of 36% in business activity, and female business owners suffered a disproportionate drop of 25%.<sup>41</sup>

## 2. Transportation (Airlines)

The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on the U.S. aviation industry. Passenger traffic in April 2020 was 96% lower than April 2019, and stayed 60% below 2019 levels in 2020 as people stopped traveling due to fear of pandemic.<sup>42</sup> Although airlines experienced recovery in

demand for U.S. leisure travel in 2021 after vaccination availability, forecasts suggest that industry recovery will be uneven as business and international air travel are expected to lag.

## 3. Auto Manufacturing

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a rapid and severe effect on the globally integrated automotive industry. The disruption was mainly caused by worldwide supply chain disruption, chip shortage across the globe and the closure of assembly plants in many parts of the world. The effects began in China, where sales plunged 71 percent in February 2020; by April, sales had dropped 47 percent in the United States and divided 80 percent in Europe.<sup>19</sup> The auto industry is not expected to make pre-pandemic level recovery until 2023.

<sup>38</sup> *A Timeline of COVID-19 Developments in 2020, 2021*

<sup>39</sup> *(A Timeline of COVID-19 Developments in 2020, 2021)*

<sup>40</sup> (Bauer et al., 2020)

<sup>41</sup> (Fairlie, n.d.)

<sup>42</sup> *COVID-19 Pandemic: Observations on the Ongoing Recovery of the Aviation Industry, 2021*

#### 4. Hospitality Industry (Hotels and Restaurant)

Travel bans, border closures and quarantine measures deeply impacted the hospitality industry which includes hotels and restaurants. More than 670,000 hotel industry operation jobs and nearly 4 million hospitality jobs were lost in 2020 due to the pandemic as per the American Hotel and Lodging Association.<sup>43</sup> It estimated that the COVID-19 pandemic has eliminated more than 10 years of job growth in the accommodations sector. The food service industry has lost nearly 3.1 million jobs and more than 110,000 restaurants have or are projected to permanently close due to the economic fallout caused by the

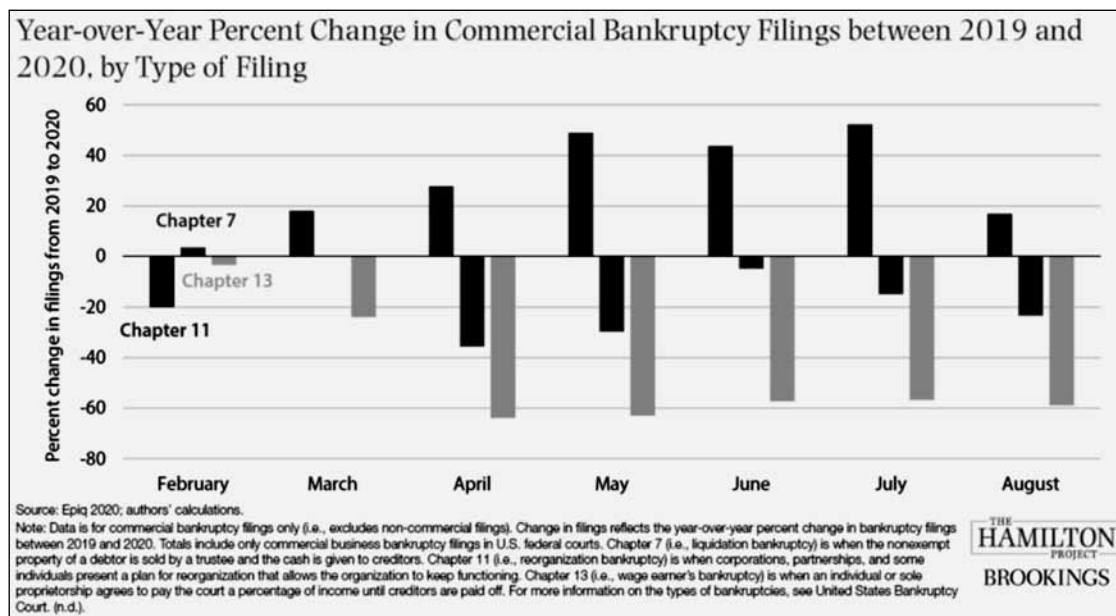
pandemic. In April 2020, unemployment rates in the leisure and hospitality industries were as high as 39.3%.<sup>44,45</sup>

#### 5. Chapter 11 bankruptcies have increased relative to 2019.

Declining business revenues have caused many firms to become insolvent. Hamilton (2020) estimates that by July 2020 nearly 420,000 small businesses will be closed since the start of the pandemic, this number of failures is typically seen in an entire year.

Larger firms benefit from entering Chapter 11 bankruptcy to restart their operations, but many smaller businesses also opted for outright closures this time.<sup>46</sup>

Figure 17:



Source: <https://www.brookings.edu/research/ten-facts-about-covid-19-and-the-u-s-economy>

### B. Impact on Consumer Behavior

#### 1. Increase in personal Savings

A sharp decrease in aggregate spending and a sharp increase in savings was one of the instant effects of the COVID 19 pandemic.

<sup>43</sup> (Hensley et al., 2021)

<sup>44</sup> (Beehr & Bhagat, 2021)

<sup>45</sup> (Lardieri & Smart, 2021)

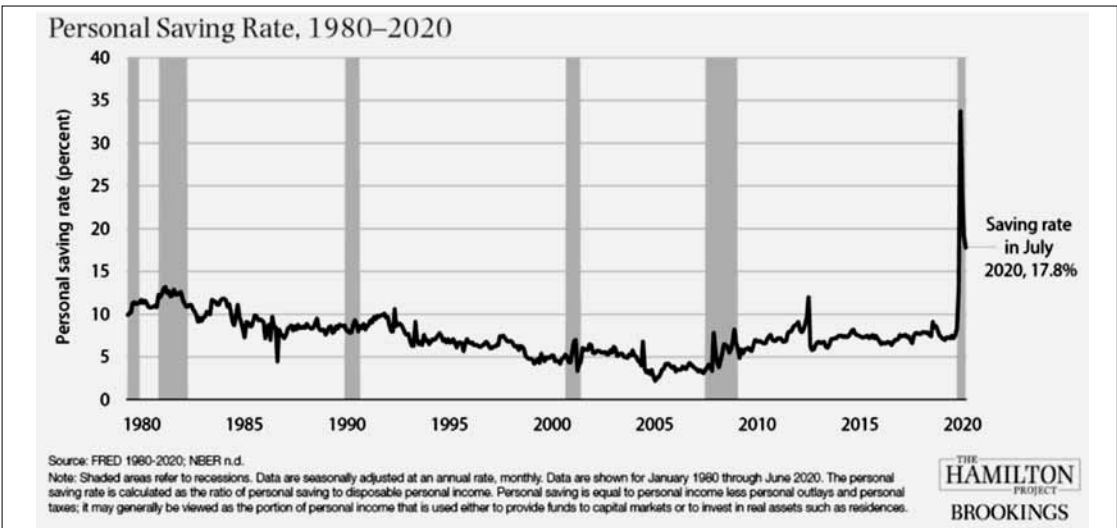
<sup>46</sup> (Bauer et al., 2020)

The personal saving rate is defined as the ratio of personal saving to personal income, which spiked to 34 percent in April, its highest level in history. It has reduced after that but continues at a higher level. Lower spending and greater federal transfer payments contributed to this increase. (Bauer et al., 2020) It has decreased since then but remains significantly elevated. Stimulus payments to households have boosted the savings rate by

including unemployment insurance benefits and other federal transfers to households. As a result, many workers have lost their jobs, personal income from March to July has

increased beyond the pre-pandemic levels (FRED 2020b). Low-income households spend the stimulus payments immediately and other households save it for the future.<sup>47</sup>

Figure 18:

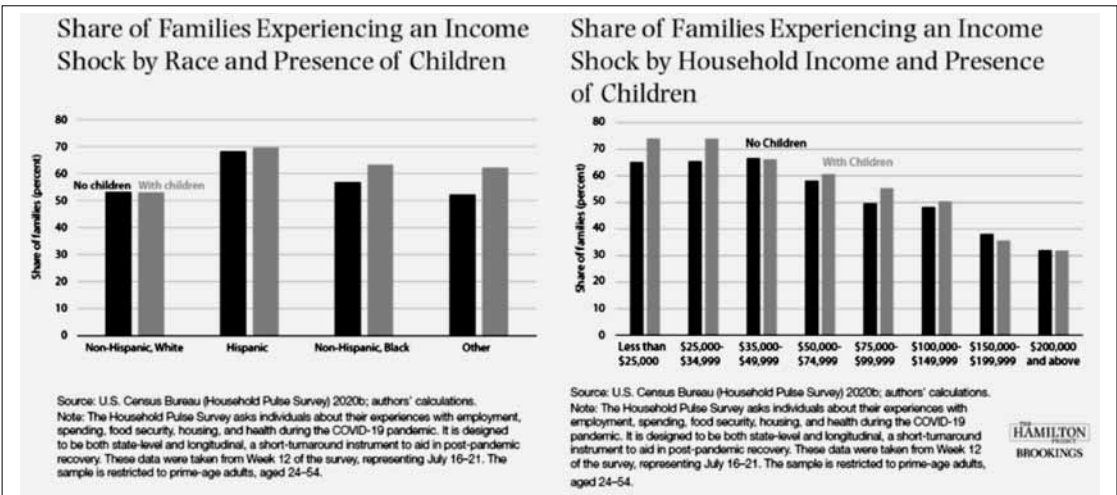


## 2. Income shock to low-income families with children

Since March, low-income households, non-white households, and households with children were most likely experienced income shock (Monte 2020). More than 60% of the households with very less income reported that they had

experienced an income shock due to COVID-19, including but not limited to material hardships, including food insecurity and difficulty in paying bills. Households were impacted to falling behind on payments, obligations and with children in the family the likelihood of delinquency increases by 17 percent.<sup>40</sup>

Figure 19:



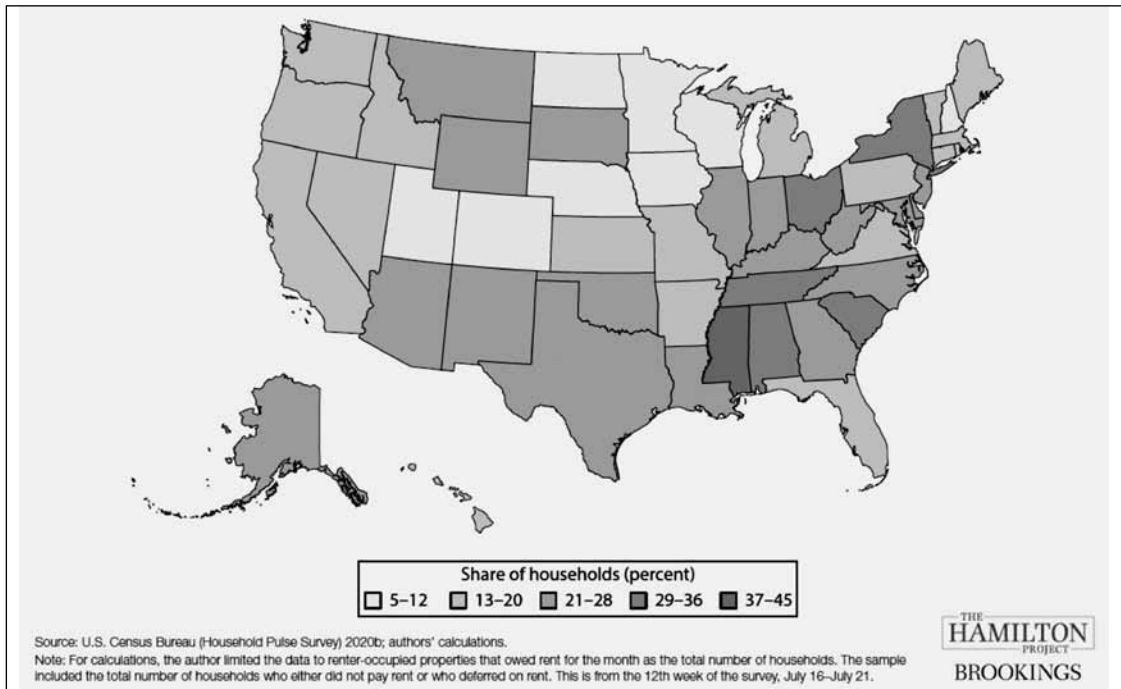
Source: <https://www.brookings.edu/research/ten-facts-about-covid-19-and-the-u-s-economy/>

<sup>47</sup> (Bauer et al., 2020)

### 3. Households behind on Rent(in 2020)

Federal payments to households and unemployed workers have been relatively generous but it has not been able to cover all expenses for struggling households. Below figure shows that more than 20% of renting households had not yet paid their rent for June in 26 states<sup>48</sup>.

**Figure 20:**



**Source:** <https://www.brookings.edu/research/ten-facts-about-covid-19-and-the-u-s-economy/>

### 4. Stockpiling of groceries and cleaning products

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, after public health officials across the world recommended social distancing and governments implemented stay-at-home orders and travel restrictions, retail food companies and farmers experienced both demand and supply shocks. Stockpiling behavior was observed through excess demand for toilet paper, shelf-stable food items (frozen, canned, and dried foods; snacks; beverages), and cleaning products, which translated into out of stock items at the grocery store. Fears of the emerging pandemic and concerns about food accessibility are the factors causing such stockpiling behavior.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup> (Bauer et al., 2020)

<sup>49</sup> (Bauer et al., 2020)

### C. Impact on Market, Inflation, Unemployment and GDP

#### 1. Financial Market Impact

##### US

Companies operating in the information technology (IT) sector have been the clear winners from the pandemic, with the IT S&P 500 sector index sitting at almost 65 percent above early 2020 levels as of November 2021.<sup>50</sup> Some of the companies who benefited the most from the pandemic such as Amazon, PayPal and Netflix. Online services such as shopping and video streaming were in high demand due to restrictions in social gatherings during the pandemic. In contrast, energy companies fared poorly during the pandemic. The falling demand for fuel was a direct impact of a halt in tourism and commuting.

<sup>50</sup> (COVID-19: Effect on US Shares by Sector 2021, 2022)

## Worldwide

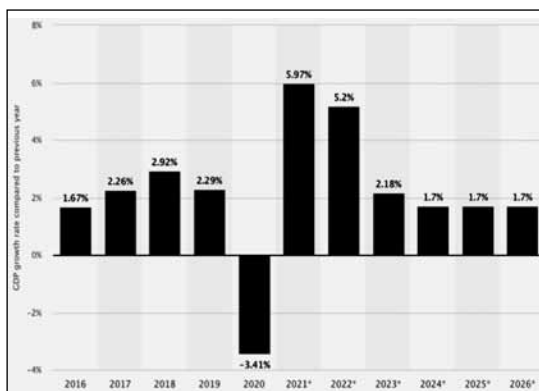
Despite having one of the highest numbers of confirmed Covid-19 cases in the world, the US' S&P 500 by far outperformed the rest of its developed peers. By contrast, markets with greater exposure to value-oriented sectors, like Europe and Australia, lagged in terms of performance.<sup>51</sup> The vaccine roll-out has been one of the key drivers of optimism in the markets. The expectation of a return to normalcy has led many analysts to upgrade their outlook on global growth.

## 2. Impact on GDP and Forecast

### US

In 2020, US GDP (Gross domestic product) decreased by 3.41% compared to increase in 2019 which was 2.29%. In 2021 it increased by 5.67% and forecast for 2022 is 5.2%.<sup>52</sup>

**Figure 21:**



**Source:** <https://www.statista.com/statistics/263614/gross-domestic-product-gdp-growth-rate-in-the-united-states/>

### Global

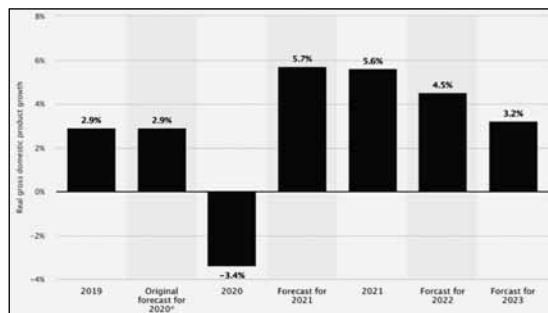
In 2020, global GDP decreased by 3.4 percent, while the forecast for the year was 2.9 percent GDP growth. As the countries are working to improve the economic recovery, the GDP increased in 2021 by 5.6 percent. According to the forecast for 2022, global GDP should increase by 4.5 percent in that year. (statista, 2022)<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> (Has Covid Actually Mattered to Financial Markets?, 2021)

<sup>52</sup> (Bauer et al., 2020)

<sup>53</sup> (Bauer et al., 2020)

**Figure 22:**



**Source:** <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1102889/covid-19-forecasted-global-real-gdp-growth>

## 3. Impact on Unemployment

### US

The unemployment rate jumped in April 2020 to a level not seen since the 1930s — and stood at 4.9 percent in October 2021, compared with 3.5 percent in February 2020. That official unemployment rate, moreover, understated job losses.<sup>54</sup> The majority of jobs lost in the crisis have been in industries that pay low average wages, with the lowest-paying industries accounting for 30 percent of all jobs but 59 percent of the jobs lost from February 2020 to October 2021, according to Labor Department employment data.<sup>55</sup>

**Figure 23:**



**Source:** CBPP.org

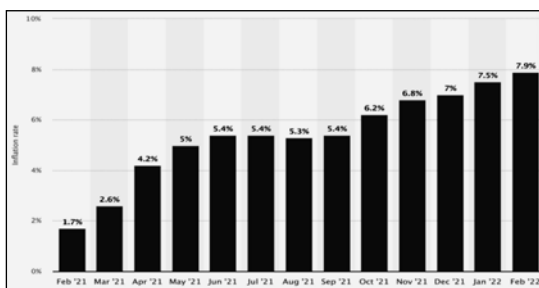
### World

The economic crisis caused by the COVID pandemic is expected to contribute to global unemployment of more than 200 million people next year, with women and youth workers worst-hit.<sup>2565</sup> The worst-affected regions in the first half of 2021 have been Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and

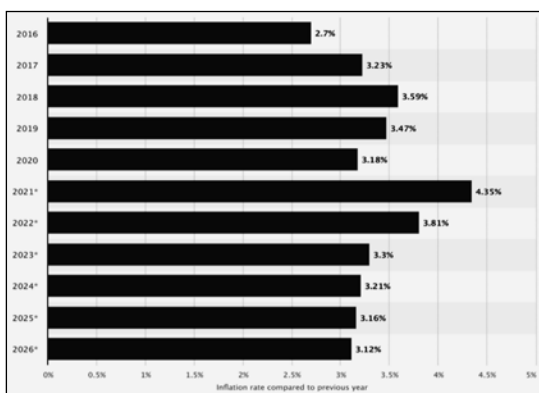
Central Asia, all victims of uneven recovery. Women have been hit “disproportionately” by the crisis, seeing a five per cent employment fall in 2020, compared to 3.9 per cent for men.

4. **Impact on Inflation:** In February 2022, prices had increased by 7.9 percent compared to February 2021 according to the 12-month percentage of change in the consumer price index, respectively the monthly inflation rate for goods and services in the United States. The data represents U.S. city averages. the inflation rate is a measure of inflation, the rate of increase of a consumer price index. It is the percentage rate of change in price level over time.

**Figure 24 (top, a, bottom, b) :**



Global inflation rate projections are shown below:



**Source:** <https://www.statista.com/statistics/256598/global-inflation-rate-compared-to-previous-year>

<sup>54</sup> (Tracking the COVID-19 Economy's Effects on Food, Housing, and Employment Hardships, 2022)

<sup>55</sup> (Crozet, 2021)

<sup>56</sup> (Crozet, 2021)

## Summary of Section 2

The economic downturn in 2020 was not as negative as initially predicted, due to fiscal and monetary policies governments adopted in 2020. In most countries, economic growth fell in the second quarter of 2020, rose quickly in the third quarter, and has been in recovery mode till the start of the Russia -Ukraine war. Economic forecasts reveal continuing risks to a global recovery due to reappearance of infectious cases and potential inflationary pressures linked with pent-up consumer demand powered by an increase in personal savings. On the supply side, shortages reflect persistent disruptions to labor markets and supply chain bottlenecks that are adding to inflationary pressures. The increase in vaccination rate across the globe is expected to help in the recovery process. The economic fallout from the pandemic has had an unequal impact on certain sectors of the economy and certain population groups which may imply post-pandemic economies with different labor arrangements and altered urban environments.

## Section 3. Comparison of 2008 and 2020 Crisis

The great recession of 2008 built up over a long time, whereas the Covid recession of 2020 crisis built up very quickly due to COVID pandemic around the world. Uncertainty in the nature of both crises led to spreading around the globe from a single economy. The global financial system was paralysed by the Great Recession of 2008. COVID 19 has the same impact as well. Economic and social activity is halted over the globe.

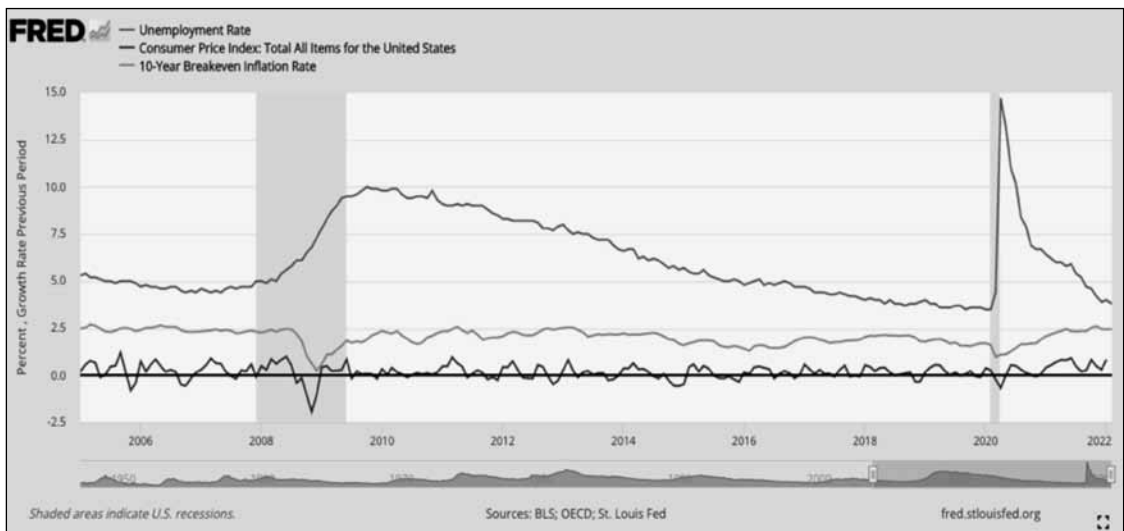
**Unemployment rate:** Before 2008, the unemployment rate remained steady at around 5%; it started rising in Dec 2007 and peaked at 10% in Oct 2009. The unemployment rate shot up to 15% in April 2020 and came back to 4% in Jan 2022.

**Consumer price index (CPI):** CPI including total items in the United States started increasing in Jan 2008 and hit a high of 1.0 in June 2008, before going down to a low of -1.9 in Nov 2009. In 2020, CPI was at -0.066 in

April 2020, 0.5 in July 2020, zero in Dec 2020, and 0.08416 in Jan 2022.

**Inflation** (10 Year Breakdown Rate) has been mainly under control during both crises, mostly between 2-3%. It is at 2.46% as of Jan 2022.

**Figure 25:**



**Source:** <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/graph/?g=C7tM#0>

Among the similarities between the great recession of 2008 and the COVID recession of 2020, collapse in stock markets of major countries was one. During the great recession, U.S. stocks were only 2.7% overvalued when it began. However, stocks sank, ultimately losing 54.1% from peak to trough. Overall, the loss was 14% by the end of the great recession.<sup>57</sup> During the 2020 crisis, between Feb. 12 and March 23, the DJIA lost 37% of its value, and the market began to rebound very quickly.<sup>58</sup>

**Figure 26:**



**Source:** <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/can-we-compare-the-covid-19-and-2008-crises/>

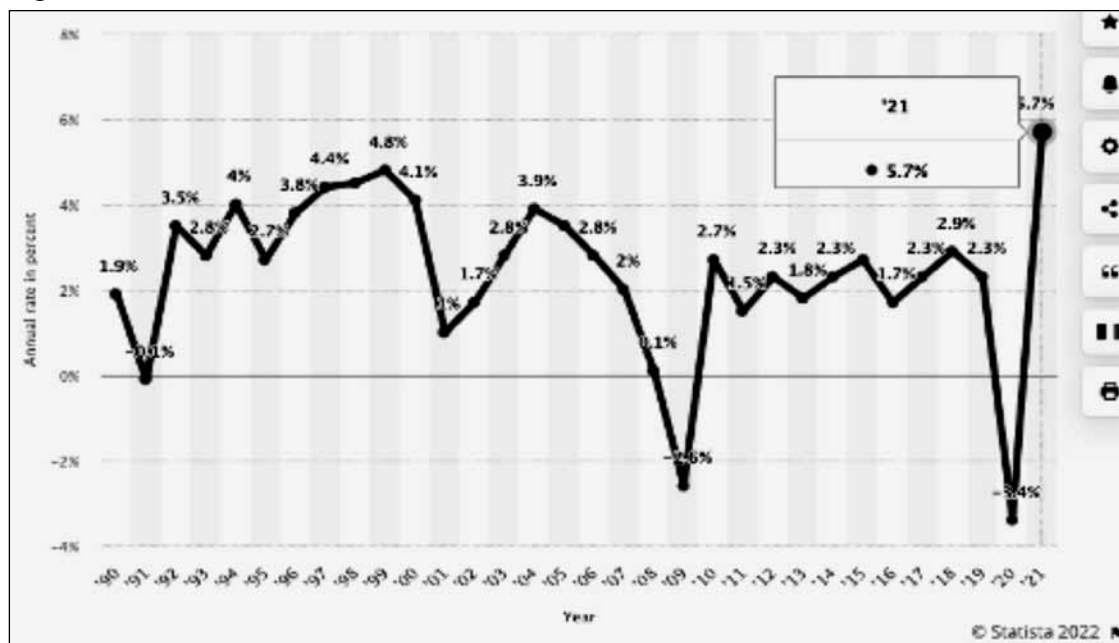
<sup>57</sup> How Stocks Performed During The Past 6 Recessions

<sup>58</sup> Coronavirus Crash Of 2020, And The Investing Lesson It Taught



In both the recessions, the US GDP impact has a similar impact. In 2008 US GDP dropped 4.3 % from its peak in 2007 Q4. In 2020, US GDP decreased by 3.41% compared to the increase in 2019, which was 2.29%, and increased by 5.67% in 2021.<sup>59</sup>

**Figure 27:**



**Source:** • Real GDP growth rate by year in the US | Statista

Groups that were struggling the most before the 2008 recession began were people of color and lower-income people; They got hit the hardest. In the COVID recession, more than 50% of low-income households have personally experienced job loss.<sup>60</sup> In 2008 it was a financial fear, and in 2020 it is fear of the virus and getting infected that leads people to withdraw from their regular economic activity.

Like the two big recessions have their similarities, they also have their differences. The 2020 Covid recession is much bigger than the 2008 version. In terms of intensity, millions of people lost their jobs much more rapidly. Millions of businesses have closed very quickly. A second significant difference between these two big recessions is that the

great recession of 2008 was caused by forces building up within the economy itself. The COVID recession was caused by the spread of virus and not due to economic causes. Third, the two crises impacted very different industry segments. In 2008 the hardest hit sectors were construction and anything related to housing plus manufacturing. In 2020, the biggest hit was on many sectors like healthcare, travel industry, food industry, personal services, leisure, and entertainment.

Both crises benefit greatly from monetary and fiscal measures. During and after the recession, monetary policy had a significant impact. It lowered interest rates in an effort to spur the economy's decline. For the most part, traditional monetary policy tried to cut borrowing rates in order to boost consumption as well as investments. Stabilization of the financial system and fiscal stimulus assist the economy to restore its strength and improve its state. These initiatives significantly shaped

<sup>59</sup> (United States Bear Market of 2007–2009, n.d.)

<sup>60</sup> (About Half of Lower-Income Americans Report Household Job or Wage Loss Due to COVID-19, 2020)

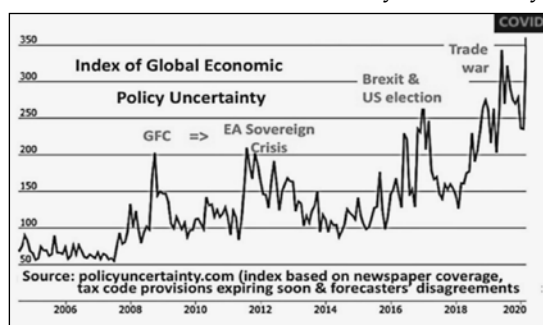


the private sector's expectations regarding the future course of short-term interest rates.

In 2008, the monetary policy helped the economy recover from the recession. A few of the world's central banks slashed their interest rates after 2008. The steps made during the recession of 2008 have helped the economy return to its pre-recession trajectory. However, the outbreak exacerbates the predicament. It had a similar effect on the economy at this time. The COVID-19 crisis halts a significant portion of the world's commerce activity. With PPP exchange rates, the Global Economic Policy Uncertainty Index (GEPU) has reached a record high. 348, which is higher than its prior highs: 202 in October 2008, 202 in October 2011 (similar), 235 for the Brexit Referendum and US elections (both in June 2016), and 235 for Trump's Trade War with China (up to 342 mid-2019).<sup>61</sup>

**Figure 28:**

Index of Global Economic Policy Uncertainty



**Source:** Can we compare the COVID-19 and 2008 crises? - Atlantic Council

Central banks' monetary responses to the 2008 and COVID crises: After the World Financial of 2008 and COVID Crisis of 2020, the global economy has entered the recessionary phase. The country's Central Bank must implement specific monetary policies to overcome the crisis and return the economy to normalcy. During the 2008 financial crisis, the federal government initiatives were more focused on aiding Wall Street and corporate America

and less towards helping ordinary Americans, many of whom struggled for years to recover from the recession. During the pandemic, most governments around the world have taken proactive measures to help the economy and its people which could be from lessons learned from the previous crisis.

It's already clear that the two crises have more differences than in common. The significant difference is that the 2020 recession began with sharp declines in economic activity, employment, and equity prices that surpassed the initial drops of the 2008 recession. The 2008 recession continued, however, and when it finally reached a trough nearly four years later, economic activity, employment, and consumer and equity prices were all far below their initial levels. The 2020 contraction turned out to be the sharpest and perhaps of all time in the United States.

In conclusion, there are more differences than similarities in comparing these two crises. The long term impacts of Covid-19 are still uncertain and others may still emerge as time goes. What will really matter is to draw the right lessons from both the crises to better prevent or limit future crises.

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<sup>61</sup> Can we compare the COVID-19 and 2008 crises? - Atlantic Council

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# Dosa of Success - An exploration of modern-day values

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## **The Virus that transformed my thinking process**

When I was fifteen, my Dad, a senior and well-respected Satellite Communication Engineer, defined success for me. "The secret to being successful", he said, frowning at me through his imposing beard, "is to be the best in whatever you do. If you want to be an Engineer, be the best Engineer in the world; if you want to be a Sweeper, be the best Sweeper."

And thus, powered by this striking phrase, I launched myself into my life and careers.

This memorable phrase, from then on, acted as a virus, a virus that constantly transformed my thoughts – the very software of my decision-making process. It defined both what I chose to do, and what I chose not to do. I was brilliant in Biology, so I joined the College of Agriculture, choosing to ignore the allure of the IITs. I was good in Physics and Mathematics, but there were others who were better than me, so why should I, I told myself, struggle to become a mediocre engineer.

As time went on, the virus got deeper into my soul (or if you prefer, my brain!). As a schoolboy I had had little difficulty in getting on stage in order to be part of a singing duet or chorus. By the time I got into college I started judging myself more harshly: I was, after all, a very ordinary singer and there was no point in inflicting myself on others. What was the point of 'exposing' myself when there were other much better singers to listen to, I told myself. But what I was really telling myself was that I didn't want to be subjected to ridicule. Without having articulated it that way, I understood that others, like me, too carried the same virus – of dividing people into two kinds, the few successful ones who were really good, and needed to be appreciated, and the vast majority of the unsuccessful, the failures, who deserved to be mocked or humiliated. Anyone who was not good enough, but still dared to come out in the public, surely deserved that mocking.

Over time, as I have become clearer both about my own nature, and that of the world, I realize that like everyone else, I too am a little replica

of the world – a fractal that reveals the very nature of the modern world. Like my father did, the world loves success. The virus that infected me, infects the entire modern world. If you are successful, you are respected, and people smile at you – otherwise you are ignored, or worse.

### **The impact of Success on your life**

To expand on one part of the previous sentence, the degree of your success also defines the degree of response you get from the world. While basic success entitles you to a smile, a pat on the back, higher levels of success can mean, successively, being allowed to jump the queue, or allowed to enter spaces not available to the ordinary person. Success allows you to get to know other equally successful people – or people who have got established as successful people before you have. Becoming successful allows you to enter the club of successful people – generating another very interesting process, to which we will return in a while. Success is also transferable to the next generation: your success means that your children will have a great time – loved by all, being allowed to do what they wish (such as asking impertinent questions of elders!). A study showed that children from wealthier families (the successful ones!) but with less academic abilities are 35% more likely to become high earners than more gifted counterparts from poor families.<sup>62</sup> Well-off parents create a ‘glass floor’ for their less academically inclined children ensuring they ‘hoard the best opportunities’ over poorer peers.<sup>63</sup>

What you are successful in does not matter. It does not matter whether you are a successful engineer, doctor, bank manager, actor, cricketer, builder or politician; if you are

successful in one arena you will get to meet other successful people from other arenas. The French Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu<sup>64</sup> talked about four forms of capital: cultural, social, symbolic and economic. He said that each type of capital is related to the other; possession of one can help person to obtain more of the other. To take an example, a person who is economically successful can afford to send his/her children to expensive schools – where they gain cultural capital. The economic capital also leads to the development of a bigger network – the social capital the person has. For our purposes, we may equate success with the acquisition of at least one of these capitals: economic, social, cultural or symbolic.<sup>65</sup>

### **The Escalator of Success**

One metaphor to describe what happens after a person has acquired one kind of Capital is that of an Escalator. When one becomes successful in one arena (in Bourdieu’s language, when one has acquired a significant level of one kind of Capital), one hits, as if, the auto button of an escalator. This escalator, automatically and rapidly pushes you to a higher level of success, as one kind of success gets added on to another kind of success. All you have to do is to reach the basic floor of success – after which all you need to do is to look alive, even as you automatically get pushed to the tenth floor!

I experienced the escalator phenomenon, briefly, and on a micro scale, as a school boy studying in class tenth. At that time, I was seen as somebody insignificant – a bit of a nerd but that was it. Though I was not part of any sports team, I was passionately interested in sports, and I used to run regularly, on

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/jul/26/well-off-families-create-glass-floor-to-ensure-childrens-success-says-study#:~:text=The%20study%2C%20entitled%20%E2%80%9CDownward%20mobility,child's%20grandfather%2C%20the%20report%20suggested.> 26 July 2015

<sup>63</sup> For the more academically inclined: this phenomenon has been described by Max Weber, the German Sociologist, as the Opportunity Hoarding Approach. In this phenomenon the elites actively prevent those who do not belong to the group from acquiring those opportunities – a phenomenon which we will refer to in this paper.

<sup>64</sup> See e.g., Pierre Bourdieu, “Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste”, 1986, Routledge.

<sup>65</sup> Cultural capital refers to the quality of education one has got, the kind of consumption and leisure pursuits one engages in (attending classical music concerts; going on holiday trips to exotic destinations abroad etc.); Social capital refers to the quality of one network – which successful people we know personally; Symbolic capital refers to one’s reputation – as a celebrity of some kind.



my own, around the school perimeter. Consequently, when the Annual Sports Day came, my House picked me up to represent it in the 800 metres race – essentially because few were interested in running this ‘long’ race, and the House Selection team seemed to have no other option. As it happened, and to everyone’s enormous surprise, I finished second in the race. Thus, I acquired, instantly, what Bourdieu would call ‘symbolic capital’ – I had become a sports celebrity!

Suddenly, without even me wanting to be, I got selected to represent the House Volleyball team, a game that I had never played before. Then, soon enough, I was selected to represent my school in middle distance running, triple jump and badminton (a game nobody had seen me play in school!), at the inter-school games. It just happened that I used to play badminton passionately at home, but here I got selected, accidentally, without being tested to ascertain whether I was any good as a badminton player!

So, how did the above happen? Can we glean any insight, generate any hypothesis as to what kind of process was at work? My hypothesis in this regard is that when people are infected with the success virus, they lose their sense of objectivity. When infected people recognize that a person is successful in one arena, they automatically assume that the person will be successful in other arenas too. I had succeeded in the 800 metres, so it was assumed that I would be good enough for volleyball, triple jump and badminton. In a similar vein, we have the ridiculous sight, in our society, of successful Doctors being asked to judge poetry competitions, IAS officers being asked to judge beauty competitions, and politicians deciding who is to be included in the district cricket team. So, who is it that asks the Doctors, IAS officers and Politicians to take on tasks that they have no expertise in? My answer: people infected by the success virus. (which is to say, almost everybody!)

### Zones of Success and non-Success

There are people who have reached a place

where they can climb the escalator of success – these may be inhabiting the escalator zone, the top zone of modern-day life. People who are in this zone are not only leading economically comfortable lives, they will increasingly become so, out of proportion to the effort they now put into work – provided, of course, they do nothing stupid<sup>66</sup>.

Then there are people (the vast majority) who have not. This group can be divided into two zones: the step by step zone, where the people either struggle to reach the rarefied zone, or otherwise come to terms with the reasonably comfortable lives they are living. In order to stay in that zone they will keep on struggling throughout their lives. The movement in the zone will try to mimic that of the escalator zone, but it would be much slower – and only in few cases, some of those people in this zone will manage to ascend to the next zone. This is the middle zone.

The final zone, the one at the bottom, where the vast majority of our country resides, is what we may call the tar zone – where people seem to be stuck indefinitely, essentially because of a glass ceiling that prevents their movement even into the middle zone. We may represent the zones visually as follows:

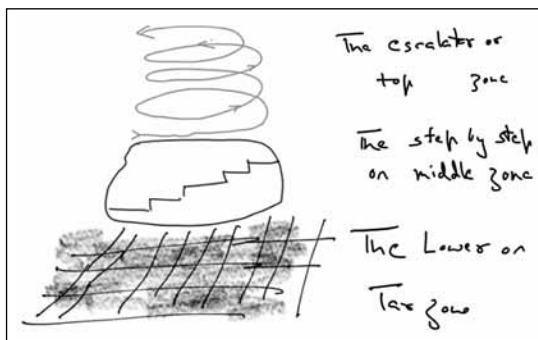


Figure 1 The zones of success, partial success & non-success

<sup>66</sup> One part of this point is well illustrated in Thomas Piketty’s award winning book, “Capital in the 21st century” which shows how the top 0.01% of the population, the one who have acquired a high level of wealth, will keep on getting wealthier even if they decide to rest and do nothing else in their lives. For instance, somebody who has inherited or acquired, say Rs 100 crores, would keep on earning, just from the interest, an amount of Rs.1 to 2 lakh per day!!

## The Value of Success

While we have looked at the impact of the value of success (the value being the virus in our software) we need to look at the source of the value. For us, living inside a world the value seems self-evident. We can ask ourselves, isn't this a basic human value? Don't all human societies have this very value – whether capitalist or otherwise? We think of India, USA, Japan, China, Korea, Egypt – and all examples seem to validate the permanence of this value. It does seem that the value of success is a natural part of the human psyche.

We shall try to challenge this thought from two directions. One, by showing that this value has not been present in at least some societies – thus questioning the assumption that this is a natural part of the human psyche.

The second way we shall challenge it is by showing that this value changes its nature when combined with some other values. In other words, we shall show examples of societies that behave very differently from the modern day societies, all because the mix with other accompanying values was different in these societies.<sup>67</sup>

### The non-ubiquity of the Value of success

The British anthropologist, James Woodburn conducted research among the Hadza, a forager society of Tanzania. Based on his research he drew parallels with some other forager societies such as the San Bushmen of Southern Africa, the Mbuti Pygmies of Congo, and the Batek of Malaysia. All of these forager societies have been based on the value of equality. The value of equality has applied not just to material possessions (which were being constantly shared around) but also to success and prestige. Thus, people who were very skillful hunters (those who should have been considered successful in their society, going

by our modern-day values), were actually systematically mocked and belittled for being so successful. Nobody was allowed to become arrogant and proud. While this did not stop these people from hunting and bringing in food for the tribe, they did not expect to get a higher status in their society just because they were better hunters. As a matter of fact, there was nothing a person could be good at in order to be considered successful. Success, as a value did not exist in these societies.

Historical research indicates that such societies are not anomalies but have existed at different times, on different continents.

The interesting thing about many of these societies was that rather than the value of success, what these societies have valued the most has been the value of 'freedom' or rather 'autonomy'. Thus, women of the Montagnais-Naskapi, in North America, were able to live their lives and make their own decisions without male interference.

As a matter of fact, what societies such as the Wendat and the Montagnais-Naskapi of North America, or the Hadza of East Africa valued was substantive freedom (as opposed to formal freedom). There were chiefs, but people were free to obey them or not. (Contrast this with the typical situation of when you are working in an organization. In most cases, you have a boss, and you have to obey your boss, whether you like it or not. So where is the freedom there for you?). People who wanted to leave their own society and travel around were free to do so because they were sure to get hospitality. In other words, mutual aid was seen as a necessary condition for individual autonomy<sup>68</sup>. (We are free to travel so long as we have the money! This was not the case so in those societies. In other words, while our freedom is a notional freedom, the

<sup>67</sup> For an absolutely enthralling description of historic, pre-historic and even present day societies that have held values very different from the prevailing modern one please read David Graeber and David Wengrow's "The Dawn of Everything: A new history of Humanity", (Penguin, 2021) from which I have taken the above extract.

<sup>68</sup> In a similar way, with the Malaysian Batek, for instance, it is a moral obligation to share food they have acquired. see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Batek\\_people](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Batek_people)

<sup>69</sup> The entire section paraphrased from the same text as above. (Graeber & Wengrow, 2021)



freedom in those societies was substantive – societies that truly valued freedom.)<sup>69</sup>

To summarize we can say that while modern societies value – success, we find that these societies have valued substantive freedom and mutual aid. Argued in another way, we can clearly see that the value of individual success is not a necessary part of the human psyche – it has been constructed and adopted in specific human societies. It may be seem inevitable at this point that this value was bound to come into human societies, but perhaps, very soon in the future, with the looming disaster of climate change, we may find that this value is destructive for all modern day societies. (a point that deserves an entire article by itself!)

### **The different chutneys that go with the Value of Success**

Let's get back, for the moment, to our present-day value. We would like to think that the value of success in our society is a stand-alone one, a pure one. Anyone who works hard enough will finally become successful.

In reality though, we realize that some people are more likely to be become successful than others. Though exceptions exist, we have seen that children of successful people are more likely to be successful even if they have less capabilities than their peers.

If we liken the virus of success to a Dosa, then we find that there are other sub-values, other chutneys which tend to get served along with this Dosa. The first such chutney, as seen above, is that if you are born into a successful family, you will get special privileges that will enable your success. You will get admission into the top Universities despite not having qualified academically; and once you graduate from those top Universities, you are automatically branded a success. (A Harvard or Yale tag itself will open numerous doors for you!)

The second chutney is that of active discrimination. If you work as a maid or household help, you will not be allowed to bring your cycle into the society (you have to keep it outside the gate, and then you are

expected to walk up to half a kilometer to reach your employer's flat); you will not be allowed to use the common lift used by residents. Walking out of the society with her monthly salary she will get checked by security and asked to get confirmation from her employers that the money she is carrying has not been stolen!<sup>70</sup> Hardships such as these are the tip of the discriminatory challenges the ones in the tar-zone face – hardships that practically ensure that they are unable to truly become successful.

The psychological blocks that society generates can be even more daunting for young children coming from marginalized or unsuccessful backgrounds. Quite unlike the children of the successful, who study in AC schools, and are routinely sent abroad to finish their education, the children of the poor are actively discouraged from studying. In an EPW case study of municipal schools, the researcher documented the teachers using humiliating language for the children who came from marginalized backgrounds - children of vendors and the like. Teachers addressed children as *kelewala*, *andewala*, *lahsan wala*, referring to their parents' livelihoods. They were negatively labelled and ridiculed as *mota*, *kala*, *kaali*, *lambu*; some were referred to as *ganda* and *bhadda* (ugly). The children's milieu was usually referred to in a disapproving fashion, and children were sometimes collectively addressed as *jhuggiwalon* (slum dwellers). During class lessons, the children and their families were characterised as uncouth, belligerent and dishonest people who quarrelled, lied and cheated. The children were also portrayed as coming from homes where boys were not subjected to any discipline and were therefore incorrigible. Children were reprimanded for treating the school like their *mandi* ("You have turned the class into a *mandi* (market). Have some shame"). Children were frequently told to work in the *mandi* as manual labour as this was all they were capable of. For instance, Deepmala who sold garlic in the local vegetable market was finding it difficult to even copy from the

blackboard. Teachers told her to quit school, “You might as well go and sell garlic, why do you come to school” The family compulsion to involve children in earning a living was interpreted as proof of parents’ disinterest in their children’s schooling.

The verbal humiliation went hand in hand with corporal punishment (despite the ban on such punishment) and teachers regularly resort to slapping, punching and kicking the children.<sup>71</sup> No wonder a majority of such children simply lost all interest in schooling and education, and found it preferable to go and join their parents in the business of being a vendor, or a cleaner or a sweeper, rather than struggle against the constant public humiliation visited on them because of their parents’ lack of success.

One guess as to what makes the teachers treat the children so badly is that – they treat children badly in order to channelize their own frustration, at their lack of success (stuck to teach poor children in a rotten Govt. school, rather than be in a high paying Public School where they will get to teach children coming from more privileged backgrounds) somewhere else. In short, the virus of success forces them to act in a way that drastically diminishes the possibilities of success of a whole set of other, marginalized, people.

### **Are other chutneys possible with the Dosa of Success?**

What we have as accompaniment to the Dosa of Success is the white coconut chutney to favor the successful, and a toxic red chilli chutney to stop the unsuccessful from succeeding. A close look at the toxic red chilli chutney should reveal that this itself is made up of three main ingredients – classism, casteism, and gender-based discrimination. (there are other ingredients too, but recognizing these three elements is a good start).

The question is, have societies created other chutneys, distinct from the present, to go with

the values of success? In other words, are there societies that have valued success, but still have been very different from the modern societies, all because the accompanying values were different?

There are two contrasting examples that we can look at, both very different from the modern day mix of values.

The first example comes from the society of Yurok, a North Californian society studied in the nineteenth century. Yurok spent long hours meditating on money – with the highest object of wealth, precious hides and obsidian blade the ultimate target. But the chutneys accompanying material success were frugality and ascetism, keeping their bodies slim and lithe, and being generous to the less successful. Wealthy Yurok men would gather every day in sweat lodges, where an almost daily test of these ascetic values was the need to crawl headfirst through a tiny aperture that no overweight body could possibly enter. Food was bland and spartan; decorations were simple, and the dancing was modest and restrained. There were no inherited titles or ranks.

The second example comes from the societies of the Northwest Coast, contemporary to Yurok, but very different in nature. One of the most well-known example of these societies was Kwakiutl. Kwakiutl, like their neighboring societies, had hereditary ranks of nobles, commoners and slaves. In these societies, nobles engaged in an annual feast called potlatch<sup>72</sup>.

The object of this potlatch feast was to give away or destroy more wealth than one’s rival. If the potlatch giver was a powerful chief, he would attempt to shame his rivals and gain admiration from his followers by giving large quantities of valuable gifts to their rival.

During the potlatch the host chief and his followers arranged in neat piles the wealth

<sup>70</sup> Based on the personal experience of this writer

<sup>71</sup> Jyoti Lal, “The Indelible Class Identity: Ethnographic examination of a School”, EPW, Feb 21, 2015

<sup>72</sup> The above two paras come from Graeber and Wengrow. (2021)

<sup>73</sup> Paraphrased from Marvin Harris’s “Cows, Pigs, Wars, and Witches: the riddles of Culture”, Random House, 1974.

that was to be given away. The visitors started at their host sullenly as he pranced up and down, boasting about how much he was about to give them. In some potlatches blankets and valuables were not given away but were destroyed<sup>73</sup>.

If we reflect a bit, in the case of Yurok, the chutneys accompanying the Dosa of success were modesty, frugality and generosity. In the case of Kwakiutl, the chutneys were lavishness and generosity. The different mix of values with that of the value of success created very different societies.

### **In Conclusion**

The value of Success is like a virus in our brain. This drives our decision-making process. It makes us pick up specific activities and shy away from others. The fact that this virus is present in the members of an entire society ends up by defining the entire society. In our case, the mix of other values is that of unobjectively extolling the successful, and humiliating and pushing down the unsuccessful – based on their caste, class or gender. This mix creates a society in which we have a few super successful who live lavish lives, a large group of frustrated and dis-satisfied strugglers who are otherwise financially okay, and a majority of unsuccessful who are forced to live lives of poverty, degradation and hopelessness. The successful are constantly pushed up, automatically, by the larger society to become even more successful, those in the middle have to keep on struggling on their own (though few actively stop them from succeeding), while the largest group is actively prevented from becoming successful.

If our society had mixed the value of success with some other values, the end result might have looked different. The Kwakiutl mixed that value with the values of lavishness and generosity – and you had a culture in which exotic events happened, and quality products got produced (the Kwakiutl are famous for their striking masks and furniture), but also where no one was impoverished or left out. The Yurok combined the value of success with the value of frugality and generosity. This

created a culture in which efforts to create wealth worked hand in hand with the need to appear simple and ascetic, and ensure that no one lived a life of poverty.

And then, there have been societies that have not valued success at all. What has been valued, instead, has been genuine or substantive freedom, along with the value of mutual aid. These societies have been highly egalitarian, with no one suffering from another's arrogance, a society where people were free to do what they wanted, in the assurance that if things didn't go well, they would be supported by others.

Finally, this article asks you to reflect on your values, the values of the group and the larger society that you have been a part of, and to experiment with and explore the possibilities of creating another set of values that would actually benefit the society at large to deal with the very existential problems it is facing.

To conclude the article: this article could have possibly explored two other dimensions. One dimension is the negative impact of the success virus on individuals who fail to succeed – witness the epidemic of suicides in students who fail or farmers who fail to repay their loans (the famous farmer suicides of Maharashtra; but also in Punjab and other places.). The other dimension is the impact of the values of success on mankind's ability to deal with the impending disaster of climate change. With material success the biggest driver for people, there is no reason for those who are creating their wealth from fossil fuels (as one example), or other industries that are dependent on these fossil fuels, to any way desist from doing so. The drive for individual success could, therefore, end up in disaster for all. Both these dimensions are critical, but exploring these dimensions in this article would have made it unduly bulky. Hence, these can now be taken up, at some other time, as independent articles.

All in all, this writer hopes that this article triggers thoughts on the different values that drive you and the larger society around you.



# OLabs – a technological innovation addressing challenges of education during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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## Introduction

Digital learning is the changing face of education where technology facilitates learning to strengthen a student's learning experience and gives them some control over time, place, path, and pace. The OLabs is based on the idea that lab experiments can be taught using the Internet more efficiently and less expensively. OLabs (Online Labs) allows students to conduct school lab experiments over the internet with ease and convenience. This technology was developed to supplement traditional physical labs and

bridge geographical and time constraints. As a result, students can conduct experiments in real time at a lower cost and have the flexibility to explore and repeat experiments until they thoroughly understand.

In a vast country like India, education by way of hands-on experiments involving sophisticated instruments is an expensive proposition as their access, availability and affordability are a constant challenge for schools that are public funded and partially supported public funded, due to lack of resources. In addition,

good teachers always need more supply. These issues are addressed to some extent, by way of web-based and video-based courses. It has always been challenging to conduct joint experiments with different participating institutions and to share expensive resources, even when few resourceful institutions agree to share them with other less endowed ones. Digital Learning is conceived as an alternative to these infrastructural challenges – during normal times when a country is not facing any calamity or adversity. When such alternatives take shape and become available to people in general and for the entire educational fraternity during a crisis, they suddenly take the shape of solutions to overcome adversities. The case of OLabs in India and few other countries is an eye-opener and path breaker for policy makers for developing time tested solutions for normal and adverse times.

OLabs was conceived and developed to meet the below objectives:

- to recognize an online learning platform's hidden potential, especially its ability to facilitate self-study by providing materials on a time and place-independent basis.
- to lay the groundwork for long-term learning infrastructure by outlining the preparation of content by translating a subject syllabus into different learning forms, such as simulation, demonstration, visualization, and teaching videos.
- to describe the relief and utility it provided to schools and kids during Covid lockdown time by its widespread use and cost-free access by everyone.

The paper also attempts to articulate how OLabs have changed over time, gearing up with technological and creative resources, and facilitated the shift from conventional laboratories to electronic laboratories by schools across the country. The scenario provides a starting point for a conversation about developing a new educational platform. It blends education while concentrating on technology and innovation. It signaled the start of a new era of technologically driven education.

## **Conception, Vision and Mission of OLabs**

OLabs and how it is helpful in the present scenario / Teacher training

- A survey shows that 75% of schools in India lack decent science labs for grades 11 and 12, and 58% of schools don't have the requisite lab infrastructure for grades 9 and 10 (Unified District Information System on Education and National University for Educational Administration and Planning). There is also a shortage of trained science lab teachers in many schools, which is a significant concern.
- The laboratory facilities in many schools worldwide are primarily inadequate, lacking the basic infrastructure in terms of equipment. Only one-third of 2.6 million schools have usable lab infrastructure (UNICEF report, 2016). Almost 13500 villages in India don't have schools (Ministry of Rural Development, 2018). OLabs has aimed to bridge the education gap, the digital divide between rural & urban, by providing content which can be accessed by both students from well-equipped schools and students with no access to physical labs or insufficient resources.
- India has around 32 million children out of school due to inaccessibility (NSSO 2014, report). Catering to this cause, OLabs has made itself accessible anywhere and anytime at user convenience.
- OLabs has provided its content in regional languages and addressed the lack of content in local languages, which has led to slower adoption of the online mode.

Online Labs, OLABS in short was conceived and developed as a technological alternative to the schools that suffer because of lack of poor infrastructure and are challenged in delivering hands-on experience to students to learn from laboratory experiments. Amrita Vishwa Vidya Peetham and Center for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) worked together to harness the benefits of the technology, especially, the

ICT tools, to bring the learning experience of laboratory studies to children of schools from far and near. Launched by Amrita Create and CDAC with the support of MeITy, Government of India, OLABS attempted to bridge the rural and urban gap in schooling and offer the same standards of educational processes and deliver learning elements to all schools across the country.

OLABS was built on the internet platform, offered to the schools for classes 9 – 12 in science subjects and English and Mathematics subjects for the classes of 9 and 10, covering the syllabi of CBSE, NCERT as well as state Board Syllabi of almost every state.

Launched in 2015, the OLABS experiment has been received and adopted by around 8000 schools, 27 thousand teachers and almost four lakh students studied and learnt through OLABS.

The Olabs was built around six pillars of learning facilitation. They are:

1. Interactive simulations which model real-life environments and behavior.
2. Give students the flexibility to repeat, explore and conduct experiments at their own pace.
3. Teacher training workshops and support for schools.
4. Experiments and evaluation aligned to NCERT Syllabus.
5. Allows for both formative and summative assessment of practical skills.
6. Ease of access- cloud-based model and CD for offline access.

### **Intended Advantages and benefits of OLabs platform**

OLabs aims to make lab experiments more efficient and less expensive by using the Internet to teach them. It can also be made available to students who need access to physical labs or where equipment is scarce or costly. This allows them to compete with students in better-equipped schools and

bridges the digital divide. As the experiments can be accessed anytime and anywhere, the time constraints of accessing the physical lab for only a short period can also be overcome.

The 'learning-enabled assessment' through OLabs facilitates the assessment of; the procedural and manipulative skills of the experiment, the concepts and understanding of the experiment, and a student's reporting and interpreting skills.

The development of OLabs includes the study and use of mathematical techniques to demonstrate the various complex functions in diverse areas of science. The labs make use of cutting-edge simulation technology to create real-world lab environments. Thorough study and research is done by research personnel for a better understanding of the experimental procedures. Real lab scenarios are captured through live demonstrations of the experiment to assimilate information on the procedures and lab equipment. Visualization and development of the graphical symbols are done based on realistic situations and compared with the respective actual equipment. Simulations are made interactive using various authoring tools, thus recreating and simulating a natural lab environment. Access to OLabs is free for Schools upon registration.

### **Salient Features of OLabs**

OLabs makes the learning experience as natural and imbibing as it could be in a physical classroom. It enhances the inquisitiveness of a student while participating in an experiment. It takes into consideration the essential requirements of a learning activity and its rubrics in its design. Especially, the below features make it a student and teacher friendly instrument.

- Evaluation – auto-evaluated multiple-choice questions & Viva-Voce questions that enable better performance in practical examination
- Provision of links to the glossary at relevant places



- Intuitive feedback & guidance throughout
- The entire Lab, including Animation & Simulation, can be configured easily by a teacher.
- Perform, record, and learn experiments; anywhere, anytime.
- Can easily be extended to support Physics & Chemistry Labs of other classes. Content aligned to NCERT/CBSE and State Board Syllabus. Focused on coverage of subjects Physics, Chemistry, and Biology Labs from Class 9 to Class 12 and English and Mathematics lessons for Class 9 and 10.

### **Creation of Learning Infrastructure within the OLabs Platforms**

The digital platform mainly worked on the learning possibilities and synchronizing the same with the content of the textbooks, supportive of teaching aids and facilitative functions of the learning elements. Briefly stated, it built on offering the basic theoretical foundations along with the processes and procedures for various experiments, making them self-learning elements. Four specific areas were focused while creating the digital content. They are:

- a. content creation for theory,
- b. demonstration of experiments by way of animation models, real experiment videos and drawings and 3-d models,
- c. facilitating students to conduct experiments on their own using simulation systems, games and
- d. facilitation of learning feedback using viva voce mode of asking questions and handholding students to answer them using multiple choice questions, true or false responses etc.

Briefly stated, Theory content consisted of the main objectives, concept and learning outcomes of the experiment. Procedure consisted of the materials required for the experiment, real lab

procedure, simulator procedure and the

precautions. A high emphasis was placed on animation - with a fundamental premise that students can clearly understand the methodology to do the experiment in the real chemical laboratory with easy to understand and grasp and imbibe animations. Simulation models were used extensively, as simulations offered flexibility in learning scope - for example, students can perform the experiments by changing variables and can observe the effect of the changes made. Students can do the experiments multiple times, repeatedly using simulations until they clearly understand the concepts and the methodology. Each lesson and experiment provided references to help both students and teachers to refer to relevant support material and the bases on which the experiments were developed and conducted. They contained text book references, seminal references and e-book and website links.

### **Adoption and acceptance of OLabs during 2013-2019**

OLabs was launched by CBSE in 2013, and initiated training of its teachers across the country to adopt digital learning and facilitate and supplement the laboratory based learning using the Olabs. Around 8000 schools and 27 thousand teachers got trained in use of Olabs and they were working with the children in their schools in supporting the teaching and learning processes using the digital platform for lab-based learning. In its endeavors and forays, OLabs continued to demonstrate its significance and role to various other countries as well and started gaining acceptance in few other countries as well.

### **Role played by OLabs during Covid-19 Pandemic**

March 2019, world started facing crises in multiple domains due to the Covid-19 pandemic covering almost every country on the globe. Within net few months, the country had to face a lockdown, which persisted over the next two years, in spurts and cycles. As a result, education system suffered and almost all learning avenues got mired under

the threat of pandemic, resulting in children suffering immensely.

- Before the pandemic, the world faced formidable challenges in fulfilling the promise of education as a basic human right. Despite the near-universal enrolment at early grades in most countries, an extraordinary number of children – more than 250 million – were out of school. ( 258 million in 2018, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), “Out-of-School Children and Youth”, available at <http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/out-school-children-and-youth>)
- Within a short span of the COVID-19 pandemic, many researchers have shared their works on teaching and learning in different ways. Several schools, colleges and universities have discontinued face-to-face teachings. There is a fear of losing the 2020 academic year or even more in the coming future. The need of the hour is to innovate and implement the alternative education system and assessment strategies. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided us with an opportunity to pave the way for introducing digital learning.
- As of July 2020, 98.6% of learners worldwide were affected by the pandemic, representing 1.725 billion children and youth, from pre-primary to higher education, in 200 countries (United Nations, 2020). Therefore, making learning possible and available from homeschooling has been the need of the hour.
- Internet bandwidth is relatively low with lesser access points, and data packages are costly compared to the income of the people in many developing countries, thus making accessibility and affordability inadequate. Policy-level intervention is required to improve this situation.
- With the advent of lockdown and a greater need for online learning, there has been a marked increase in OLABs usage indicators like the number of users, number of sessions, unique views, and bounce rate,

as shown in Exhibit 1. Overall, the total number of users has increased by 93.92% between Apr-Dec 2019 and Apr-Dec 2020. The number of new users signing into the platform increased by 90.36% during the same time frame. The number of sessions went up by 259.18%, showing an increased reliance on online learning. This is in line with expectations as most schools, including government institutions, were forced to shift to online teaching starting in March of 2020. Therefore, many new users would have relied on OLABs. Additionally, while earlier OLABs was at best a support instrument for education, many teachers would now be inclined to utilize it as a primary teaching resource, thus increasing the number of users as well as several sessions. This is further illustrated by the increased session time, which went up by over 53%, and the higher number of sessions per user, which increased by over 85%.

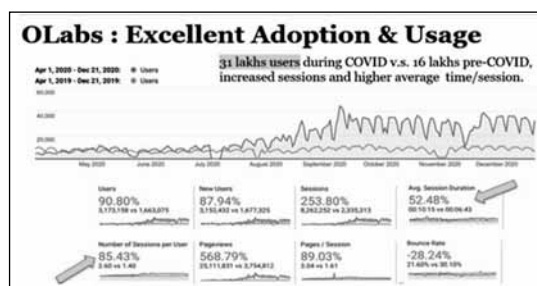


Exhibit1: OLABs adoption and usage

The genuine nature of this increase is best illustrated by the engagement of users with OLABs. For example, the number of page views increased by 573%, and the number of pages viewed per session increased by over 87%. Additionally, the bounce rate, which measures the number of times a person enters and leaves a website from the same page without much engagement, dropped by over 28%.

During the pandemic year 2020, the OLABs platform was accessed by 3 million users. Users increased from 14,908 to 36,700 monthly average, with new users increasing from



12,647 to 23,789, a clear demonstration of the growing visibility and popularity of OLABs, as in Exhibit 2.

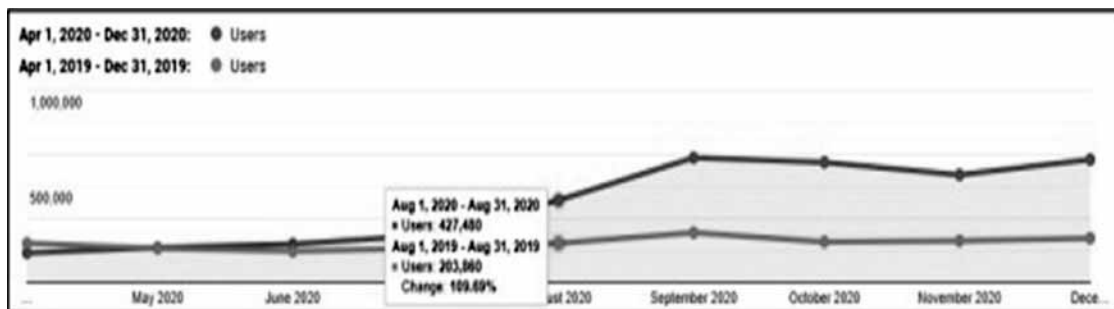


Exhibit 3: OLABs platform monthly usage comparisons between Apr-Dec 2019 and Apr-Dec 2020.

### Conclusion

OLabs is an innovation that was conceived and developed much before the recent Covid-19 pandemic. It was intended as an instrument to enhance the offline learning methods and supportive of classroom pedagogies. However, the time and space agnostic nature of internet-based resources came to the fore while it started offering solutions that are timely, apt and removed the shackles of constraints of physical presence or absence of teachers as well as students from school premises to conduct teaching and facilitate learning to happen to an interesting student and a committed teacher.

In a nutshell, a very carefully created platform of digital learning, that leveraged the capabilities of technology on one side and built on the creative talent of those adept with digital content and learning systems came to become and accepted as a highly appreciated medium for education, overcoming the lockdowns and adversities associated with pandemic periods, across the country.

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# Leadership & Management Style for 2023

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Suppose you could use a time machine to drop a manager from the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, 2010s or even January 2020 to the same industry in 2023. That manager would be naturally disoriented.

As we look forward to 2023 – it's useful for those interested in management and leadership to think about some fundamental forces impacting our world. Understanding these elemental forces will help in being able to lead effectively in a vastly changed workplace.

This article presents an edited compilation from my main blog StratoServe.com which I started in 2005, soon after Tom Friedman published "The world is flat." The StratoServe blog presents my early ideas that inform my research, teaching, and consulting, and received the inaugural Most Valuable Blogger award from CBS Television, Connecticut, USA.

## **The world is flat**

Tom Friedman first explained in his #1 Best Seller, "The World is flat," in 2005 that with

Internet work that did not require physical contact could be done from anywhere. Thus, workers in even large enterprises could collaborate on projects in real-time across time zones and countries.

Companies could thus locate team members working on the same project in any country. The ability of a multinational to hire workers from any country was considered a big challenge for jobs in developed economies. Until now, only manufacturing jobs had moved to China, and it looked like service jobs like data processing call centers would also move to countries such as India and the Philippines.

Meanwhile, in 2004, Facebook launched, and Google (established in 1998) became popular on computers and notebooks.

But something changed in 2007.

## **The iPhone and smartphones**

The iPhone was launched in 2007, followed by the Android versions of smartphones in 2008.

The smartphone changed life, particularly for developing countries and poorer communities in developed countries. In developing countries, it was hard to lay phone wires, and poorer folks in developed countries simply could not afford the high home internet costs.

Cell phone towers solved the infrastructure problem, and now you have a computer in your hand in the form of a cell phone.

Covid-19, work and management and leadership.

Covid-19 forced us to adapt, and anyone who could work from home was compelled to do so.

The technologies had developed to the point where virtual meetings became easier with Zoom.

As COVID-19 recedes in 2023, a combination of forces has dramatically changed work, our relationship with work, and our ways of leading at work.

In the remaining sections, I reproduce the most popular blog posts related to management and leadership from the StratoServe Blog. Reference list these posts.

### Jack Welch GE's 4 E and one P curve<sup>74</sup>

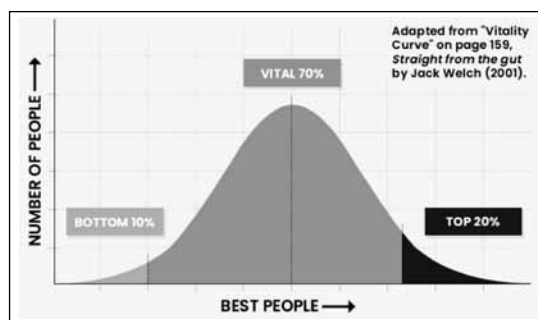
This post is from 2011, and GE, the model of management and leadership at all MBA schools and was still in the S&P Dow Jones 30. GE was booted out of the Dow Jones in 2018, and this was before the pandemic. I continued to see rising traffic on this post and was compelled to provide a note of caution.

**Update and Caution:** August 10, 2022: We are both elated and worried about the wild popularity of this post from 2011. Serious questions are being raised about Jack Welch's style, as depicted in this post. See recent criticism by David Gelles in "The Man Who Broke Capitalism: How Jack Welch Gutted the Heartland and Crushed the Soul of Corporate America—and How to Undo His Legacy."

<sup>74</sup> <https://stratoserve.com/2011/05/jack-welch-ges-4-p-and-one-e-curve.html>

Some GE managers who worked during Welch's time seem to agree though ex-Home Depot CEO Bob Nardelli is still a steadfast supporter of Jack Welch's leadership style. Welch was widely considered "the manager of the century." The Jack Welch century was the 20th Century. Do check out what seems to be working in leadership in 2022. Leadership Style 2022: Jack Welch or Satya Nadella?

This blog discussed Jack Welch's 4E's and one P in an earlier post; given the interest among blog readers, here is some more clarification about the concept.



### Jack Welch 4E's and 1 P -StratoServe

To evaluate managers, GE started a system of differentiating managers on performance but was hard-pressed to identify the characteristics that differentiated managers on the "Vitality" curve, which is essentially a "grading" curve or graph for managers. The word "vitality" is confusing because it refers more to being vital or essential to the organization rather than being "vital" in the "having high energy" sense. In fact, "Energy" is one of the 4 E's but let's go over the 4 E's of GE leadership briefly:

1. **Energy:** High personal energy of the manager is important. It reminds me of a boss who used to watch the speed at which you walked in the corridor! It sounds weird, but someone who is mostly lethargic in walking up and down does give off a "low energy" vibe.
2. **Energize others:** Do you brighten up a co-worker's mood? Or do co-workers feel down after interacting with you?
3. **Edge:** Can you make tough decisions that

are Yes/No without fear of being disliked? Welch found that many managers have two or even three of the above “E’s” and did not seem to click to be put in the **top 20%** of the curve. “Execution” was this missing 4th E which is this blog’s favorite managerial and leadership ability.

4. **Execution:** Can you deliver? Let us say that you are a supply chain manager who is responsible for engaging a few small high-tech innovative suppliers for a new component development for a new product project. You asked one of your buyers to send out emails from the supplier database, and perhaps none of the suppliers responded. When you show up for the new product top team meeting, you just say that suppliers are not responding. Well, you are not “executing.”

The “execution” focused manager would have figured out why suppliers were not responding (*perhaps small suppliers worried about volumes down the road before investing*), then would have put out a “development” financial advance proposal and discussed, offline, how much the new product team was willing to spend in supporting a new supplier. High “ability to execute” is the manager who walks in with the prototype of the component into the next meeting with no excuses.

Such managers do not promise anything easily. Once they do, top management or the board knows it can “*consider it done*”!

5. **Passion:** is the “P” in the 4 E’s and one P. A manager passionate about her/his job goals normally has some of the first 3 E’s and must focus a great deal on executing. Passion is what holds the 4 E’s together for the top 20% performers.

### Generation Z will not accept Jack Welch leadership style in 2023

As anyone involved in teaching/interacting with Gen Z knows, they are very different and will not accept the hard Jack Welch style. Instead they would “Quietly quit” which is

ethically wrong and a wrong move for the knowledge economy.

Hence this blog post from August 31, 2022.

Quiet Quitting does not work in the knowledge economy<sup>75</sup>



Quiet Quitting does not work in the knowledge economy.

“Quiet quitting” is quite the rage on TikTok and has now appeared in mainstream media, including NYT, WSJ, NBC, Fox, etc. Gen Y Millennials (born 1981 to 1996) and the younger Gen Z (born 1997 to 2012) are particularly influenced by this trend of quiet quitting. The most influenced might be Gen Z, about 60% of TikTok users. The trouble is that these are impressionable young people growing up into teenage and young adulthood.

Naturally, managers are quite alarmed because it turns out that we are increasingly moving from the information age to the knowledge age. And to become a knowledgeable expert on anything needs 10,000 hours of work, as Malcolm Gladwell highlighted.

Everyone cannot become an Instagram/TikTok/YouTube star, just like most people are not able to make it to stardom in Hollywood or Broadway. And to sustain stardom in social media is hard and needs a lot of “work” ( yes, 10,000 hours), the very thing that quiet quitting objects to. Becoming a TikTok star involves posting frequently and making a persistent effort to come up with posts, graphics, and

<sup>75</sup> <https://stratoserve.com/2022/08/quiet-quitting-does-not-work-in-the-knowledge-economy.html>

videos that inspire, outrage, and generally resonate with your audience.

### **What is Quiet Quitting?**

As far as we can tell, quiet quitting is working your hours without putting your heart and soul into it. If you are a Barista at Starbucks, you deliver the coffee with or without a genuine, enthusiastic smile. Is that a problem for Starbucks? Yes, it is because suddenly, the \$5-10 fancy latte does not seem that special to the customer. More importantly, if a Barista serves without enthusiasm and spirit the bigger loser is the Barista, as we explain next.

### **Concept of Karma**

*Disclaimer:* We do not claim expertise in theology or religious studies. Please consult whatever source or religion you prefer.

Organized religion arrived with agriculture. Agriculture is much harder sustained work than hunting and gathering. Authors like James Suzman point out that religion was needed to manage agriculture. People started living as a community in the village and domesticated animals with the goal of agriculture. Working on a farm involves hard deadlines. Feed the animals on time, milk the cows on time, and collect eggs on a timely basis. You cannot delay seeding or harvesting.

One of the fundamental ideas in Hinduism and later Buddhism is the idea of Karma or duty. When you do your duty sincerely as an offering to God without expecting any personal benefit or results, you are blessed and are rewarded in this life or your next birth. It turns out that when you work and derive purpose, meaning, and satisfaction from work – it becomes like play. Results follow incredibly, although Hindu scripture sternly asks you not to look for personal benefit. Since you are not thinking about any personal results or benefits you are completely free of “attachment” to the fruit of your efforts. This is naturally very hard to do, but if you can do it there is no stress while doing the work. And certainly no stress after work hours. The relevant verse from the Bhagwad Gita is Chapter 2, Verse 47.

In Christianity, the Calvinist Protestant work ethic is “work is worship,” and scholars believe this was a big driver of the Industrial revolution. And if you think about the success of America since its founding days by the pilgrims.

From the Industrial age (Henry Ford/ Taylor), we moved to the service age, and we believe that Gen Z and younger Gen Y are confusing the upcoming knowledge economy with the service economy as they justify quiet quitting.

### **Service Economy vs. Knowledge economy**

In the service economy, you had the Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) worker who went through work training at, say, McDonald’s. The model of such training is wonderfully explained in the Netflix movie “The Founder.” However, today just observe the kind of specific requests that the customer has, for example, a burger with mayo and no lettuce. It does matter to the customer if they get what they ordered and the order taker and kitchen can get their act in sync. The competitive landscape has changed as you notice the extreme personalization at Subway. Or the special feeling at Chick-Fil-A.

A QSR worker focused on making a customer happy is likely to learn more about customer service than a student taking a marketing class. And that knowledge is tacit because the worker “knows” but can’t necessarily explain the steps that lead to customer happiness. (Oh well, a marketing class will help such an engaged worker far more than an inexperienced or disengaged worker). And that knowledge is valuable in creating more growth opportunities for such a worker in other industries or as an entrepreneur even in unrelated fields.

Our dear readers would know plumbers and electricians who know and care about what they are doing and a majority who do not. Both groups are qualified, have passed exams, and yet have been quietly quitting for years. Services like Angi and HomeAdvisor have high valuations because they try to separate the quiet quitters in the trades.

Moving up the knowledge chain, consider orthopedic surgeons. As pointed out in an earlier post, Propublica has a public database of surgeons with fewer vs. more complications, as evidenced by repeat visits and insurance claims. Consider this: all surgeons are competent, qualified, tested, and certified. A majority, though, are like the majority of quiet quitting plumbers. They have personal competence, but someone in their team might drop the ball, and they don't have the dedication to see that all pieces of their process (eg good physiotherapy after surgery) are working well.

To summarize, in every field of work, you already have many folks functioning as quiet quitters.

We just can't afford the younger Gen Z to start quiet quitting.

To any quiet quitters among our dear readers: We confess to quietly quitting on many fronts but then recall the words of a mentor, "Every morning I wake up to a fresh start and convince myself that I have zero laurels I can rest on"!

And so we soldier on. And urge our dear readers to do the same.

### Leadership Style 2023: Jack Welch or Satya Nadella?<sup>76</sup>

And finally, here is something I wrote of January 31, 2022 for 2022 but seems to be something to be equally relevant for 2023.



### Which leadership style to adopt in 2022 with the Great Resignation ?

<sup>76</sup> <https://stratoserve.com/2022/01/leadership-style-2022-jack-welch-or-satya-nadella.html>

One of our all time popular posts is about Jack Welch's leadership style.

The Jack Welch ( legendary CEO of GE ) style is what most Baby Boomers (Born 1946-1964) grew up with. Organizations exist because stuff needs to be "done" by teams of people. If you as a team member can't deliver – you are out was the mantra. If you hold a job, you should know the outcomes expected in your job. Your manager may not communicate along the way. Or you may be hesitant to ask for help to achieve your expected outcomes.

Gen X( Born 1965-1980) was willing to go along with the Baby Boomer/Jack Welch leadership style. Gen Y or Millennials ( Born 1981 to 1996) and Gen Z or Zoomers (Born 1997 – 2012) are very different. Since the pandemic and the Great Resignation , we thought it was timely to rethink the Jack Welch style as discussed in our very popular posts on Jack Welch. Between the generations, the economy has shifted from industrial to service and now the knowledge economy. Also family wealth has increased so Baby Boomers and Gen X are happy to support their adult children as needed. All this has resulted in dramatic shifts and here are three illustrations:

1. Gen Y and Z don't obsess as much about ownership and are happy to pay for use. These include houses (Rent, Airbnb) cars (Uber). Freed from the tyranny of fixed loan payments and more assured of parental support they feel less trapped in organizations that they do not like.
2. Also Gen Y and Z are happy to change their jobs and locations easily as the pandemic has shown. The carrot and stick approach does not seem to work as well as it did in earlier times.
3. Younger people worldwide are far kinder to each other. And they are more accepting of people different than themselves. They are far more open to diversity.

When Satya Nadella took over as CEO of Microsoft in 2014, he made the reading of "Nonviolent Communication" by Marshall



B. Rosenberg compulsory for the top management. Nadella's predecessor at Microsoft, Steve Balmer followed a version of the Jack Welch approach without the candor that Jack promoted at GE.

We got hold of "Nonviolent Communication" (Note: *we get no commission for offering this Amazon link to our dear readers*) and were amazed at the way candor was really executed. In the Jack Welch era, you called a *spade a spade*. Candor meant that you tell your people on their face that their work "sucks". Even back then, you didn't make friends. Legend has it that in the old GE days managers had to list their bottom 10% people and HR would find that several colleagues (now deceased) were listed in the bottom 10%. Just so that the manager could avoid firing current colleagues! The dilemma was that if you avoid offering feedback to team members, things don't improve and the whole organization suffers.

Nadella's approach with Nonviolent Communication turned out to be a game changer for Microsoft. From morale to financial performance and stock price – everything has been only improving.

Incidentally, the Satya Nadella approach also hits the spot in a multi-generational workspace. Nonviolent Communication resonates with Gen Y and Z.

Here is a brief application of Rosenberg's suggestions for our dear readers in their roles at any organization. Our sense is that Baby Boomers and Gen Xers become happier and this is a great path to have Millennials and Gen Z's buy in to your organizational mission.

**Scenario:** *You as the leader of Sales have a team member who has missed the last important project deadline. For this scenario, assume that the sales team member (cross reporting to finance) was working on costing sheets for an important Request for Proposal (RFP). Some predicted prices were expected to reach the costing person from Supply Chain folks who were supposed to get predicted prices from certain suppliers. With COVID, Supply Chain issues, inflation, there were a lot of*

*moving parts to predict for the costing person. You now have a one on one Zoom meeting next week to discuss the next costing for the next response to a new RFP.*

Nonviolent communication suggests the following approach for your meeting with the team member. The foundational principle is to build a human connection with the other person that involves a common humanity and bonds of trust and cooperation. You are neither trying to provide a carrot (incentive) or a stick (threat):

1. **Observation:** You start with observing the facts of the situation. Since the primary agenda of the meeting is for costing out a new RFP, a good way is to start by saying "we have a new RFP coming up for -day-month. I noticed that your last costing sheets were delayed." Your team member is likely to give you several reasons for the delay. It's good to listen and understand carefully. *Here it is important not to judge.* For example, if you hear that "Supply Chain folks did not give me the predicted price" do not say "You should have told me" or "Did you call them". *Hold on!*
2. **State how you feel:** "I felt let down because we had to use this data for a time sensitive RFP". Follow this how you feel statement to the next step.
3. **State your needs explicitly:** "Can we figure out a way to get the next costing sheets in on time?" Here you are showing that you rely on the person and that is a great feeling for a team member. Sometimes we are not clear ourselves and at other times we think it would be impolite to *clearly* ask for what we need. Clearly asking means talking in a polite and friendly tone (or email). Rosenberg provides great examples of parents yelling at their children instead of calmly asking the child to address what the parent needs.
4. **Actionable item:** Following from your needs you must specify a doable action item. Here it's important to convert your

need to an actionable item. Once you specify the action the recipient of your nonviolent communication has a chance of considering doing it. You should be willing to hear a “no” to your specific action item without getting upset. In this particular scenario under costing will not hurt your response to RFP’ success but over costing might. However, there will be profitability questions if you get the contract with severe under-costing. Can you add a clause to index your quote to a public index like the consumer price index? Note some data crunching is needed here. In any case what you need is the costing that is as realistic (within a range) by a certain date. You still can figure out your final quote based on the market, client’s budget etc. You want your meeting to end with “winning the heart” of your costing colleague. Performance will follow.

Consider any difficult work email you send today. Try the above steps as you compose that email. Our guess is that you will be pleased with the outcome.

## **In Conclusion**

Given the proliferation of the cell phone and social media, most bad things don’t remain in organizations. Besides, after the pandemic, most people do some part of their work from home. And the strict work/home boundary of the Jack Welch style has disappeared.

It also turns out the baby boomers and Gen X who accepted a Jack Welch “take no prisoners” tough style did create a lot of wealth.

For generation Z, basic needs are assured, and their demand is for a kinder, gentler, more inclusive workplace. It is indeed these forces that leaders need to change their style from Jack Welch to Satya Nadella in 2023.







# Evolving Resilient Strategies for Survival & Sustenance

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*(The current focus on energy resilience and rising coal shortages and lower achievement of renewable energy parameters in India pose a substantial danger to a sustainable future. Along with the danger of future disasters both on the east coast and the west coast, it is imperative that we have to evolve resilient strategies for the future else we perish!)*

At the turn of the millenium, the Gujarat earthquake happened in Kutch and people were sleeping in the grounds of Gandhi Maidan in Bhuj as it was to be safest place to be in the disaster- sleeping in the open. There was a growing realization even then that not only have disasters come to stay, they are bound to increase in the coming years. We have to become more resilient if we are to survive. In 2004 the Indian Ocean Tsunami struck on December 26, 2004 and the trail of destruction and damage including deaths was unparalleled and reminded one of the Apocalypse. There have been numerous

other disasters in between such as floods in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, Cloud bursts in the Himalayas, Leh Ladakh, etc. The pandemic in 2020 caused by the COVID 19 virus has literally put the world on notice. Lakhs of lives and livelihoods were lost as the nation struggled with poor health public infrastructure, poor planning and mismanagement from vaccines to oxygen, hospital beds, etc. Unless we take steps towards sustainability, resilience and responsible co-existence the human race may not survive into the next millennium.

Increasing disasters are becoming a big crisis for India's coastal states and it requires us to put in place a framework for resilience in India. The resulting framework comprises a snapshot of India's energy source mix, an overview of India's energy policies/politics and an outline of the challenges of Renewable energy and policy design for more resilient energy systems in disaster-prone regions of India. This means further developing key

elements of the framework, structured around key concepts of climate compatible critical infrastructure, technology based on ethical materials choices used in energy generation devices and energy systems, development of disaster risk resilience (DRR), and governance and public policy analytical lenses for design of climate compatible resilient energy systems, and finally, identification of criteria for assessing the ongoing sustainability of energy systems. The developed framework aims to assist policy makers to combine transitions to lower carbon emission development with measures that will also reduce the risks experienced by disaster-prone communities by laying out steps to address the proactive design of more disaster and climate change compatible energy systems and critical infrastructure. (Refer paper **Developing a framework for disaster energy resilience – India** by Professor Linda Hancock and Mathew Cherian).

The current crisis of climate change in India has been triggered by the “dirty coal” debate where India’s dependence on coal and resultant carbon emissions have served as a trigger which will endanger the survival of the Indian sub-continent. The coastal people in India will be the most vulnerable communities in the coming decades. Measures for vulnerable people can only be created if it is clear who can be categorized as vulnerable people. The exact definition of vulnerable people differs from country to country, depending on what society views to be a decent life, as guaranteed by the constitution. For instance, the Community-Wide Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment by the Canadian government [1] also lists pet owners as a type that may be considered as vulnerable, which is a type unlikely to be found in developing countries. To summarize the findings in a definition applicable to all countries, it is necessary to have a general definition. Hence the following was adopted as a working definition: Vulnerable people in a community: “People who have characteristics and live in circumstances that make them more susceptible than others in a community to the

damaging effects of a hazard, despite measures to avoid disasters or to recover from disasters taken on behalf of the entire population. These people require extra measures to have the same level of vulnerability as others in the community”. It is often not possible to consider the individual characteristics of vulnerable people on a national scale. Therefore it is necessary to construct a definition of groups of potentially vulnerable people as well. For example, ‘elderly’ is a group with many vulnerable people as members, but not all elderly are vulnerable people. Group of potentially vulnerable people: “A group of people sharing one or more characteristics, such as age or ethnicity, in which it is likely that a majority of the members also have one or more characteristics of vulnerable people”. When considering the characteristics of vulnerable people to disasters, as described below, an overlap may exist where people can have multiple characteristics simultaneously or their characteristics may change during their lifetime. The characteristics of vulnerable people (with examples of groups of potentially vulnerable people): less physically or mentally capable (infants, elderly, people with disabilities); less material and/or financial resources (low-income households, homeless); less knowledge or experience (children, illiterate, foreigners, tourists). These definitions enable the evaluation of vulnerable people, both in laws and policies as well as the field of statistics. In India fishing communities are likely to be the most vulnerable in the coming decades and people living in estuaries and near mangroves like Sundarbans in Bengal, Lake Chilka in Orissa and Pichavaram in Tamilnadu plus many more. There has been no mapping in India of the vulnerabilities of people due to climate change. The west / east coast and Gujarat coast are likely to be the victims of more disasters due to climate change as the Arabian Sea is warming up. A rise in sea level has already been predicted that will endanger cities such as Mumbai, New York etc. Nature shows no discrimination!

Data from EMDAT [2] show the frequency

of disasters has been increasing in the past decades, as well as the amount of damages and loss of lives they are causing. The United Nations World Water Assessment Programme [3,4] shows that the world is facing population growth projections of 2–3 billion people in the coming 40 years; and that 18 of the world's 27 megacities with populations of 10 million or greater are located in coastal areas where the largest population increase from migration will take place. According to the United Nations University [5], by 2050 the population vulnerable to flood disasters will be 2 billion, due to rising populations in flood-prone lands, climate change, deforestation, loss of wetlands and rising sea levels. This increase in the frequency and magnitude of hazards combined with an increase of population points to an expected increase of groups of potentially vulnerable people with a higher risk of exposure to hazards. To support vulnerable people, the goals of Disaster Risk Management (DRM) laws (also named Disaster Risk Reduction laws) include reducing vulnerability of vulnerable people. The Pressure and Release (PAR) model by Wisner et al. [6] explains how vulnerability progresses via root causes, dynamic pressures and unsafe conditions, and how vulnerability can be reduced. It seems logical that DRM laws, which have reducing vulnerability as their goal, would target all of the causes that ultimately lead to vulnerability in order to create a lasting reduction of vulnerability, from the root causes to the unsafe conditions. The WWAP [4] describes such dynamic processes as population growth, land use change and greater use of hazard prone areas.

During the last 10 years, many countries such as Japan, the Netherlands, and the United States have revised their disaster laws given the increased losses from disasters worldwide, and several countries are beginning to adopt climate change in their legislation [7]. It remains to be seen to which extent dynamic trends influencing the amount of vulnerable people, such as poverty, aging and urbanization of coastal areas, are also taken

into account in vulnerability reducing laws. Conforming to the principles of Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) and Burton's Forensic Disaster Investigations [8], the main basic disaster law for each case study countries was identified and analyzed. Given that water-related hazards account for 90% of all natural hazards and the disproportionate rate of influence and occurrence of flood disasters among the total disasters [9], flood DRM laws were investigated in detail. The focus of this paper lies on the comparison of measures taken for vulnerable people in different countries. This paper addresses the questions 'which groups of potentially vulnerable people are defined and supported by DRM laws?', 'how do laws support vulnerable people?' and 'which measures are taken during which phase of disaster management?'.

The goals of DRM laws and policies, as well as safety norms and acceptable losses, differ greatly from country to country. There is a common theme, however, to increase support vulnerable people. Examples are taken from Japan, the Netherlands and the United States show that these countries all have governments asserted as democratic and have signed or support the UN declaration for human rights. They are all modern states with sufficient resources, knowledge, a stable infrastructure and well-functioning distribution networks and education to support vulnerable people. This means these countries have both the need and the methods to support vulnerable people. The choice for these specific countries was aided by accessibility of their laws. Furthermore it was found that in these countries the amounts of two groups of potentially vulnerable people, elderly and ethnic minorities, show increasing trends. Although the case study countries have different law systems, and even have multiple systems within their own country as explained by Zweigert and Kotz " [10], a comparison of the constitutions and main disaster laws can still be made. The national laws of Japan, the Netherlands and the United

States all include references to equality and guarantee a safe living environment. Laws do not guarantee implementation or superior effects over non-governmental assistance, but there are several ways laws can contribute to support vulnerable people. While local actions have proved to have the most effect on increasing resilience, laws can help distribute and mitigate the risks.

In India, two agencies were created to combat disaster risk, one the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) for creating the overall policy framework and a national disaster relief force with volunteers and full time trained personnel called National Disaster Relief Force (NDRF). Elderly and disabled people are most vulnerable followed by women and children in disaster situations. There needs to be specific strategies to help these vulnerable populations during and after disasters. In Orissa millions of vulnerable people were moved during Cyclone Fani and Cyclone Amphan and in neighbouring West Bengal. However, the damages were most intense and losses in billions. Can we reduce this vulnerability to Climate Change in coastal areas in India? However, we are weak in laws relating to Disaster Risk Reduction and protecting the vulnerable communities across India. The Present day Government machinery is more interested in creating a favourable climate for coal based energy, ignoring the warnings of climate scientists. Kerala Government ignored the warnings of Madhav Gadgil Committee report and are now facing the consequences in repeated landslides and disastrous floods which is destroying the ecosystem and placing millions at risk.

Coal based thermal energy is one of the key drivers of global energy. Carbon emissions are rising in India and the use of coal for power generation is increasing in spite of these warnings. There appears to be no laws to curb this mindless expansion of thermal power and its resultant carbon emissions. In spite of commitments in COP27 talks our political will to reduce is completely lacking.

There have only been policy pronouncements with very little action. There is a need to place a much more comprehensive law towards resilience if we are to survive over the next 100 years. Do we have laws to support vulnerable people? Do we support vulnerable fishing communities and poor people living on the coasts or do we pay attention to the Elderly and People with Disabilities?. In the Himalayan region can we reduce the number of dams, roads, etc being built in eco fragile regions. The Ravi Chopra report had indicted both the Centre and State governments for indiscriminate destruction of the sensitive Himalayan region. The Kedarnath Himalayan Tsunami was a warning from Mother Nature. The fragile mountains, reduction of glaciers, and huge cyclones are warnings to India that either we decide to change or we perish. *Are policy makers listening?*

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# Broad Basing Process for Socio-Economic Transformation\*

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Broad basing refers to the inclusion of marginalized communities in the social development process. There are many ways of social inclusion and social mobility such as 'trickle-down, empowerment, integration, and democratization. Broad basing is different from social mobility. "Social mobility is often concerned with individuals and families and sometimes with individual communities, whereas broad basing refers to society as a whole and its power structure" (Nadkarni, 2020, p. 11).

Trickle-down is a result of economic growth wherein certain benefits flow down to the downtrodden. In contrast, empowerment implies the widening of power structures to include the oppressed and marginalized communities. Deprived classes may retain their distinct social and cultural identity and

may not get integrated with the mainstream in this respect. While such communities may be integrated yet they may not be part of the power structure. Democratization refers to the political participation of marginalized communities. Broad basing is a broader concept compared to trickle-down, empowerment, integration and democratization and includes all these processes. It includes economic, political, social and cultural aspects of human society.

With respect to democratization, Nadkarni (2020, p.12 & 13) observes, "The connotations of Broad-Basing and democratisation come quite close to each other, but they are not identical. Though it can be an end in itself, democratisation can be taken also as a means of achieving and maintaining Broad-Basing ... The essence of a democracy is that all the citizens have equal human rights - the right to life, decent living conditions, to food and education, to freedom of expression including

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\* This article is written for a book in honour of Prof. M. V. Nadkarni, to be published soon.

the freedom to criticise the state policies and their implementation, to free association with others for peaceful and constructive purposes, to own and dispose of property without being under pressure, to employment or an occupation for livelihood and similar related rights. No Broad-Basing is possible and meaningful without these rights. The connection between Broad-Basing and democracy is thus clear”.

There is also a difference between broad basing and integration. In this respect Nadkarni (2020, p. 12) observes, “Broad-Basing is different from integration. Families of the deprived castes/ classes who join the mainstream of society may retain their separate social and cultural identities and may not become one integrated mass of homogeneous people. To the extent that integration indicates inclusion in the power base of the society sharing benefits and functions on an equitable basis, Broad-Basing can be said to be involving integration. The term ‘integration’ is also used as indicating incorporation into a system of inter-relationship, where it may differ from Broad-Basing”.

Nadkarni in the preface of his edited book, *Socio - Economic Change and Broad - Basing in India* (2020), states, “Broad-Basing is a process by which more and more social groups that were formerly marginalised or deprived enter the mainstream of social, political and economic life to derive the same advantages as the group already in the mainstream. It also means that the social basis of the power structure widens, and in the process it becomes more inclusive.”

Historical perspective on broad basing process in Indian society reveals that the broad basing process has been going on in Indian society for long time. “It was in operation even in the distant past in India, by which outstanding poets in Sanskrit like Valmiki, Vyasa and Kalidasa had emerged from lower castes, enriching India’s literature and culture in spite of the caste system” (Nadkarni 2020, p. 1). Around 12th century Basaveswara started

the anti-caste Bhakti movement and gave a call to end caste inequality. Sant Jnaneswar in 13th century interpreted for common people Bhagwad Gita to say that for the Supreme God caste difference do not matter. Other Bhakti saints such as also Kabir took an anti-caste stand. Dalit saint Chokhamela in 13-14th century denounced the caste system and Eknath also denounced caste differences. Thus Bhakti movement contributed substantially to the broad basing of Indian society during medieval times.

During modern times, there have been several movements towards ending the supremacy of Brahmins in Indian society. For example, a movement launched by Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy (1879 -1973) challenged the hold of Brahmins and this movement addressed all non-Brahmin rather than only one community.

Dalit movement started by visionary Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956) demanded reservations for Dalits. In 1956, he even converted to Buddhism along with his followers.

Post-independence Indian constitution provided for the reservation of Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Later this benefit was extended to Other Backward Castes and classes.

Thus over the years, the Indian society has been undergoing a broad basing process. In all historical periods such as Vedic period, Bhakti movement period, freedom struggle period and Independent India period, broad basing of Indian society has been going on in one form or other. During ancient period outstanding poets in Sanskrit like Valmiki, Vyasa and Kalidasa had emerged from lower castes. During Bhakti movement period, Basaveswara, Sant Jnaneswar, Kabir, and others took anti-caste stand and argued for broad basing of Indian society. During the Freedom movement period, Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy, B. R. Ambedkar, and others contributed to the broad basing movement in India. During the Independent India period, the Indian constitution provided reservations for the SC/ ST and later for OBC and EWS



thus facilitating the process of broad basing in Indian society.

The Dalit movement under the visionary and spirited leadership of Dr B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956) was also started before independence. He did not stop at demanding reservations but also gave a shock to the Hindu society when along with his followers he formally came out of it and embraced Buddhism. As a result of Dalit movement, many prominent Dalits have played a leading role since independence on a scale as never before. They are now not only in the mainstream of politics but also in professions, literature and business. They even have a political party, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). There have been two Dalit presidents of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind (2017-2022) and Shri K. R. Narayanan (1997-2002) - both were eminent leaders in their own right.

Nadkarni (2020, p.2) observes, "Under new forces of capitalist economic growth, the main factors which had structured the feudal caste system were very much weakened. Thus the old forces of feudalism gave way to new forces of capitalism. This has complicated the Indian society and polity, because even before the old caste system disappeared, new forms of inequality and marginalization emerged". Thus we observe the emergence of new marginalized sections in Indian society.

Sharma (1996, 2013) provided 4 Es framework of Efficiency, Equity, Ethics, and Ecology for Holistic Development and Management. Prof. Nadkarni's academic contributions can also be analyzed through this 4 Es framework viz. Efficiency, Equity (Social equality), Ethics and Ecology. Economic efficiency is reflected in GDP and per capita income. Social equity is reflected in broad basing of the society for opportunities and democratic participation. If a society is broad based there will be more social equality. Ethics are necessary for corruption-free society and Ecology is necessary for sustainability.

Broad basing aims to seek social equality in terms of economic, political, social and cultural spheres. Ethics provide a basis for

order in society. Concern for ecology has gathered momentum during recent years. Nadkarni's book, Socio Economic Change and Broad Basing in India (2020) traces various movements in Indian society that have helped in broad basing Indian society, His book. Ethics for Our Times: Essays in Gandhian Perspectives (2011), provides relevance and significance of Gandhi's social economic and political thoughts for our times.

Sharma (2013) also provided 4 Cs framework wherein 4 Cs are represented by Competition, Compassion, Creativity and Consciousness. Competition is rooted in the idea of 'Survival of the Fittest to leave behind the rest'. In contrast Compassion is rooted in the idea of 'Survival of the Weakest' as well as 'Empowerment of the Weakest'. Creativity is rooted in the idea of 'Survival of the Unique' and Consciousness is rooted in the idea of "Arrival of the Best to lead the rest". Creativity is needed in knowledge society and Consciousness, particularly higher consciousness is needed for creating an enlightened society. Accordingly there are two types of leadership viz. one based on survival of the fittest to leave behind the rest and second arrival of the best to lead the rest. Most people will agree that today's society needs the second type of leadership i.e. arrival of the best to lead the rest. In the ultimate analysis we need a balance between 4 Cs just as we need a balance between 4Es.

We can also use 4 Cs framework to analyse Prof. Nadkarni's work. His academic tilt is towards Compassion and Consciousness and accordingly we can find the ideas of survival and empowerment of the weakest and broad basing of the marginalized sections of society and the ideas of ethics and spirituality..

Modern societies are influenced by four fundamental forces viz. Force of Market, Force of State/ Government, Force of People/ Force of Capillary action, and Force of Market are rooted in the ideas of Competition, Efficiency, and Survival of the Fittest. The Force of the State/ Government can be expressed through public policy. This force is utilized to create

broad basing in society through public policy initiatives such as reservations and welfare schemes for the marginalized sections of society. This force can bring more equity and equality within society. Force of People/ Capillary action can find its expression in protest movements and self-help groups. Gandhi's vision of Swaraj is rooted in channeling the force of people in a constructive way. Force of Self finds its expression in Higher Order Purpose of Existence (HOPE) and accordingly in higher values such as love, compassion and devotion. If there is a proper balance between these four forces there is harmony and peace within society.

Prof. Nadkarni's focus is on the analysis of the Force of State, Force of People/ Capillary action, and Force of Self to achieve the goals of broad basing of societies. In this, he draws upon the intellectual heritage of Gandhi and Ambedkar, and others to put forth his arguments for broad basing. Force of State when utilized for broad basing can achieve mainstreaming of the marginalized sections of society. It can find its manifestation in terms of a reservation policy, in affirmative action, and in the design of welfare schemes for the marginalized sections of society.

Prof. Nadkarni has also authored, 'Sāmājika-Nīti-Kāvyā-Gucchaḥ:

A Bouquet of Poems on Social Ethics'. This book contains the following Śataka:

1. शारदादशकम् (A prayer to the Goddess of literature and arts)
2. परिसरनीतिशतकम् (On environmental ethics)
3. गान्धितत्त्वशतकम् (On Gandhi's philosophy)
4. सनातनधर्मतत्त्वशतकम् (On Hinduism from a Gandhian perspective) and मानवधर्मशतकम् (On humanitarianism)
5. प्रजाप्रभुत्वशतकम् (On democracy)

The first Śataka, Parisara-nīti-śatakam, is on environmental ethics. It makes an impassioned plea to safeguard nature and its environment, which we have been harming through our short-sighted goal of maximizing personal

and national income. In this Śataka focus is on unsustainable exploitation. Nadkarni states, "Unsustainable exploitation of nature is not required for eradication of poverty; it will only aggravate poverty. The destruction of nature is very harsh on women who would be compelled to fetch water and fuel wood from greater distances. The poor, including poor women, depend directly on the health and productivity of nature. Let us not forget that:

वसुन्धरा मनुष्याणाम् एकमेव सुखस्थलम् ।

तस्य संरक्षणं कार्यमनुरागेण गौरवात् ॥२॥

Vasundharā manṣyāṇām

ekameva sukha-sthalam,

tasya samrakṣaṇam

kāryyamnurāgeṇa gauravāt ||2||

Vasundharā – The earth, (is), ekameva – the only, sukha-sthalam – comfortable place, manuṣyāṇām - of mankind; tasya (sthalasya) – its, samrakṣaṇam – protection, kāryyam – has to be done, anurāgeṇa – with love, (and), gauravāt – with respect.

The Earth is our only place, where we can live and flourish;

it's mankind's obligation to protect it and cherish".

Thus the focus of first Śataka is on ecology and protection and preservation of planet earth.

Second Śataka deals with Gandhi's thought and philosophy. Nadkarni states, "For Gandhi, ahimsa is not a negative principle, but very much a positive principle of love, actively reaching out to help, fighting (non-violently) to end injustice, and fellowship or brotherhood. Gandhi also stressed that Truth and Ahimsa are actually two faces of one coin only; you cannot separate the two. He honestly tried to be what he aimed at and taught. He famously declared once: 'My life is my message'. The very first verse in this Śataka says about Gandhi and his life:

Easy to find are those who preach with no attention to implementation,

but hard to find those noble lot whose life itself is an education.”

सुलभ्याः नीतिबोधाय स्वानुष्ठाने न लक्षिताः।

धीरास्तु दुर्लभाः येषां जीवनमेव बोधनम् ॥१॥

Sulabhyāḥ nītibodhāya swānuṣṭhāne  
na lakṣitāḥ,

dhīrāstu durlabhāḥ yeṣāṃ jīvanameva  
bodhanam ॥1॥

Nīti-bodhāya – For preaching morals, (are),  
sulabhyāḥ – easy to find, (those who are)  
na lakṣitāḥ – not attentive, swānuṣṭhāne  
– to implementation in person; tu – but,  
durlabhāḥ – hard to find, (are those), dhīrāḥ  
– noble persons, yeṣāṃ – whose, jīvanam eva  
– life itself, (is), bodhanam – an instruction/  
education.

Third Śātaaka deals with sanatana dharma / Hinduism. In this respect Nadkarni states, “The essence of Hinduism, particularly as enshrined in the Gita and reiterated by Gandhi and other savants of Hinduism like Swami Vivekananda, lies in Karma-yoga – selfless service for the welfare of the world. Hinduism as presented in this Śātaaka is no narrow religion restricted to Hindus alone.” Nadkarni further observes, “The essence of Hinduism, particularly as enshrined in the Gita and reiterated by Gandhi and other savants of Hinduism like Swami Vivekananda, lies in Karma-yoga – selfless service for the welfare of the world. Hinduism as presented in this Śātaaka is no narrow religion restricted to Hindus alone (see Verse 120 below). It has a universal appeal. Non-violence is a fundamental principle of Hinduism along with commitment to truth, according to Gandhi.

The fourth Śātaaka, Mānava-dharma-śātakam, is on humanitarianism or on ‘Religion of Man’ as termed by Poet Rabindranath Tagore. In this respect Nadkarni states, “The essential idea of the Śātaaka is that ‘humanism’ or ‘humanitarianism’ is the religion of ‘being human and promoting human welfare ...’, and is the primary base of all religions, in the sense being compassionate, helpful, and respectful to all humans, and being

considerate towards nature. Being human is not only being aware of human rights but also of duties.” Nadkarni further observes, “The humans are the most intelligent of all species (at least we believe so), by which they can go beyond what is given by nature. They can contribute positively to further the cause of evolution, or choose a self-destructive path of reversing the direction of evolution by endangering the future of humankind itself. The danger to the future of humankind lies in harming nature beyond repair, and also in the inability to settle disputes amicably without violence”.

Mānava-dharma accepts what is good and common to all traditional formal religions, but rejects the narrow distinction between ‘us’ and ‘others’. In traditional religions, we find the echoes of ‘us and ‘they’ in the form of my God is superior to yours. It also tries to present the fundamental principles of the universal ‘religion’ or ethics (dharma) common to all. It is essentially spiritual in nature and suggests the need for higher consciousness in human conduct. Its focus is on the ‘way of living’ rather than on the ways of worshipping.

The fifth Śātaaka is on Prajāprabhutva or democracy. In this respect, Nadkarni states, “Though human rights exist universally irrespective whether the concerned state is a democracy or not, it is democracy which presents the best scope for the exercise of both human rights and duties ...Though India had some democratic forms of governance in the ancient times, they did not seem to have had a defined or uniform structure. Gandhi acknowledged the earlier existence of village democracies in India and recommended that the village panchayats should be revived”. The essence of democracy lies in three fundamental values viz. liberty, equality, and fraternity. In the Indian constitution, these three values find a prominent place. In a democracy, everyone is entitled to equal freedom. “If freedom has to be meaningful for all, as it should be, there has to be social, economic, and political equality. It is not merely equality before law, but also equality in terms of well-being. Hence,

resources for access to well-being should be equally accessible to all”.

Thus in various Śataka we find the echoes of sustainability, Gandhian thoughts, humanism, and democracy.

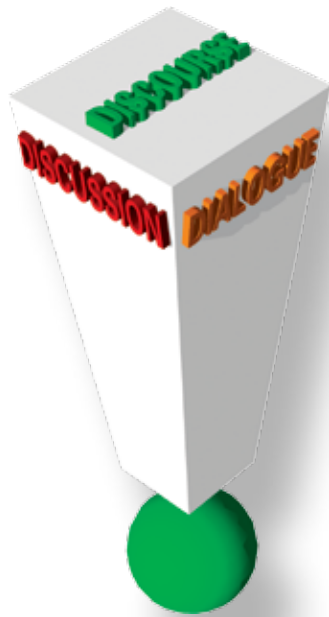
In essence focus of Prof. Nadkarni’s academic work is on broad basing the society through empowerment, democracy, integration, and political interventions. These ideas are applicable not only to Indian society but also to other societies to create an inclusive, harmonic and peaceful world. He also notes that broad basing of Indian society has been going on since ancient times and can be seen in all periods of Indian history. His concerns for the marginalized sections of society and ecology are the main themes to further ponder and research. His concern for social equality, ethics, ecology, empowerment, compassion and higher consciousness provides us a framework for a new vision of ‘sacro-civic’ society rooted in the idea of a broad basing of society that is inclusive and harmonic.

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