Sustainability
The Fourth Wave Of Economy

Foreword By
H.E S. R. Nathan
Former President of Republic of Singapore

Dr. Rashid Alleem
To Almost
One Billion People Who
Sleep with Hunger and
Pain Every Night
Also by Dr. Rashid Alleem

My Green Journey in Hamriyah
Inspirational Stories
My Leadership Secrets
Is Success a Sin?
Successful Marketing Plan
The 13 Critical Traits of Team Dynamics
New Year Resolutions
I Am Committed
The SEWA Way
Praise for

Sustainability
The Fourth Wave Of Economy

A powerful leader knows what it makes to create a successful business venture. It is all about having a great idea and finding a vibrant team which gives life to that inconceivable idea. The book 4th Wave of Economy is a preamble of Dr. Rashid's insurmountable leadership qualities.

H.E. Mohamed Aboud Mohamed
Minister to the Second Vice President's Office, Zanzibar

Nobody seems to have captured the potential and possibility that sustainability can provide to the world and to the future generations as Dr. Rashid Alleem has done. His book on Sustainability, the Fourth Wave of Economy makes out a very valid and futuristic – and above all – an interesting study of present day and future problems of the world and laid out the roadmap for what should be done. I must congratulate Dr. Alleem for his candid thoughtfulness.

Dr. H.P. Kumar, CMD, NSIC,
Ministry of MSMEs, Govt. of India
Dr. Rashid Alleem is an emerging 'sustainable development ambassador'. He has adequately addressed the emerging global issues with his deep insight and thought provoking book that could lead to inclusive growth and to respond to ever growing challenges of poverty alleviation in the context of the fast depleting resources in the global arena.

**Professor Primrose Kurasha (PhD)**
Vice Chancellor; Zimbabwe Open University

Dr. Rashid Alleem is an innovator of economic model in the world. He is my best teacher who immensely inspired me to make a new brand, that is ‘HALAL ECONOMY’ with almost 3 billion users.

**Safrizal Akbar, SAPTEL GROUP, Deputy of Permanent Committee for Environmental Impact Management, Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Indonesia**

‘Sustainability- the fourth wave of economy’ by Dr. Rashid Alleem is astounding. The basic thing in the writer is inexhaustible fertility and brilliance of his mind. He raises many important questions and goes on to suggest possible solutions. The book has a very high readability factor as if we are going through a masterpiece of fiction, but with simplicity it is very convincing and forceful.

People like Dr. Alleem are rare, as he is blessed with the vision and wisdom to reform our society. I wish Dr. Rashid all the very best and success.

**Asif Khayyam, Vice President, Corporate Banking, Barclays Bank PLC, UAE**
Dr. Rashid Alleem has addressed major economical and sociological issues that we should be actively working on to resolve. Dr. Rashid Alleem’s approach in providing solutions and ideas to achieve “Sustainability” is exceptional as he provided practical analysis for current situation and suggestions for the way we should go forward.

Mohamed Amiri, Chief Executive Officer, Ajman Bank, UAE

A business is the reflection of one's own leadership and its employees. A business driven by ethical values, principles, and core beliefs they represent automatically generates a brand value. You have not only penned down the attributes of an ethical leader, but have also successfully demonstrated during your decade long leadership journey in the free zone- Congratulations Dr. Rashid!!!

Honourable Islam Ally Balhabou
Dubai Trade Mission Ambassador to the Zanzibar Government

Dr. Rashid Alleem reminded me with a very famous quote ‘Learn to do common things uncommonly well’ - ‘George Washington Carver’ and this is what exactly what Dr Alleem is doing by being an Entrepreneurship in the region targeting a very sensitive topic ‘Sustainability’. While reading the book, I felt he is talking to the recent generation to help the next generation.

Faisal Al Nuaimi, General Manager, Ajman Tourism Development Department, UAE
Dr. Rashid Alleem is a new 'change ambassador' and has been addressing the emerging global issues with his deep insight and thought provoking study. A truly dedicated, he is an inspiration to the professionals of tomorrow. Dr. Rashid has been recognized globally for his down-to-earth approach for sustainability.

Rajen Kumar, Chief Editor, SME WORLD, India’s best known information & knowledge magazine.

Sustainability is a must in both macro and micro level economy, but Dr. Rashid Alleem, the ‘eminence grise’ of Sustainability and has reshaped the concept to bring a paradigm shift through a systemic look l stages. This book shows you the way to the next decade of the discipline, as it lays out the ingredients in a new recipe for sustainability approach.

Mohammed Emad Al Shaikh, President of Saudi Student Club in Kuala Lumpur; President of Graduate School of Businessdent Club, The National University of Malaysia

The purpose of business is not just profitability rather a growth which, in broader sense, is inclusive. This is possible only by having a paradigm and fundamental shift in our very thought process, the way we use our natural and human capital resources and our lifestyles. Dr. Rashid has, undoubtedly, provoked a powerful thought in a more simplistic and holistic way. His book 'Sustainability – The Fourth Wave of Economy' is an enlightening reading which enriches the mind.

Dr. Mohammad Tariq, Chairman & Managing Director, Paradigm Pioneers Group, UAE
An amazing and insightful book dedicated to improving the well being of the present and future generations by Dr Rashid Alleem. He explains how crucial education is to creating awareness when it comes to balancing social, economic and environmental concerns in our daily decision making in meeting the needs of the future. He shows and illustrates through practical examples on how individuals and organisations through inclusiveness, cooperation, collaboration and coordination, can be the game changers to achieve Sustainable Economy. In short he says sustainable economy is the way forward, when We Change, Everything Will Change. A must read for all!

Wemel Cumavoo, CEO & Co-Founder, My Mobile University, Malaysia

I believe this book should be a must read for all graduating seniors in Business Administration, and those entering the job market. With most corporations focusing on increasing shareholders values or paying attention to the bottom line, Dr. Rashid Alleem book is like a breath of fresh air into what the future should look and be like, by presenting very pragmatic and implementable ideas. Even if some ideas are ahead of its time, Dr. Rashid brings to the table some simple yet thought provoking concepts which should be studied on a larger scale. Well written, and easy to explain to all level of readers.

Ashraf HAMOUDA, Head Partnerships & Business Development MENA, Central Asia & Eastern Europe United Nation World Food Program, UAE
Dr. Rashid Alleem has truly captured the essence of a global issue and the need for change. His thought provoking studies have addressed the issue of Sustainability with a refreshing holistic approach, for both individuals and wider communities, to gain the inspiration and to make a difference.

Linda Rudkin, Membership Relations, British Business Group

Information is knowledge; Knowledge is power and Dr. Alleem has provided us all the necessary information on the various aspects of sustainability in his latest book “Sustainability, the Fourth Wave of Economy”. Undoubtedly, Dr. Alleem had contributed to our success and this latest book will directly or indirectly benefit the business community as well as the general public.

Eric Tan, Managing Editor, Building & Investment (B&I) Magazine, Malaysia, www.b-i.biz

Dr. Rashid Alleem has an innovative mind, which alone can perceive the present and anticipate the future of highly evolving world order. His deep insight into the problems; his analytical mind and understanding of dynamic world in his book “Sustainability-The Fourth Wave of Economy” are highly impressive and thoughtful and carries the readers with him. His deep and wide understanding is refreshing and encouraging.

Deepak Sharmaa, Group Managing Director, Sarthi Group, Mumbai, India's leading Capital Advisors with special focus on SMEs
I have gone through the book, "Sustainability - The Fourth Wave of Economy" written by Dr. Rashid Alleem, which is a well researched document on sustainability, which very few people have conceived the way he does. His writing reflects his deep interest and commitment to more than one billion people who sleep with hunger and pain every night. An enlightened scholar and an able administrator in him has given him the vision, which indeed is required for make less fortunate see the end of the tunnel and bids well for the future of humankind.

Dr. H. K. Sehgal, Former Director, CIRE, Govt. of India and former World Bank Project Consultant, Govt. of Philippines

Dr. Rashid Alleem is a charismatic personality and his infectious dynamism can attract anyone. This is how I felt when I met him during an event in Sharjah in 2013. Going through his book ‘Sustainability - The Fourth Wave of Economy’ I feel that it truly represents a thought process which is the need of the hour. He has very carefully chosen the topics which are well timed and intellectually elaborated. I am sure the book will be a big draw.

Dr. Girdhat J Gyani, Director General, Association of Healthcare Providers (India),
Dr. Rashid Alleem, through enlightened and passionate discourse, reminds us that much remains to be done when millions are deprived of basic necessities, while few flourish in bountiful largesse. He reminds us that economic growth must be balanced by social responsibility and environmental sustainability. This book represents a credible attempt to demonstrate how businesses and leaders might develop and deploy strategies that integrate efficient use of renewable resources to create new opportunities, jobs and to boost sustainable economic development.

Dr. Alleem's observation that past three waves of human development based on the first wave of mass cultivation and development of an agricultural society, followed by a second wave of industrialization and shifts to manufacturing and infrastructure, and then a third wave leveraging technology and information to further accelerate economic development.

As nations industrialize and rely further on technology to accelerate the pace of growth of production and consumption, with emerging markets understandably focused on getting their share of resources, environmental challenges are both immense and imminent. This acceleration, accompanied by unequal distribution of newly acquired wealth, puts further pressure in demand for commodities – and, invariably, those at the bottom of the pyramid must also suffer the wrath of inflation. While genuine concern for improved health care has undoubtedly increased life expectancy by both reducing infant mortality and increasing survival of the elderly, these in turn have resulted in
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unfulfilled demand for education and health care, respectively. When it comes to natural non-renewable assets, are we going to consume tomorrow’s resources today – or are we going to conserve today’s resources for tomorrow, for our children and grandchildren? Thus the unintended consequences of the second and third waves of economic development have been many converging trends that result in complex and “wicked” problems.

As we look towards an uncertain future, Dr. Al-leem makes clear that we need to hit the ‘reset button” and architect a fourth wave characterized by a relentless focus on sustainable development. Yet, when facing wicked problems in an increasingly uncertain, volatile, changing and ambiguous environment, there is no magic formula, no clear strategy. Here is Dr. Al-leem’s strategy for how nations might develop sustainable solutions is worth examining. This strategy envelops inclusive growth based on energy, water and food security. These securities will require clever investments by nations. Absence of good infrastructure generates the need for cars rather than buses thereby increasing both fuel consumption and traffic congestion and air pollution.

Additionally, these natural building blocks of energy, water and food security must necessarily rely on empowerment and opportunities made possible via education. In his eyes only education can change the world. The future will belong to those who are far-sighted and work towards solutions that reduce our dependence on scarce resources. Without education, religious fundamentalism and intolerance will be rampant, innovation will remain a mystery, technology inaccessible, and the right to health, wealth and happiness out of reach to too many.

Dr. Al-leem’s focus on sustainable solutions, the fourth economic wave, is laudable, interesting, and worth reading. His perspectives are refreshing and inspiring. I commend the book to all who are thinking of solutions to emerging societal problems.
I take this great pleasure in having this opportunity to introduce this book which is a testament of his inspiring leadership abilities and is a candid effort to make a significant change in the world that is sustainable for the generations to come. This book is a genuine attempt to give its readers an 'elixir of life' and the benefits of cuddling to the inclusive growth approach strategy.

Today 'globalization' has become a household name across the world. In fact, until a decade ago globalization was understood as a way for economic growth that most nations believed and started embracing it. Has globalization brought in a 'real economic prosperity' of the human community? The so-called hype behind economic growth & development through globalization has achieved is Sustainable?

Dr. Rashid Alleem through his book 'Sustainability-The Fourth Wave of Economy' resoundingly unearths the inside story with mind-boggling statistics on why capitalism failed, in-depth analysis on what prompted an economic meltdown during 2008, how this ushered in a new-order to measure economy. This book is a wake-up call for business to have a change model for being more responsible by imbibing the sustainability principles and practices in the years to come.
This book captivates the readers by giving more insights on the rising rate of poverty, inequality, the increasing divide between rich and poor, mounting unemployment affecting millions worldwide and countless inaccessible to basic services. Dr. Rashid Alleem invites and calls for world leaders to develop business model which he mentions it as a 'my dream for an inclusive growth'

Dr. Rashid reveals his invaluable secret to the budding entrepreneurs on how to imbibe sustainability principles in their business and can be profitable and yet take care, protect the well being of the community.

I applaud Dr. Rashid Alleem for his steadfast effort to empower and enlighten all the sections of the society by striking a right chord-that sustainability is the purpose of life which is to create value to the community.
Bernard K. Membe  
Minister for Foreign Affairs and  
International Cooperation, Tanzania

I am highly honored to write this foreword and initiate the excellent work of Dr. Rashid Alleem's book 'Sustainability-The Fourth Wave of Economy'. Today we are witnessing drastic changes as far as the business landscape is concerned. There are huge challenges for the human community to handle today like impacts due to climate change, mounting apprehensions about environmental degradation, alterations in consumer attitude and consumption patterns, depletion of sparse natural resources which are redefining the corporate responsibility.

Owing to the above external pressures the business world is forced to rethink on innovative strategies as it calls for embracing a new economic model which is gaining new momentum today is 'Sustainability'. Many companies are fast becoming trendsetters in reducing their environmental footprints by implementing waste minimization programs; aspire to achieve zero waste to landfill, voluntary commitments for carbon emission reductions and many more.

In this book Dr. Rashid has creatively scripted down on how together we all can help to make 'sustainability- as a daily endurance practice' and how industries can imbibe the sustainability and inclusive growth principles as an organizational culture and become a profit oriented conglomerate.

I am sure his sustainable vision and success strategies shared through this book will definitely inspire every reader mold his/her leadership capabilities that are crucial for hastening up this business world into truly a transformed future.
Dr. Rashid Alleem's book “Sustainability the 4th Wave of Economy” comes at the right historic moment as global leaders are discussing successor to the Millennium Development Goals – a new set of internationally agreed targets to address alarming human development challenges our world is facing. World leaders at the United Nations aim to agree next year on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Dr. Rashid's strategic vision has once again come to play to offer his thought leadership in the form of this book in support of the upcoming SDGs.

While the content of the book is solely Dr. Rashid's thoughts and opinion, I believe it will contribute to lessons learned by the international community to pay more attention to country based economic policies and budgeting to cope with sustainability challenges. Sound, inclusive, and sustainable economic policies is the backbone of nations' progress and prosperity. As Dr. Rashid's book argues economies are bound to fail if policies do not maintain a balance between social concerns, economic growth and environmental sustainability. The world no longer can afford to live beyond its means.
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Acknowledgements

Sustainability - The Fourth Wave of Economy is the result of our collaboration with SME WORLD Magazine and its research team and Naveed Khaliq, Head, Integrated Marketing Communications, Hamriyah Free Zone. I must say that they have worked tirelessly and with utmost sincerity in the best team spirit. Their commitment to the cause and dedication in completing the book is beyond words.

During the course of the editing process, Rajen Kumar and his team were especially insightful in sharpening the text, updating, writing and designing the book.

This book would not have seen the light of the day without the unwavering support, encouragement and patience of my family. To all of you, I am deeply grateful.
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The Story Behind the Book

Towards the end of 2012, I, as Director General, Sharjah Department of Seaports & Customs and Sharjah Free Zones Authority, was invited by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), India's apex body of industry, to be a Guest Speaker in the Global Summit on MSMEs which supported by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India. The Summit was aimed at highlighting various issues facing the MSMEs sector not only from the Indian perspective but also at the global level.

The Summit was a big draw. My 20-minute presentation on ‘Sustainability and Economy’ outlining my vision on Sustainable Development for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) and the initiatives Hamriyah Free Zone Authority has taken to strengthen the MSMEs sector was indeed very well received. Among a battery of media persons who met me was Mr. Rajen Kumar, Chief Editor, SME WORLD, India's exclusive magazine on the
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MSMEs sector. Mr. Rajen Kumar while appreciating my presentation complimented me for a very pragmatic vision of the sector alongside the initiatives taken to promote sustainability.' We discussed at length how sustainable development could lead to inclusive growth and to respond to ever growing problems of poverty alleviation in the context of the fast depleting resources in the world.

Thus was born the idea of writing this book. I thank Rajen Kumar for his unstinted support during the writing this book. I must also thank the dedicated team of SME WORLD magazine which has been very instrumental throughout especially for helping me with relevant research.
SUSTAINABILITY
The Fourth Wave of ECONOMY
Introduction

The best way to become acquainted with a subject is to write a book about it.

- Benjamin Disraeli

The thoughts shared in this book are my vision, my guiding light in life and actions. I have the privilege of interacting with people from all walks of life on a regular basis. I love to hear their stories, views, approach to life and derive inspiration from them. The key 'take away' from these valuable interactions are 'Hope and Desire' for a better tomorrow; not for individuals but for the community as a whole. These interactions set me to think that how easily we take life and its elements for
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granted with an assurance of continuity and abundance.

I am all for capitalism and economy that is bountiful but are we making sustainable choices? Are we considering the lives of those who lack access to even basic amenities? Where are they in our scheme of things?

A glass of drinking water which is an insipid little thing for us can be the difference between life, disease and even death for many. Do we even look before dumping down the left over three fourth glass of water into the bin? Imagine the quantum of wastage and how many people would benefit from the same in arid zones.

Today, when I walk out of my office, I try to make efforts to switch off the light and the air conditioner. I am trying to influence others to do the same. This change came upon after coming across areas in certain parts of the world where people do not have basic electricity for a tube-light and fan.

The most horrifying moment of life was when I was narrated a story of how many infants died simply because of lack of healthcare for their mothers. In this developed world, we are trying to create life in a Petri dish while in other parts of this planet precious lives are withering away for ridiculous deprivation.

But there is hope. And the straws of hope are education, the power to change self and the world. I am awestruck at
how people are starting up business ventures with innovative ideas and making wonderful progress. And this is not about people living in big cities and going to Ivy League colleges but from every nook and corner of this planet. Internet has truly changed the entire access and delivery of education to people both in the formal and informal sense. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are becoming revolutionary. Can you envisage how a girl from a third world country can learn all about Artificial Intelligence through a simple computer and internet connection? The power is enormous and transformational.

The chapters are my thoughts and rumination on elements of life that need our immediate attention and structured action. These are issues where we should be putting our efforts to bring about significant change. My aim is to nudge readers to think and introspect on the fundamental premises of life and pitch in to bring about the desired change in this world, not for us but for our children and our descendents in the times to come.

Hope you enjoy the read.

Rashid Alleem

Sharjah, UAE

June 2014
Religion, faith and culture are also to be considered pillars of sustainability. One needs to respect and accept others' culture and have faith in a cause. This has built civilizations.

- Dr. Rashid Alleem

Change is the only constant in our lives. Every moment brings some transformation, subtle or otherwise. Thus, change is no longer an option but a stark reality as Thomas Jefferson, the 3rd US President said, "Every generation needs a new revolution." And revolutions essentially mean a change. The choice is how we react to these changes and adapt ourselves to it. And we must choose, extremely carefully because every choice has its own consequences – good or bad.
Change is the only constant in our lives. Every moment brings some transformation, subtle or otherwise. Thus, change is no longer an option but a stark reality as Thomas Jefferson, the 3rd US President said, “Every generation needs a new revolution.” And revolutions essentially mean a change. The choice is how we react to these changes and adapt ourselves to it. And we must choose, extremely carefully because every choice has its own consequences – good or bad.
Here I recall Khalid, a young student, seemingly impatient and ambitious, who graduated in Business Administration, expressed his mind to me. “I want to do something different, something out of the world.” Khalid truly represented the generation of tomorrow. He was mind-ready to ride a wave of the change revolution.

The First Wave

In the beginning, people ate food solely to survive. They depended on fruits that grew on the trees and slowly started killing animals for their flesh especially in regions where the flora was limited. Slowly, with the invention of wheel and discovery of fire, life started changing faster and for the better. During this period, agriculture was a major mean of subsistence. Countries and communities came together to work on various aspects of agriculture and secure the food demand of their nations.

This was the First wave of economy where the entire focus of nations was on strengthening agriculture backbone of nations and more people were employed in this sector for livelihood.

However, in many nations the method of agriculture was still manual and primitive, lacking serious adoption of technology. That is how some countries raced ahead by increasing productivity of food products per square feet of land.
Enough is Never Enough

In the process of getting more and more production, much of the land and soil quality started getting compromised due to rampant use of chemicals and artificial agents to improve output. In due course of time, the side effects started showing up and now the world talks about bio-fertilizers and organic farming. But the harm has been done and it will probably take generations to reverse it or more realistically reduce it.

The Second Wave

With seasonal issues and uncertainty of agriculture business, the need for technology to increase output arose. This was the period when many inventions were made. Visionaries started seeing value in machines, automation and technology. This heralded the Second Wave of economy. The wave was for Industrialization. Soon the focus shifted towards manufacturing, infrastructure, scientific research and mainly industrial development.

The Turning Point

This was another huge turning point in the history of mankind. On one hand, the inventions like the steam engine and railroads as well as discovery of sulfa contributed significantly in improving the quality of life
and, on the other hand, the imbalances caused by these developments also started manifesting. Problems started raising their ugly heads taking a big toll on the environment and our life. Rising levels of pollution, problems of lead and mercury poisoning from chemicals, side–effects of drugs are a few random examples. What has been the reasons and fall–out of all the wars especially the recent ones – Russia, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan? Is it really about weapons of mass destruction or more driven by vested interests to market weapons and technology? Who gained? Was the problem solved? Russia moved out and the issue of Taliban popped up. Many lives were lost in each of the wars including those of soldiers and innocent civilians. It took a heavy toll on environment and the existing infrastructure was razed to the ground. So who gained really and how?

The Third Wave

In the last couple of decades the focus has continued on manufacturing but the services sector has made huge inroads and its importance is prominent in most nations' GDP. The world has metaphorically shrunk and there is far more interaction and trade between countries due to liberalization and privatization. In this globalized world, information has become a key element of success. The world has been engulfed by the Third Wave of Economy –
Information. It has drastically changed our lives and how we operate both in our personal and professional lives.

People are now used to real time information for making fast decisions which is creating sudden economic shifts and knee jerk action amongst nations. Our lives have become hostage to e-mails and mobile phones, smart applications and cloud technology. From the petty street-side vegetable seller to the corporate honcho, everyone wields a mobile and is available 24 X 7 X 365. It has changed how we target and deliver to our customers and increase business revenue. This is simply amazing. Accessibility, timeliness and networked information are the main deal ingredients of success today. But there is a flipside of dependency on technology like hacking, misuse of information, invasion of privacy and the environmental harm due to radiation from mobile towers. Have you noticed how few sparrows are seen on our window sill nowadays? But people in general are in a mad race for bigger, better and superior. No one is stopping for a moment; to catch a breather, to reflect, analyze and introspect. And almost all are on the fast track.

It is a race to become the best and a race to gain the most. A race is on to become an economic behemoth and to make others subservient to us. And in this race, there is overtly blatant negligence to the peripheral consequences. The need to become economically powerful and to maximize
profits, countries, corporate and individuals alike are acting in a parochial manner thus, conveniently exploiting and oblivious or ignorant of the price that we will have to pay or our future generations will end up paying.

**A Paradigm Shift**

There is ample evidence of some macro changes in the recent past. The last few decades have seen the global economic ecosystem undergoing a sea change. Look at the condition of the economy of some of the EU countries. Economic revolution has witnessed a paradigm shift of economies from people focused to being corporate-centric. Governments' policies are beginning to be designed by the corporate and for the corporate. The level of collusion to promote each other's vested interest is colossal and beyond the comprehension of common man. Today, it is all about revenues, bottom-line, stock prices, shares and net worth.

There is no harm in being competitive or economically driven but what about humanity and progress of people on the whole. Whose responsibility is that? There is abject poverty and billions of people are devoid of basic healthcare, sanitation and hygiene. Women healthcare and infant mortality are in shambles. The concern is that in these circumstances there is gross apathy.
While the industrial revolution has changed the way we live, the emergence of 2008 financial crisis has worked to block the progress and slowed down the pace of prosperity. Result is - the race for development fell short of reaching the teeming millions. The gaps between haves and have-nots have widened. According to International Monetary Fund (IMF), 4 billion people today make their living on earnings which are less than 2 dollars a day. And the world is expanding fast. We will have 9 billion mouths to feed by 2050. The trends have thrown many challenges before us.

The great financial crisis triggered by the debacle at Lehman Brothers in 2008 has made deep cuts in the global financial and economic system. It has compelled us to consolidate our resources and take fresh initiatives and think up ways and means to develop shock absorbers to withstand such situations critical to development and growth.

There have been many factors at play. On one side, science has helped us improve our longevity and provided us with medicines to battle with life-threatening diseases and on the other hand we have issue of fast expanding population in the third world countries in geometric progression. Bangladesh for example has the highest population density in the world. With population comes the pressure on per unit resources available on earth – water, air and
land. Excessive population with less natural resources leads to poverty and hunger. It makes enlarged demands into resources like medical care and education. There is an ever increasing criticality to tackle the issue of population explosion.

**Quest for Sustainability**

The economies essentially run on two types of resources – natural and man-made. We have blatantly allowed both types of resources to deplete. Natural resources are usually derived from environment and are so essential for our survival. The recent past has compelled governments everywhere to focus on conservation of environment. This is evident in the United Nation's *Agenda 21 Section 2* which outlines the necessary steps to be taken by countries to sustain their natural resources. It is the depletion of natural resources which is a grave concern.

*The coming years will unleash the Fourth wave of opportunity and challenge on mankind – the quest for Sustainability.*

The depletion of natural resources is strongly considered to be an issue of sustainable development. The term sustainable development has many interpretations, most notably the Brundtland Commission's which defines sustainable development as 'to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.
Sustainability – The Fourth Wave

The road ahead beckons us to usher in a harmonious sustainable society. After agriculture, industrial and information age, this is the Fourth Wave – the Wave of Sustainable Development.

We have to redefine how we wish to live our lives and be remembered after we leave this earth. There is philanthropy and then there is sustainable development. Aiming and working towards the latter makes more sense. It is more grounded and long-term. It is more defining and embodies the indomitable spirit of mankind.

In my quest for exploring how dreams of the teeming millions can be turned into reality, my journeys through the cross continents took me to Nagaland, a vibrant state in the North Eastern part of India. In a heritage cemetery, an inscription on a stone outside shone the message loud and clear:

\[\text{When you go home} \]
\[\text{Tell them of us and say} \]
\[\text{For your tomorrow we gave our today.} \]

I wondered have we got the message? Have we tried to perpetuate the legacy of those who craved for their future generations to live better? What are we honestly standing for? What is the purpose of our existence? Have we been
able to sustain the message and perpetuate it for our future generations?

**Alleem Strategy for Sustainability**

To my mind, any strategy for sustainability would rest on five pillars, which are also central to any civilization. These relate to the religion or faith, social, economic, environmental and cultural ethos; each of which has its own place in a society.

**Religion/Faith**

Religion or faith is based on the basic tenets and principles, which have stood the test of time. These have been based on values and the belief system, which have sustained these societies over years, decades and centuries. How different countries or regions have evolved over the period is what is important for a given society and has contributed considerably to its sustainability.

**Social**

Similarly, the conditions that prevailed at different points of time and the actions taken in a given society that enabled it to make progress to the present level, have also contributed to the progress of any society and this constant
evolvement has to continue for all times to come. It will be necessary to continue with the social actions to ensure sustainability.

Economic

There is yet another, but important aspect; perhaps more important than others. This relates to actions that affect the people on how they meet their businesses' needs.

Environmental

It is also important to note as to what value these societies attach to the environment in their scheme of things. Are the people conscious of the impact of their actions on the environment, ecology and the climate? This will have far reaching effect on the sustainability scenario now and years hence. Integral to other aspects like religion or faith, social and economic actions and the value that is attached to ecology and climate, are the cultural ethos and the way that they maintain their cultural heritage.

Cultural

The actions through which communities manifest their identity and cultivate their traditions from generation to generation are also important, which need to be taken into account, while attempting to attain sustainability.
The following is my Sustainability Model:

**Religion/Faith**  Timeless principles, values, and belief system.

**Social**  Actions and conditions that affect all members of society.

**Economic**  Action that affect how people and businesses meet their economic needs.

**Environmental**  Actions and condition that affect the earth's ecology and climate.

**Cultural**  Actions through which communities manifest their identity and cultivate traditions from generation to generation.

**Sustainability : Fact or Fiction**

Why should we be obsessed about sustainability? The resources that are being used today for economic development are limited. They are also depleting. If we continue to be over dependent on them and use them at a rapid pace, soon they will be over. What next? Imagine a scenario where oil reserves dwindle. All the gas guzzling SUVs will be rendered useless and get rusted. Electricity which is so integral part of our lives and helps in running much of the appliances is produced with coal and gas (non-renewable sources of energy) apart from other natural sources. What if the lowering water levels hit the rock bottom? The rapid growth in real estate projects and
high rises across nations is putting huge pressure on the resources. Each house needs gas for cooking and heating, electricity for lighting and running gadgets and water for cooking, washing and bathing. The downside of all these improvements is depletion and exhaustion of inputs.

Our focus has to shift towards a more inclusive approach. We have to start considering the far-fetching effects of our current methods and work towards solutions that are eco-friendly, safer and healthy. More than three fourth of this planet is covered with water but how much of it is drinkable? What are we doing to conserve water and make better use of it? Many species have become extinct due to imbalance in nature and man's greed. Look at the state of tiger population. It is a carnivore that plays a pivotal role in the food chain. What happens when there are no tigers?

Today, sincere efforts are being made to save the tiger. I remember having been accosted by a few volunteers of an NGO on a chilly morning on my way to the Salford University, Manchester, UK where I was pursuing my Ph.D. studies. A group of young enthusiastic boys and girls informed me about their project of saving tiger and how to support their efforts. I was impressed by the NGO's lofty theme and its endeavor to spread awareness about the dwindling population of tigers and the looming threat they face. They were explaining to the passers-by the important role tigers play in our lives and the whole ecosystem.
With animals fast becoming extinct, the entire food chain gets disturbed. It is just like our human body where hypothalamus does not send proper signals and we develop thyroid problems. We need to maintain the rate of growth of resources while using them.

**The Future Course**

A fall-out of rapid industrialization and urbanization is climate change. The melting of glaciers, sudden tsunamis, earthquakes, hurricanes, global warming are all worrying signs. These are occurring as nature's balance is getting disturbed. The future will belong to companies and people who are far-sighted and work towards creating solutions that reduce our dependence on scarce resources while improving our living conditions. Renewable energy, green buildings and waste management are a few such areas that will redefine the society.

What sustainability entails is that we maintain a balance and harmony between our *needs* and *wants* for existence and consumption of resources and focus on social aspects and obligation towards the future of mankind. We should work towards solutions that are future-oriented. We have to consciously look for alternatives and invest in research and development for solutions that shift our dependence from non-renewable resources to renewable or ones that can be replenished. Businesses have to go beyond the
numbers on their balance sheet and contribute significantly and proactively towards education, food security, sanitation, clean water and healthcare to not only address the issue of poverty and hunger but population control and conservation of the environment.

Sustainability for Better World

This surge of movement towards sustainability will ensure that our future generations live in a better world. Excessive urbanization with total disregard for town planning puts lot of pressure on the environment. Water consumption and wastage becomes a prime concern. Nations without good infrastructure puts pressure on need for individual transportation rather than public transport and excessive congestion on the roads and fuel consumption. Not to mention the problem of air and sound pollution. Electricity generated through coal not only contributes to polluting the environment but is also less efficient. There is no choice but to improve the environment we thrive in. There is a serious need to introspect and make changes in our lifestyle and approach to business and economy to create a better world. It is time to redefine success and achievements and make the parameters more vibrant and innovative.

After generations of banking on bigger and larger, the West is now moving towards smaller and compact. After
Hummers and jumbo portion of food (a large part of which is wasted), aerobics and pilates, they are now waking up to Prius and the benefits of yoga and Tai-Chi. They are growing organic food and trying to eat healthy to fight against a silent epidemic – obesity; the harbinger of lifestyle diseases. They are building houses, factories and offices which use more of natural building material; the architecture ensures use of natural light, solar power, using water storage systems, effluent treatment and recycling plants. All this is with the sole aim of leading a better and healthy life with less dependence on harmful medicines and chemicals. This is just one of the many examples which we can see around us.

The main lesson to be learnt is that every action has both good and bad consequences. Working towards addressing specific challenges with singular aim without being conscious of associated changes and repercussions will only lead to further complex challenges in the future. It is a vortex where we will simply get sucked in more and more. The need for the future is moderation, introspection, multi-variate calculation, analysis and implementation. And this is not the end. We need to install a strong feedback mechanism that continuously checks for anomalies or deviation and immediately enforce course correction. We have to work towards maintaining harmony and balance in our surrounding environment and the entire planet.
After the agricultural thrust, industrial revolution and information age, it is this wave of sustainability that will define the hopes of mankind and the probability of our progeny to live a decent life on this planet. Sustainable efforts by individuals, businesses and governments will create a framework for better productivity and efficiency in utilization of scarce resources without depleting them to zero. Nature sustains on a very delicate balance and there are cascading effects to disturbing any of the elements. A positive approach towards sustainable solutions is our vital key to a brighter and better tomorrow. A world where there is still hope and peace.

Will it be a cake-walk for Khalid to embark on a career that is different? Will he become a part of the ecosystem to meet the challenge of sustainability? These questions will have to be answered. Can we?
Chapter 1

Inclusive Growth

The example of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever. - Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Him)

With the dawn of the twenty-first century, we ushered in an era of progress and development. Growth paths were beginning to take shape. Growth curves began to rise up in the corporate charts. Economies stuck with stunted development started talking about double-digit growth. The emergence of BRICS, MIST and COMESA nations as promising manufacturing bases and economic resurgence in various countries began to be sighted. An
Inclusive Growth

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environment of rapid development was beginning to form and then all of a sudden 2008 happened!

Overnight, all the well-laid plans seemed to go awry. Countries and companies started becoming bankrupt, margins began to dwindle and people started talking of austerity drives to tide over the situation. The fragile nature of the networked economy started showing chinks in its armor.

At this juncture, during one my sojourns in a part of South Asia in the midst of the economic cold winter, I met a forward looking entrepreneur in his mid-forties, well-qualified structural engineer who had put in his sweat and blood in raising his enterprise with a promise; he looked broken and out. He shared his agony with me. “How will I make it and come out of the crisis. After spending my fortune, I was so happy to embark upon a promising entrepreneurial path and the promise came from the West. I clearly saw a road to tread towards success.” His agony was visible. I smiled and looked at him. I told him bluntly, “you are a structural engineer. Haven’t you been taught how to restructure a tumbled building? I could clearly see the changing expressions on his face and with a raw smile, he barely uttered, “perhaps you are right.” I knew he is not alone for there may be lot more who have to be readied to be brought face-to-face the tough battle that won't be easily won.
Nations started realizing how vulnerable they have become. Markets seemed to be shrinking and demand waning in almost all sectors in varying degrees. Policy makers and governments started grappling for answers and solutions. Private sector began withdrawing from any investment and curtailing their magnitude of operation. Companies shutting down became common and large chunks of people became unemployed - more than 20 million in China alone!

What happened to the gleaming globalization and the great growth story? It is very simple. The fundamentals were flawed. The exponential growth plans relegated the most crucial component to the fringes – people!

**Economy Without 'People'**

Much of today's economic development programs are insular and the initiatives lack the foresight of inclusive growth and fail to derive its far reaching benefits. The policy makers and proponents of economic supremacy have forgotten that without “people” there is no economy! And a handful of people can bring about very limited growth in the economy. We need the power of all in order to truly realize our potential.

There is a question that I have always been asked during my visits to different countries, “*What is the real definition of economy?*” My answer has been the same –
People, People, and People. Yes, people are the focal point they make the graphs and the charts. Graphs and charts don't make people.

There may be many pillars on which a robust economic structure stands and one the most important pillars is the 'people'. Why is an economy so vulnerable to external pressures and shocks? It is because the fundamentals of economy are too weak to withstand shocks. The fundamentals visibly relate to the macro-economics whose indicators are wholesome and in totality like GDP, unemployment scenario, price and human development indices.


Greater progress has also brought about a strange paradox. If there are great advancements in the spheres of communication, medicine and technology, the problems have also surfaced.

During my numerous travels to various countries that are at different stages of global socio economic progression, a common phenomenon that I have come across is one of abject poverty. Today, there is a stark difference between
the privileged and the under-privileged. We have a world where people are earning five figure salaries and living in plush houses and on the other end of the spectrum, there are those who do not have a roof above their head.

“He did not believe. He did not believe, the Prophet said, He did not believe, he who slept with full stomach knowing that his neighbors is hunger.”

-Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Him)

Look at any grand real estate project that is under construction. The irony is all those people who are building our palatial accommodation themselves do not have a place of their own. There were disheartening reports from some quarters that farmers who till the soil and produce food for us are choosing to end their lives out of hunger and penury. Can there be a better paradox? Every great city, state and country has its share of dark underbelly. Some accept it and let it slide, others consider it inevitable but recognize it at least and then there are those who are trying to make a difference and bring about change.

We must understand that economic development can never happen in isolation. GDP is stated in numbers. But who generates those numbers? Where does the statistics come from? Who are producing? Who are consuming? Who are pushing the demand? Who is the market?
The entire dance of economy and economic progress is dependent on society and environment. We cannot focus on one while neglecting the other. Nothing in nature manifests in isolation. The faster we accept that the better we are in working harmoniously.

Today the countries which are better off than others post-economic upheavals are those who have managed to strike a sensible balance between the triad. Not only have they managed to keep the economic momentum steady, they have worked hard to stabilize and create a sustainable base for the nation to grow upon. A country worth mentioning as an example is India which remained insulated to a great extent from the external shocks. Why? Because India has a mass of human force – the working populace. Here again a very large human factor has come to the rescue of an economy which revolves around a very large consumption club within. It is not for nothing that the global economists rate India as one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

In my course of life, I have seen and experienced that the best investment is not in gold or real estate, stocks or bonds but in people. I have seen how empowered people are able to bring about change in geometric progression. Each person who is empowered becomes capable of empowering five more. Can you imagine what a miracle that is? I am thus a strong believer and campaigner for
inclusive growth. The impression that I deeply carry to date is that people love to use the word 'inclusive growth' without really understanding the real meaning of it or its necessity. The glaring questions are why is inclusive growth crucial? What can we do to bring about this change of mindset and create sustainable outcomes?

There is no Alternative to Inclusive Growth

A growing economy indicates (in a linear manner) growth in trade and commerce, increase in GDP, growing purchasing power and rotation of funds. But who all are actually growing when an economy grows? What is the composition of growing sectors? Is the economy and GDP delicately balanced on selected few sectors? Is a specific segment of the population benefiting from the surge in economic activity? Is the entire population being given the choice to participate and get benefitted by economic progress? How is the growth impacting labor dynamics? Is there a growth in employment? Who all are getting opportunities? Are women being included in the workforce and offered equitable opportunities? Or does economic growth means poverty and progress go hand in hand? This is a question that has been bothering our economists and thinkers for long. Isn't the outcome of progress eradication of poverty? Don't the marginalized ones deserve a better quality of life, better standard of
living and an opportunity to take part and enjoy the gush of economic exuberance?

But do not read my concern and compassion as a crusade for Marxist equality. I do not believe in making the richer poor and the poorer rich thus bridging the gap. It is actually good when the rich become richer, because they contribute to economic activity and create more conspicuous consumption. And it is more desirable to make the poor rich but how? Is it by subsidizing them at the cost of the rich? How long do you think such an economically imperfect solution will yield results before the whole thing implodes?

Sharing the Growth Path

Inclusive growth happens when there is greater movement of people amongst social classes. It happens when the growth paths are shared by rich and poor alike. The analysis of any inclusive growth initiative should measure how fast the economy is growing and the pace of growth of various segments of the social class.

The lower middle class move to the level of middle class and a significant percentage of middle class moves into the upper middle class segment and so on. Basically, the poverty numbers reduce and the quality of life of a larger section of the population starts improving and getting better. A growing number of people joining the workforce
get gainfully employed and the benefits trickle down the layers.

To bring about inclusive growth, the fruits of development have to be brought at the doorsteps of the poor. Opportunities have to be given to the masses and \textit{not} only classes. A classless society has to be created where sweat and blood join to produce and efforts of all classes mingle to produce a force.

Countries should focus on improving their human development index. The tenets of macro-economic have to be strengthened. The freedom to act, trade, work, speak and being provided opportunities to function is important. Many Middle-Eastern countries are facing huge revolution. Women's rights are very crucial for a just society. Women are equally capable of contributing to the betterment of the society. It is an encouraging development that today more women than men are usefully engaged in the service sector. Improving literacy levels is on immense importance. There are many countries where illiteracy still looms large. Providing banking facilities and social security are essential especially for the underprivileged. Training and developing skills in the potent workforce will be finally beneficial for the economy. When people grow, nation grows.
Think from a shrewd business perspective. If you have a product and the market comprises of five hundred people, you can sell only five hundred units and then probably a few more repeat sales. How do you expand your market? How do you increase your quantum consumers? You start creating products and packs that will be accepted by the poor and the downtrodden. Or you help bring them up in the social strata and create a new breed of consumers. The latter option looks more lucrative and sustainable, isn't it?

**Capacity Building**

We need inclusive growth to help reduce poverty and create better living standards for people who are subsisting on bare minimum or starving to death. We have to build human capital strength and empower them to contribute to our economy. A weaker section of the population drags the economy back so it is evident that we address this issue. It is a sure shot way of becoming economically competitive.

One of the largest drawbacks of poverty is lawlessness and economic unrest. It leads to social instability and strife. There are people with vested interest who provoke the downtrodden for their own selfish cause. It hardly takes much of an effort to make them sway by drawing their emotions to instigate them to indulge in disruptive activities and cause social trouble.
Who gains? Only the ones who instigated in the first place
Who loses? Economy and enterprise

The challenging question is – *Why would the downtrodden decide to become lawless?* Honestly, if we look at the pathetic condition of their lives, we will see that they have nothing to lose. The life of misery which they lead is worse than getting punished for lawlessness and shoved into a prison. A jail would at least provide them a room, bathroom and food. It is the life outside which is a bigger jail for them. We must understand the complex relations which tug social development, economic growth and environment depletion.

What good is a nation with tremendous economic growth with a burgeoning population living in shadows of poverty? We are making a mistake of using growth and development as synonyms, they are two different concepts, one is purely numbers; the other is *intangible numbers* and that has been my focus over the years.

Let me share here with the readers that as Founder & Executive Chairman of Alleem Knowledge Center, I was decorated with an award for my efforts in Training & Human Capital Development at the Third Middle East Business Leaders Summit and Awards held in Dubai in May 15, 2012.
The Challenges of Inclusive Growth

More often than not, growth is linked with development. 'Growing' is a process which may not necessarily lead to 'development'. Growth may be for self consumption but development is for all. This is what is called inclusive growth. When a tree grows, it bears fruits for others to taste and eat.

Why is it difficult to create inclusive growth? The governments are to blame to a certain extent. They create weak policies with too many loose strings and then are unable to implement them successfully. There is too much vested interest, bribery, corruption and frauds which scuttle very good plans. Many countries have the issue of growing population which increases the pressure on per capita resource. Bangladesh is a good example. The issue of information asymmetry is quite common which mute the results and leave too much to debate and argument. The urban rural divide continues to be gaping and with increasing population, it keeps on widening. Quality of
life continues to be poor as many large countries also suffer from problem of regional disparity.

Creating the Impetus for Inclusive Growth

In the ecosystem that is fast developing, we all want to grow for self. We have been talking, discussing and raising the issue of inclusive growth on every platform. How do we achieve it? The foremost step is to understand how the economy is growing in different nations, what are the underlying patterns? What is promoting the growth? Certain sectors are growing faster than others and which industry verticals lag behind and why? What is the employment pattern in these sectors? How can we create more job opportunities as the economy expands? The governments and the enterprises need to put in place a mechanism to derive an accurate data to create a roadmap for growth. They need to know which areas will require more concentrated efforts and yield substantial results.

At the outset, countries will have to improve the investment climate making it more conducive and competitive. And that will require stability of governments and policies. It also calls for well-defined accountability and good governance. There has to be a strong commitment from the governments that they are serious about growth.
Domestic investors should be encouraged to invest more by offering favorable benefits which help them loosen their purse strings. Entrepreneurships and start-ups are the best source of inclusive efforts since they often set up shops in remote and rural areas thus involving the locals. Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) are more effective in inclusive growth front because they have more of manual or semi-automatic processes which require semi-skilled labor.

Foreign investors should feel secure and safe to come in and invest. They must be offered an even proposition where they are treated fairly without prejudice or bias.

The Hamriyah Story

Hamriyah Free zone is an exceptional example of an organization which pursues the goal of sustainability as the culmination of social, economic and environmentally sound business practices which are driven by dedicated faith in the value of serving society at large. The result is that the number of companies working there has increased from 130 in the year 2000 to 6,500 in 2013.

A single window clearance for projects will however fall flat on its face if the infrastructure is inadequate. We need good roads, electricity, ports and railways for logistics and delivery systems. Countries need stable communication and information technology platform. Energy availability...
and cost directly affects our production and overheads. Many advanced countries are shifting to expensive renewable energy solutions simply on the logic that some electricity is still better than none. How do you think the remote parts of a country will be ever touched by private sector unless they are able to reach and communicate in those areas? How will enterprises setup units in interiors parts if there is no road to deliver and dispatch goods? Even cottage industry requires some amount of electricity but many countries have issues with last mile connectivity. If the villages do not get electricity, how can they prosper? Poor infrastructure hurts our competitiveness. It is inspiring to see how China has first built the infrastructure and then lured companies to open shop. Who would not be enticed?

In absence of such dedicated support, the government will invariably be left to bear the burden of uplifting of those areas.

In majority of the countries, rural areas are more dependent on agriculture as their mainstay. However, this trend is changing. The agriculture sector is saturated in most countries in terms of land use. The output is increasing only with improved use of science, technology and tools. Food processing is a major industry now apart from floriculture, fishery, animal husbandry, dairy business etc.
Thus, it is imperative for governments to put serious thrust for manufacturing sector. This sector creates the most effective and tangible growth in the economy, and improvements in productivity are easily visible unlike services. The meteoric rise of knowledge industry must be used to enrich the manufacturing industry,

The number of jobs created directly or indirectly due to manufacturing is comparatively larger. The opportunities are also deeper in the rural and underprivileged areas both due to lower cost and ease of finding labor. Inclusive growth is \textit{not} equal distribution but should mean \textit{equitable} opportunities for all to participate in economic activities. If all the economic activities are concentrated in one area, how will people from other areas get a chance to offer their services, work and earn? But again jobs cannot be created irrespective of demographic and geographic features. The inclusive growth plans would work best when there is synergy between the environment, opportunities and the availability of people. This is one reason clusters have managed to create lot of difference. However, the main reason why there are fewer jobs is due to the lack of skilled workers. Many small businesses employ fewer people as they are unable to find others to do the job and expand their operations.
THE ROADMAP

The Roadmap

This leads us to one of the most essential components for development – Education. The power of education can be seen everywhere. It is one weapon that helps in progress by equipping the person to become productive, valuable and a game changer. These people make some real difference in the value chain. Education is not only essential at the primary level but also in the form of skill development and training for adults who form the workforce. Literary equips us to read, write and sign our name but education creates awareness, it helps us dream and achieve them; it tells us what opportunities exist around us and how we can take advantage of them for our own good. The government and the private sector should be involved in Public Private Partnership (PPP) format to create avenues to impart education. It is so good to see progressive economies like India which has realized the importance of skilling the people and has set target to skill 500 million by 2020. This is a way forward towards inclusive growth.

Expo 2020

An ambitious vision of Dubai for 2020 is to attract 20 million tourists and pump a whopping AED 300 billion in the economy. The corner-stone of this plan is to create world-class infrastructure and facilities for tourism. At the
superficial level it seems frivolous. But investigating deeply, the vision is revolutionary. The number of jobs that will be created is enormous. And many other businesses will get impetus in this bleak scenario of sagging economy. If tourism prospers, one might contend that it is a service sector that is flourishing and is fraught with risk of global fluctuation. However, tourism is the end-result – the means to create that tourism experience will be a manufacturing base which will build the infrastructure and goods to make the economy boom.

Healthcare is a segment which deserves equal priority like education. It is sad that a portion of the population suffers from 'lifestyle diseases' and become pill poppers where another segment is bereft of any medical care or support. It is horrifying that we have not yet managed to curb infant mortality and improve maternal health even though the advancement in medical science is astounding and we are on the verge of cloning human beings. To improve the lives of the poor and marginalized, we have to create systems for healthcare delivery. They should be provided basic health centers for primary care to start with. Hospitals should be implored to create definite quota for free or cheaper services to help the poor. Medicine companies can innovate and create cost effective solutions if they desire to do so. If such moves are not proactive, then the same can be imposed through indirect means.
In my opinion, inclusive growth will be most effective if the efforts are restricted to small community areas with greater control and accountability of the implementer. This will ensure more impact and result compared to nation-wide plans which are like leaky buckets with too many holes.

**Unleashing Demographic Dividend**

Labor laws and reforms need a special lens for analysis and monitoring. We have to go into the depths to know how labor laws are promoting or impeding equitable participation. Governments have a lot of task on hand in this area. With the changes across the globe, we need more skill and capacity development centers to make the work force capable and productive. What is the use of implementing high tech machinery when we do not have people to operate them?

What are the labor force characteristics? Which types of jobs are creating more employment, what skill-sets are required? Which segments are under-utilized and have the potential to expand? What is required to do so? What can the governments and the enterprises do as strategic measures that can provide them more opportunities? These are the questions which we should be asking ourselves and try working in those directions. Improvement in labor welfare, wages, health benefits,
subsidized education for children are all actionable points that will propel multi-dimensional inclusive growth.

Women force forms a large and potent section of the working class who can be equally productive like their male counterparts. I believe that empowering women is a very judicious move. Unlike common perception that they can become a threat, they help in socio-cultural stability and growth; they nurture the children (our progeny) better, they understand the value of education, health, hygiene, population control, safe pregnancies, nutrition and freedom of expression.

**UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

The UN Millennium Development Goals were primary set with a view to raise basic standard of living of the teeming millions of the world reeling under abject poverty conditions.

Eradicating poverty worldwide has been the prime concern of the United Nations. Of late, human development issues have attracted global attention and in this direction the United Nations has initiated efforts by setting ambitious goals – UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - to highlight widening gaps in human development. Reducing the poverty rate by almost half by 2015 is one such goal.
The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) cover a wide range of pressing issues the world faces today. The goals include poverty alleviation, to check the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the year 2015. The entire world has united in this gigantic task and has galvanized efforts to meet the goals towards achieving inclusive growth.

My personal believe achieving: the MDGs by 2015 is challenging! But possible!

The scope for entrepreneurship and innovation is greatest in the area of inclusive growth programs and schemes. We can do wonders by innovating housing construction, channelizing education, product creation to make it environment friendly as well as having a mass appeal. The unbanked masses need a simpler credit facility and banking system to avail funds and become economically productive. Low cost solutions will most likely be generated from social entrepreneurship. The whole focus is on creating opportunities. I keep on reiterating that disparity can be removed through empowerment and not freebies. People must work for what they get and that's how they appreciate the value.

To make inclusive growth effective and visible, everything boils down to governance. Policy formulation, program implementation, monitoring progress, and evaluating the effectiveness and outcome require good
quality and comprehensive data that is verifiable and true. We cannot have lip service; we have to walk the talk. The objectives and goals of the programs should be clear and sound. Government must declare how the effectiveness of the plans will be measured. Regulatory bodies also play a critical role in ensuring compliance and accountability at all levels. Local community involvement and use of administrative machinery will yield better results in terms of delivery and outreach. Based on my experience and Charity International; I strongly believe that Non-profit organizations should be involved in monitoring the initiatives against mismanagement or misappropriation of funds. They also double as feedback agents and produce critical assessment of the programs.

Inclusive growth aims to reduce poverty, bring about social equality while conserving the environment. It can achieve its fullest potential when there is transparency and honest communication. Governments cannot wash their hands off after declaring a policy. They have to clear the red tape and bureaucratic hurdles. They have to implement it and demonstrate the results. Are the benefits and outreach programs actually touching those for whom these are meant? Are people honestly gaining and welfare is generating positive results? Good governance entails proper execution of plans, improving the pace of growth for all segments alike.
BRINGING INTO THE MAINSTREAM

Inclusive growth will flourish through grassroots intervention. It helps increase the rate of growth of the poor compared to the well off so that the disparity is narrowed and the gap is eventually bridged.

With reduction in poverty through greater inclusive growth plans, we will be able to bring the fringe into the mainstream. We empower the lesser privileged to work and earn a decent living, provide a better life to their families and thus contribute to the development of the nation.

REDEFINING GROWTH

In the global development scenario, we have to redefine the meaning of growth. We have to expand its scope making it all encompassing and not merely GDP numbers. The scope of growth has to be broad-based not narrow and spirally. It has to be both horizontal and vertical. Economic growth does not mean economic development. To effect development, the growth has to be inclusive. That entails that the fruits of development reach all sections of the society.

We cannot harp about growth if a significant section of the population is languishing below the poverty lines. Governments, public sector, private sector and not for
profit organizations have to come together for the cause of inclusive growth because its absence will make all other growth futile and unsustainable. We will be continuously fire fighting and draining our resources without making much of headway.

Economic development will be most prominent and resounding when there is inclusive and equitable growth and not just a small segment of the population growing to obscene levels while half the population is surviving on $2.00/day for subsistence.

**Nice to Know**

There is a difference between growth, development and inclusive growth. When we talk of economic progress, it is growth. But development is when growth combines with improvement in quality of life of the weaker section of the society. Inclusive growth on the other hand is when equitable opportunities are provided to this weaker section to continuously improve their own selves and contribute to the economic growth of the nation. When we talk of weaker section, it also includes women who are on the fringes in many nations and it happens for cultural reasons only. When we talk of removing disparity it also means gender based discrimination.
I recall a lecture delivered by Nelson Mandela in 2005. He said, 'Today we live in a world that is divided; A world in which we have made great progress and advances in science and technology. But it is also a world where millions of children die because they have no access to medicines. We live in a world where knowledge and information have made enormous strides, yet millions of children are not in school...It is a world of great promise and hope. It is also a world of despair, disease and hunger...'

The basic reason why some countries are better off than others is because their human capital is more productive and key driver of their economy. I have been to Africa a number of times and every time I ask myself – Why are African countries, so rich in resources, are still backward than many European nations? There is so much potential in the African nations and enough resources to transform the entire nations but there is no channel or plan to execute. On the contrary, take the example of Scandinavian nations who had the foresight for energy security and joined their networks to share electricity. They also have the most extensive renewable energy solutions to serve their masses. There are solutions to problems, they only need to be identified and addressed. If governments, public and private sectors and the masses get together and synergize, there will be amazing changes in how we live and prosper.
No Magic Wand

Inclusive growth will not happen overnight. There is no magic wand or pill. It is a never-ending process that will require our faith and sustained efforts. It requires true vision. It will require our conscience, commitment and contributions to make a difference. The flow of opportunities and benefits should reach everyone and that will require proper funnels. All human beings deserve growth, development, freedom, well-being and the right to participate in any way they are capable. It will improve our society for the coming generations. The result of our initiatives towards inclusive growth will be life transforming.

We have to take the first step, the rest will follow. We can choose to be inclusive and see the miracle unfold.
Recreating a Better Tomorrow

The world will shape you if you let it. to have a sense of yourself as you live, you must make conscious choice.

~John Donahoe

In the race of life, when we are steaming ahead, rarely do we take the time to pause and ponder. We are continuously competing. Just think; why are we on this earth? Where we are headed for, what is the true purpose of our lives, what are we really trying to achieve? How are our actions affecting us and those around us?

We are always craving for more and better and bigger. But what is more and better is, in fact, an infinite. What is more
for one may be less for another and what is better for one may not be good for the other? So, what this illusion is? It is all about your vision. How far you can imagine? How far you can think? How do you set your goals? We are free to talk of the sky and the stars but these are mere illusions. We have marked our destinations yet few are sure of reaching them. Are we destined to reach where we want to, remains a quandary?

We are in pursuit for more and more, larger car, bigger house, fatter salary, exotic vacations, designer labels; the list is never ending. And all does not end here. We are constantly comparing our material possessions with those of our friends, neighbors, work colleagues and even random acquaintances or our tall idols. It is no longer about our needs or wants; we are driven by our desires and conspicuous consumption. Extravagance is what many of us strive for. We have an obsession to fulfill our material needs at any cost - paying any price. To a certain extent, our attitude is: since I have the means I have the inherent right to acquire whether I really need it or not. Basically, the present generation today is simply trying to live for the moment and enjoy the present. Most of us unfortunately feel ill-equipped in abilities to think beyond ourselves and our own interests. And that is what is most worrying.
Living for the Moment

Today, most of us carry a desire to become rich, nay, financially rich. But the real richness eludes most of us. Having attained the material richness, we remain poor to the core. Yes, I am talking of social richness. Cultural richness! Ethical richness! Spiritual richness! Emotional richness! Our greed for more and more stems from our sense of utter insecurity leading to self-centeredness. The celebrated nineteenth century Congregationalist clergyman, social reformer, abolitionist, and speaker Henry Ward Beecher describes it the best:

“Our gifts and attainments are not only to be light and warmth in our own dwellings, but are to shine through the windows, into the dark night, to guide and cheer bewildered travelers on the road.”

Our wealth remains ours, secured and guarded and is eventually passed on to posterity and for your generations to-be without touching lives outside your own domain. Wealth is the recreation process and is acquired by dint of hard work of those around you or those who have served you by their blood and sweat. When a tiny enterprise grows big, the contributors are also the people who have put in their hard work in its growth. But the fruits are enjoyed by its masters alone. The tree owes its existence to both its mentors – the one who sowed the seed and those who tended it.
Everyone today talks of growth and development of the nation, enterprises and the self. There is a constant eagerness to do better, grow bigger and being insatiable about wants. Fundamentally, these are desirable traits as it propels our efforts for more economic activity, commerce, movement of funds, material, labor and opportunity to use one's skills and make a living. The catch is growth and development but at what cost? And whether astounding per capita income of a handful of the population means economic excellence? How do we define 'good' standard of living? Are governments suffering from tunnel vision towards a certain segment of the community or the schemes, policies and laws take into account the bigger picture and the far reaching implication of developmental decisions?

As the economy races at a pace across regions and countries, the development in essence remains a far cry. The sad fact I have eventually arrived at after 20 year of putting in humanitarian service realizing that the rich-poor divide is widening by the day. The economic development in one corner world is also marked by acute hunger and abject poverty in another. Take the case of affluent Western world and the penury-ridden Africa. But then why are we talking of World Society? The economists around the globe have not been able to find an answer to this paradoxical situation.
Equitable growth is necessary to help the poor get an opportunity to work and earn a decent living. They are able to attain a life of dignity and honor. The rich can get richer but not at the cost of poor getting poorer. By all means, the global resources need better management and distribution.

The Striking Disparity

Unfortunately, small segments of the society have access to large portion of resources; and are unashamedly exploiting them for their selective needs while a large chunk of humanity remains bereft of bare minimum. International reports divulge startling facts. Today, 815 million people go to bed at night not knowing whether they will have enough to eat tomorrow. Each year, more than 6 million children do not live to see their fifth birthday even while one billion people suffer from overweight.

This striking disparity makes us live in two worlds – one of those who have it and the other of those who don't have it.

Nature is a beautiful gift created by The Almighty Allah. Yet we have recklessly interfered with nature. The wide green vistas have been butchered and replaced with concrete. We have reclaimed oceans to build townships and our dwellings. We are mindlessly exhausting our
natural resources. So much so that today we have arrived at the brink. And started crying on nature!

Look around yourself; there are abundant instances of land erosion, soil quality depletion, falling water tables, increasing sea levels as a result of melting glaciers, water and air pollution and dumping of toxic wastes in sea and rivers, mixing of drinking water with sewage, rising temperatures globally, shift in seasons, tsunami, hurricanes and typhoons due to unchecked urbanization, industrialization and scant regard for the ecology. Commercial interests are driving how we use science and technology to create artificial fertilizers and pesticides as well as chemically altered hybrids to grow larger and greener vegetables and turkey-sized chicken. Not to forget the creation of artificial rains even while some places are having acid rains.

Global warming and climate change is evident by the heat waves in Europe, cold wave in the Arabian Gulf, tsunami in Indonesia and excessive snow-winters in Europe and elsewhere. The examples are numerous and increasing every day. Greenhouse effect is assuming alarming proportions and we are practically oblivious.

What is the outcome? These pollutants are entering our body through the food and water that we ingest. Exposure to these pollutants over a sustained period of time is causing all kinds of diseases and health scare. Global
global warming is altering the environment and is playing its own role in manifestation of acute health issues. There are massive environmental side-effects due to mass and mindless industrialization and urbanization.

**Striking a Balance**

We cannot neglect our progeny, generation whom we have consciously given birth to. I believe that it is one of the worst crimes if we shove our children to a world full of deficiencies and challenges which are the manifestation of our recklessness, greed, blatant ignorance or selfish motives to enrich our present.

What is missing is striking an even balance in the society. On one hand there are people with multiple houses and cars with unimaginable and ever-inflating bank balance and on the other hand I have witnessed those who have to trudge miles each day just to fetch a pot of drinking water. One of the major culprits is unrestricted population growth. It is estimated that the world population expected to be 9 billion by 2050. This is creating maximum burden on the resources. Development is inevitable and most desirable but it has to be balanced and in the right direction. In order to fulfill one want, we should not destroy the ecosystem. Thousands of species of birds and plants have become extinct. Animals are killed by poachers for skin, nails, bones and even teeth.
Being in-charge of the Customs department of Sharjah government very often I used to get perturbed when our inspection staff would accost people carrying unauthorized booty ranging from anything to everything. What is most disturbing is that such people do not necessarily come from poor countries. They include citizens of the highly developed countries also.

Do we really need a fur coat to protect ourselves from cold? Are ivory jewelry a must have or something we cannot live without?

We are living in the contrasting worlds of gluttony and wastage where others are fending for two square meals a day. How shameful is it that people in this century are still dying due to acute starvation and drought. Thousands of children die by the minute in many countries for want of basic healthcare while millions more are unable to cross the age of five due to lack of nutrition. Women are still dying to poor post natal care.

Disease and hunger give rise to social unrest leading to frustrations. Many criminals in the society are outcome of abject poverty. There is lack of jobs and affirmative action by governments which drives people to the wrong path. Students embrace death out of depression as a result of unemployment while draughts and floods drive farmers to end their lives. Everyone is striving to survive at any cost. People in developed countries are guzzling gas driving
around in their large SUVs whereas there are many villages across the globe which does not have tractors or a single ambulance. Are we still living in the 16th century?

One of the most intriguing factors is “standard of living”. In international forums, this concept is explained in relative terms. However, there is no such distinctive benchmark of what is “a fair standard of living.”

**How Much is Enough?**

People on the margins still struggle for basic amenities like water, food, sanitation, housing and electricity. They do not have access to education for their children. Primary healthcare is still elusive. Poverty is rampant and the condition of life in many cases is beyond deplorable. These masses lack any kind of social security system and are often exploited by middle-men due to their ignorance and absence of literacy.

*Alan Durning*, the founder of *Northwest Environment Watch*, had written a poignant book titled – *How much is enough?* He so candidly describes the extravaganza like this. “*Excess consumption creates declining marginal utility for additional purchases. Green beans taste great on an 1800 calorie diet. They taste terrible when eating 4000 calorie a day of junk food.*” This is the question that we must ask ourselves at each stage of our lives.
We need to be in control of our lives and wants and not under the control of our wants and desire. We must become our own masters to drive our life honestly. We have to progressively move towards a more contented and enlightened life to improve its quality. Happiness does not come from owning a mansion or fleet of cars, they solely fuel our insecurity. Have you ever thought that finally at any given point of time you sleep only on one bed with few pillows? You can only drive one car at a time. A bigger or faster car can run only that much faster as the infrastructure allows. Sadly, in our quest for procuring these wants, we keep running and when the end comes we realize that we hardly enjoyed what we possessed because we never had the time!

*I really need you to stop here for a moment and ponder over quietly of what I have just said.*

The bottom-line is to live within our means, to control our desires and work towards a quality life. It is vital that we think and brood over how our materialistic zeal harms the environment around us. Are we even bothered about the outcome of our actions?

I guess, a common feature is how we define growth and satisfaction. Is monetary gain the only measure of growth? Does a growing economy indicate that there is equal level of social growth? Are we more successful if we have more material possession? This struggle for more is
nurtured by companies who are simply striving for profit maximization and shareholder values. Advertisements and branding are all centered round weaving a glamorous story in the minds of the customers, motivating them to part with their funds. The global projections are that in the 2014 total ad-spending by world’s 10 countries alone would be about 40,000 million US$ even while a large chunk of the world population sleeps with empty stomachs.

Sustainability for Perpetuation

Let us ponder over a few simple instances: I have lot of money. Does that give me the unwarranted permission to go about procuring food 10x my requirement and let it go waste? Is it right that since we have running water, we keep the taps open 24 X 7? Is it justified that paying for energy gives me the right to consume as much as I want? How do we demarcate how much is enough?

The BIG Question

Today, we are faced with many challenges ranging from education, healthcare, sanitation, clean drinking water, and low farm output due to soil depletion, deforestation and air pollution. People are subsisting at less than USD 2 per day even as a cup of coffee costs more. If humanity has to be perpetuated, this striking disparity has to be
narrowed down to the acceptable levels. How do we do it is the big question. It is a challenge for the governments across the world to chalk out long term measures to design policies and think up mechanism and broaden their vision to ensure that life goes on and goes on well. History will record both the good and the bad. We must think of the posterity. We must think of sustainability in a sustainable way.

We have to strike an even balance. Just because we have access to resources does not mean we go about exploiting it incessantly without any regard to its necessity by others. There has to be a linkage between production and consumption, a relation between demand and supply. A cohesive way to produce and to spend has to be thought of.

To live in harmony and in equilibrium, the foremost duty is to protect the environment. It is the responsibility of every human being and corporate and government to protect and preserve the environment. The ill-effects of environmental degradation will be ultimately felt by human beings and it will be too late. We have to work towards smarter cities, better use of resources, preservation of flora and fauna, use of alternate sources of energy and finally altering our life-style to become less dependent on too many gadgets or non-renewable sources of energy. Lot of research and development is needed in this area and demonstration of improvements. We are
living due to the environment. If it is depleted we will become extinct too.

**Now or Never**

Sustainability is essentially living in harmony and seeking harmony with others without compromising the future. It is about leading an enriched life with a rich value system and bequeathing the same to our future generations. Why has our lofty value system taken a dip is a question which must bother everyone living in a civilized society. We have to revive the moral values system of living and we have little time for this. It is a 'now or never' situation for mankind. We have to act NOW lest it is too late.

**Holistic and Inclusive Living**

Sustainable development touches each and every aspect of our life and is a complex interplay of eco-socio-political objectives while conserving the ecology, the biosphere, our planet Earth.

When we think about sustainable development for a better tomorrow, we mean the larger environment which includes the ecosystem, our society, economy, political system and the overall cultural fabric that binds mankind. Aiming to make a sub-part sustainable while neglecting others will defeat the entire purpose. Sustainable
development has to be all-encompassing, holistic and inclusive. It has to be diverse and multi-faceted.

There is a lot that needs to be done in residences, localities, communities and larger geographic spread. We need leaders and champions to push forward the cause. The world today needs many leaders who have the right attitude towards the issue of sustainability, who understand the seriousness of the problem at hand and why we need to act, who have vision, talent, ideas and the ability to drive initiatives and extract results.

The world community of business and political leaders, thinkers, NGOs has come forward with the realization that sustainable development is the only hope for the survival of mankind.

**Welcome Rio +20**

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), also known as Rio+20 Earth Summit 2012 was the *third* international conference on sustainable development which aimed at reconciling the economic and environmental goals of the global community.

Earlier, at Rio+10, sustainable development was recognized as an overarching goal for institutions at the national, regional and international levels. A need was felt
to enhance the integration of sustainable development in the activities of all relevant United Nations agencies, programs and funds. The discussion also encompassed the role of institutions in stepping up efforts to bridge the gap between the international financial institutions and the multilateral development banks and the rest of the UN system.

Why should we aspire for sustainable development? Many of you might recall that we have read since childhood in our science class about renewable and non-renewable sources of energy. What does non-renewable mean? It means finite and stagnant. Have you wondered how electricity will be generated when the entire quantum of coal has been burnt? If not today, it will happen someday in the future. How will people cook who depend on coal as a household fuel? How will trains run? How will you scale the high-rises? How will your gadgets work? The resources around us are limited.

The size of this planet is constant. The amount of land and sea are finite. Mankind depends on this land and resources, flora and fauna for sustenance. We are yet to reach that level of scientific excellence where we can survive without food, water and the surrounding atmosphere. On the other hand, population is expanding at an astonishing pace. With each new life, the demand on the limited resources is simply growing. Hence, the onus
is on all of us to protect and conserve the resources and utilize only an optimum level enough to sustain our lives.

Every human being is not capable physically or financially to make a huge difference but that should not be a deterrent or an excuse. If each one of us starts making conscious choices, start altering our lifestyle and control our demands and wants aiming only to fulfill our necessity, we can create a huge ripple effect. We have to learn to become informed, aware of the changes, cause and effect in our surroundings and act responsibly. We are accountable for our actions and cannot behave selfishly where we are only concerned with our lives, wants and desires.

Human beings by nature are highly adaptable creatures. We can survive in very hostile environment but we are not invincible. When the environment starts becoming demanding, we have the spirit to face the challenges and find our way through. But in life it is easier to proactively alter our lifestyle and consumption patterns at our own terms rather than being forced to do so due to scarcity and man-made shortages as a result of over-production, exploitation of resources and reckless wastage.
The Challenge at Hand

The foundation of sustainable living and development starts from acknowledging the fact that we have a challenge at hand and we can and should do something about it before it reaches irreversible proportions. We have to accept that resources are fast getting depleted or destroyed by rampant and unchecked usage and consumption for very insular aims of economic dominance.

The path to a sustainable life and future fundamentally depends on our ethics, morals, values, attitude, education, religious, faith and social upbringing. We have to seriously introspect and reflect on how far are we ready to go to fulfill our desires. How much are we ready to sacrifice and compromise while retaining a decent standard of living? What will be our legacy? How do we want our progeny to remember us? What values and timeless and ageless principles do we intend to instill in our children and the next generation per se?

How do we recreate the age-old value system our ancestors lived with? We need to transform our education system which embodies the basic tenets of morals and values. Education is a very strong pillar of sustainable development. Education of the day is more directed towards achieving short-term goals – getting a plush job.
that only ensures financial security rather than social and cultural security. The present system spreads literacy rather than education. We need to educate the generations to be towards sustainable living – living for the tomorrow and not for the moment.

We can achieve sustainable development by making small incremental changes in our lifestyle and the way we function. Starting with simple measures like conserving energy, reducing consumption of all kinds, cutting down on emissions, reducing waste, utilizing optimum resources and basically altering our lifestyle, we can steadily move towards a sustainable world. It is rightly said – *a stitch in time saves nine*. It is time to make some conscious choices and take concrete steps before disaster strikes and systematically wipes us all from the face of this earth.

**The Quest for Sustainability**

Sustainability is without doubt the biggest quest in this 21st century. It is a serious concern for mankind. How we live our today will determine how the society will develop in the future. Fortunately, it is still not too late and we can do something about it. There is a lot that needs to be done in the area of energy generation and consumption. Infrastructure needs to be developed especially in the interior parts of the nations to help the rural population get
access to basic necessities of life like health center, food and water. There is a latent demand for sustainable housing solutions which are less energy dependent while being conducive for people to live a healthy and comfortable life. Low cost but efficient science and technological innovations are required in the area of energy generation, distribution, water treatment and conservation, waste recycling, information and communication. We need dedicated steps to ensure food security.

Sustainable development will not happen simply because I believe in it. We have to change mindsets; we have to become sensitized about its importance and criticality. Change will happen when a large number of people believe in it and work in cohesion towards a common cause.

Co-operation and Collaboration

We can motivate others to this crusade for a safer, cleaner, happier future for us and our generations to come. Individuals, businesses, governments and societies have to come together and join hands for the cause. We can meet the challenges through co-operation and collaboration. We 'can' make a difference. We can choose to become whomsoever we want and decide how we wish to conduct ourselves, what we bestow to our children. We
can create awareness for the nature of this challenge and invite commitment.

Life is all about the choices we make, the path we take and the values and ethics that we espouse and propagate. We choose to become followers or leaders. We can create a more peaceful environment and achieve inclusive growth and sustenance. We decide how we conduct ourselves honorably and become torch bearers not just the immediate society but whole of mankind.
Lighting up Lives

No man is an island, entire or of itself; every man is a piece of the continent.

~John Donne

There are some things in our lives which we take for granted. We somehow believe that those things are always going to be there no matter what. Energy is one of those. Imagine a life without energy sources. Average people cannot move few feet without the help of energy-driven solutions. When the Icelandic volcano erupted, a large part of the world came to a standstill. Hurricane Katrina disrupted millions of lives because energy sources were drastically affected. Each
and every part of our lives is dependent on some technology or the other which are operated with most common energy source – electricity. Oil and its variants derived from refining crude are used from surface transport to sea and air.

Energy is not an end but a catalyst to achieve a lot of varied ends, good and useful ends and possibly open up many more new beginnings. It has become a broad concern for almost all nations – the ones who lack resources and also the ones who have abundant resources.

**Thank You Your Highness**

In his latest thought about energy resources His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai said “we recognize that preserving our energy resources will be one of the greatest challenges in our drive towards sustainable development. This, however, will not materialize unless the different facets of our society adopt energy conservation principles in their core values. The future generations will be the chief beneficiary of our achievements and the best judge of what we accomplish in this field.”
Energy Security

It is indeed important to note the growing concern about what is called as Energy Security, which would mean that the nations across the world must have, in a reassured manner, enough of availability of energy, which is the prime mover of any economy. We have already played havoc with our natural resources in order to meet our day to day requirements of energy needs and with their serious depletion; we now will have to look for renewable sources of energy, which could last forever. That is how we can ensure energy security.

Let us refer to the major sources of energy that we find around to be providing energy in the world today.

Sustainable Energy

*Hydro-electricity* has been acknowledged as the best source of energy; inasmuch as it is considered to be perennial, if not perpetual and is cheaper than other forms of energy. Its greatest advantage is its eco-friendliness. Most of the early sources of energy has been only hydro electric power which continues to be the mainstay of some of the countries that abound in perennial rivers. The source of energy need not only confine to large-scale projects; even mini-micro hydel projects, which are being increasingly accepted in hill and remote areas, where there are water channels available, on a continuing basis.
Another eco-friendly and preferred source of energy is *Solar Photo-voltaic* (PV as it is generally called). It is an easy and almost perpetual source of energy as it stores the solar energy and feeds it into the grid. Even the small stand-alone systems can be very helpful in meeting the requirements of small households and the cost, though generally prohibitive, is generally a one-time cost, save minor expense of its maintenance.

In this connection, The Energy & Resources Institute (TERI) in India has done commendable work by way of a model project, known as Solar Micro Grid (SMG) comprising solar photovoltaic power panels installed in modular units along with the required storage, allowing generation capacity to scale up easily to meet demand. This unit can meet the energy requirements of 50 households for 4-5 hours a day. The cost of project is around US $3500, which is quite economical as compared to any other system. A smaller unit for an individual family could cost as low as US $70.

**Biogas**

Biogas technology, which converts biological waste into energy, is an excellent alternative for cooking fuel especially in areas where wood and coal are scarce and expensive. Cow manure and small-scale biogas digesters provide a sustainable source of power all year round.
improving lives, livelihoods, and health in the developing world.

Various countries have since adopted best practices for making bio gas from animal waste. Thailand is one of them. During one of my visits there particularly in the suburbs, I have seen how the waste of pigs is being converted to gas which is used for cooking.

**Wind Energy**

Rural communities often do not have access to the national grid. Wind powered micro-grids are suited to the low-density rural areas and can be effective in meeting local social and economic needs. We support small entrepreneurs offering wind powered renewable energy solution for isolated and power back-up systems. This source of energy is getting increasing acceptance as a major source of energy. Large wind farms have been set up in a number of countries, which generate electricity and feed it to the grid.

**Biofuels**

Biofuels, such as biodiesel and bioethanol, are widely derived from biomass (plants and other organic waste) and provide an attractive alternative to fossil fuels. These fuels have many different applications. In rural areas they can power mechanised milling or small scale electrification systems. In the cities, biofuels are
especially used in the transport sector adding to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

It is a matter of major concern that the world, at large, is over-dependent on various forms of energy that are particularly non-renewable. Cost of provision of energy is yet another matter. There are a number of factors that would need to be gone into, while charting out any future course of provision of energy for its various uses; be these industrial or agricultural production or its households. The actual energy plan for energy security will be depending upon a combination of factors like the local availability of source of energy and its cost to various segments of users, which would again depend upon the state policy on fixing the energy rates for different segments.

Since energy security is essentially, in the first instance, a national subject, if not a sub-national subject, any energy security planning will have to be based on the factors mentioned above.

However, any futuristic plans on energy security will also need to be seen in the international context, as today, we are living a global village and the cumulative requirements of energy of various countries and continents will need to be factored into. What is the best for the humankind will need lot of clear understanding, over-arching view of the world energy requirements and
its security – and these are needed to be worked out at various levels – local, regional, national and international, ensuring in the process that the deprived and under-privileged sections of the society, all over the world, are given a fair treatment.

**Why should We be Concerned?**

Energy is the backbone of the larger concept – infrastructure. The nations that have developed and become torch bearers of progress and leadership have consistently strengthened their energy system of availability and usage.

The simple benefit of energy security has translated into superior conditions of living standards for their nationals. This is the primary advantage of being energy secure.

The lateral benefit of a good and stable energy system is in the form of good communication and automation systems. Technological improvements can be executed based on strong and stable energy networks. Riding on the back of a resilient energy system, banking systems have developed in leaps and bounds all due to the terrific outcome of amazing technology solutions.
Healthcare is another area spurting with innovations due to stable infrastructure.

The larger concern is the overdependence of the world on various forms of energy especially the non-renewable one. A lot of geopolitical undercurrents, alliance and complexities (polarity) have developed around this issue of availability of resources. This is causing vested interests to assert power and create disharmony.

**The Concerned Factors**

The factors which nations should be concerned with are:

- The most vital question is how much of the population has access to electricity and other sources of energy? What is the strategic plan to cover the segment of population currently without access to energy sources? How will it improve their lives? Everyone thinks about the economic impact of availability or shortage of energy but few are seriously concerned with the social impact and influence of access to energy at a competitive rate in improving standard of living.

- What is the cost and availability of energy for the entire population and not just a segment of the whole?

- What is the current energy mix and what are the flaws in it? How can it be rectified?
WHAT WE SHOULD DO?

- What is the projected requirement for the future?
- What is the planned capacity augmentation to meet the growing requirement?
- Who are the current suppliers? What is their unique attribute? Who are the alternate suppliers and how can be tapped? What are the contractual obligations towards continuity of supply? What will be the impact of international political uncertainty on the current suppliers?

What We Should Do?

Alleviating the scarcity of energy and making it accessible to the remotest corners of the world is what we all should strive for.

If we look into our own lives and the changes that we have undergone in the recent past, we will be able to see the tremendous improvements in our individual efficiency due to the energy-enabled technology solutions. How much of these growth potential remains stunted when our brothers and sisters living on the margins and in rural areas subsist without electricity or basic fuel to cook or remain warm in harsh weather? They depend on wood for their basic energy needs. It is a clear case of depletion of natural resources in many ways which changes the weather of the region as time goes by. The apathy of most of the planning bodies towards the plight of these people is despicable.
The saddest part is that the powers that might be are not keen to help improve and enhance the lives those on the fringes because they lack the vision to see long term gains in human productivity for the whole nation. Everyone is focused on shallow short term unsustainable gains for window dressing. We need revolutionary changes in our mindset and actions to bring about a wave of human development for creating a better and equitable society.

The rate at which population is growing world – over the demand on energy resource would simply increase. What will be the population to energy requirement ration? How long can the available sources of energy help fulfill the demand? After all we are over dependent on non-renewable sources of energy. And they are slowly but steadily depleting the environment which is showing various signs of stress. The incessant drilling for crude and mining for coal has its downside which slowly manifests into undesirable changes in the environment.

It is about time that we realize the potential and importance of investing in and promoting renewable sources of energy as a desirable alternative.

Creating renewable micro generators in the rural areas can strongly help in fulfilling basic energy needs of the people. Using renewable sources means the environment is sufficiently protected. Availability of power in the rural areas will speed up the process of technology adoption for individual lives as well as for agriculture and to set up small entrepreneurial ventures. Once these floodgates of
WHAT WE NEED?

development are opened, it is only a matter of time when growth gathers momentum.

I well remember having seen an interesting story featured in CNN some time back. The story concerns a commoner in Bangladesh who wanted to make a difference in his community by his exemplary endeavor. He put up solar panel on his small ship to power the computers and to teach IT to the kids.

The unassuming person may have made a humble effort but his realization of the energy crunch being felt everywhere speaks volumes for his vision. We need this kind of vision everywhere especially in those who feel concerned with sustainability and survival of mankind.

What We Need?

There is a silent undercurrent about the harsh realities of our extravagant lifestyles and its dire stress on the environment. We have to consciously alter our lifestyle and try to lead a greener life. It is heartening to see people are slowly warming up to healthy eating and living. Buildings are incorporating designs that utilize more of natural light, air and water for lighting, circulation and cooling. The material that is used in the structures is itself eco-friendly. People are also leaning towards environmental friendly cars instead of gas guzzling low efficiency SUVs. There has to be a fundamental shift in how we live.
WHAT WE NEED?

Each and every earthling has to become sensitive to the idea of leading a life that takes into consideration the impact on environment. We have to shake ourselves away from the concept that - if I can afford, I will spend the way I want. We have to remember that the resources are not only for us but for our progeny.

We cannot become selfish and behave like gluttons.

The scope for innovation and niche – based entrepreneurship is more defined now. Designing energy solutions and allied equipments that are sustainable has a growing market and a better environment for adoption. The need is for low cost effective solutions that can be easily deployed and managed while creating good results. The common attitude towards solar power generators is the high initial capital cost. Any innovation in this area is bound to generate a ripple effect of changes and development.

We need technology that ensures better efficiency from per capita consumption of fuel. With the input remaining constant, only improvement in output will be the differentiating factor. There is a clear case of huge transmission and distribution losses in electricity especially in the developing countries. What it means is wastage of both fuel and energy systems. What could be the gains from stemming these losses? We need technology and deployment. We need stronger and more defined energy audits to check all the losses and plug the leaks.
Hamriyah Green Team

At Hamriyah Free Zone, we actually endeavored to corporatize our efforts in reaching out to individuals and organizations with the 'Green Message'. We created Green Team to spread awareness and help individuals and companies and to get their green strategies in motion. One of the main objectives, were energy audit, where the team members visit the offices during off working hours to see and find out which unit is still on and which should be otherwise off.

I felt that the best way to implement green concept is to first try in our own organization at Hamriyah. This led to setting up a Green Team as an in-house team.

On 26 October, 2009, an e-mail was sent to all the Hamriyah employees seeking volunteers for the Hamriyah Green Team for 10 different creative themes. Employees responded quite positively, reflecting the interest level of my staff regarding sustainability. There was a lot of enthusiasm in our staff in promoting both short-term and long-term green objectives with emphasis on developing a concrete road map. Green Team members were invited to come out with their concepts and suggestions for the way forward. The result was tremendous. Of the cluster of creative ideas and concepts that were shared included in-house save paper campaign, save water campaign and used paper recycling etc.
Several of the suggestions were implemented and concepts translated into actions. This only goes to prove that if there is willingness to promote green concepts, neither ideas will run short, nor will be the efforts to execute the green concepts, which hold a lot of promise. I am happy that the setting up Green Team was a successful experiment and showed us the way to move ahead.

Development occurs more in areas where there are better energy sources. This puts a lot of pressure on the resources within that area. The development in such places is random and unplanned. Thus, a large section of land remains under-developed while other parts are bursting to the seams. It would make better sense to have central planning bodies, government agencies, economists, social scientists, real estate development companies and associated organizations to work together in building planned cities with proper estimation of requirement and creating infrastructure suitable for the demand. This will ensure optimum utilization of resources and very little wastage. Energy efficiency is reduced when divergent systems are forced to work together without any apparent synergy. Instead, if we have a well planned system, then there will be harmony in how we operate.
Globalization has pushed the demand for energy and is creating imbalances in supply. The critical issues are energy market dynamics and development and the associated political undercurrents. One of the major fallout of energy imbalance is blackouts when entire grids collapse due to excessive drawing of power. Countries are exerting all kinds of pressure political or trade to secure more energy resources for themselves.

If we look to the near future say 2025 – 2030; what will be the energy scenario due to the ever increasing population and the finite supply of non-renewable energy resources.

**Is it Availability or Affordability?**

The issue of availability of energy is the most fundamental one. In some low income nations, it is the primary challenge whereas in others it is concerned with certain segment of the population bereft of basic energy sources to provide common comforts like light at night or a simple fan.

Availability is also associated with cost; the price at which the end consumer gets access to energy like electricity for home and offices, gas for running vehicles or the fuel to cook. So *availability* is not the end but *affordability* is a larger concern.
In some countries, the energy basket is small; the dependence on a few variables is much higher. That is a sure cause of concern. The slightest change in supply side can lead to unprecedented problems and chaos.

Availability of energy has to be coupled with diversity of supply. If one variable falls short, there should be enough alternatives to cover for the deficit. And in today's world, that alternative will come from renewable sources of energy because they are diversified, sustainable and renewable. The most important factor is that they are environmentally safer compared to the non-renewable ones.

Talking of environment, the use of non-renewable sources of energy and its over exploitation is causing havoc in our ecosystem. The changes are gradual and subtle to our human eyes and mind. Man is adaptable and most of us do not see the growing effects on the ecology. But the harm is happening as we read this and in most cases it is irreversible. If we do not act now, we will surely reach a point of no return in the near future and that will be game, set and match.

**Whose Job is it?**

The question here is: Ensuring Energy Security: Whose Job is it? It is a challenge to come up with a quick answer but then we all understand the primal nature of energy in
WHOSE JOB IS IT?

our lives. It is evident in more than hundreds of ways why we need energy for a better life and to sustain. We all know the importance of creating an energy secure society. The question today is – whose job is it to ensure energy security? Who is supposed to think of the issues, create solutions, implement them, innovate, audit and improve? Whom do we hold accountable for deficiencies and shortages? What are our rights and our obligations?

Actually, such obligations where the reason for Dubai government to create Dubai Supreme Council of Energy, under the visionary guidance of his highness Sheikh Muhammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, and Ruler of Dubai, the Dubai Integrated Energy strategy 2030 was developed in 2010 and deployed in 2011 to set the strategic direction of Dubai towards securing sustainable supply of energy and enhancing demand efficiency (water, power and transportation fuel).

The Dubai Supreme Council of Energy is the governing body talked with policy development, planning and coordination with concerned authorities and energy bodies to deliver new energy sources while employing a balanced approach to protecting the environment with a vision of “Dubai to be a role model to the world in energy, security and efficiency.”
WHO ARE WE?

Who are we?

We are the people, we are enterprise, we are the entrepreneurs, we are the society and we are the past, present and future. We are the world. We are the generators of energy, the controllers and the consumers. We are the private company owners, we are the citizens, we are the ones electing the government and we are the government.

The responsibility of creating availability of energy, conserving it, making it eco – friendly and developing alternative sources of energy to meet the growing needs lie with each one of us. We have to discharge our duties and play our specific roles in building an energy secure society that is sustainable and comfortable for the coming generations too.

And we have to look beyond our needs and wants. We have to develop policies and processes such that each and every living being on this planet enjoys the benefits of energy and works towards its conservation.

There is a skewed system of one part of the society getting more advantage and access to energy which has dramatically improved their lives and plays a large role in creating the divide of haves and have nots. In my earlier discussion on inclusive growth, when I discussed about equitable society – energy is one of the key factors in helping the fringes to join the mainstream.
True energy security will be achieved when it lights up each and every life such that there is marked improvement in the standard of living.

The 3 Cs Needed

We need to collaborate, cooperate and coordinate at each step as human beings and not nations separated by borders for the global fundamental requirement of energy. We must strive to create a society of abundance and well-being by integrating each and every human life, by providing light in the lives of each living being.
Chapter 4
Quenching the Thirst for Water

We made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?

- The Holy Qur’an

Things We Take for Granted

Living in a developed country with endowments of all kinds has its upside and downside. On one hand, where all our desires are fulfilled and we consider our luxurious lifestyle as basic requirement, somehow in the process we become disconnected with the trials and travails of many people across the world that are struggling for very basic things in life and that too seeking them in very small quantities.
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During one of my many travels across the world for business and trade relations, I came across an astounding piece of information something that I was earlier oblivious about. Close to a whopping 2.5 billion people in this planet do not have proper access to safe or potable water and sanitation conditions are deplorable. With the total population of people on Earth hovering around 6 – 6.5 billion plus (and growing rapidly), this means close to 35% of the people are deprived of something as basic as Water!

And here I thought we have oceans and seas full of water something that probably sets us apart from the other planets. North Africa, parts of India, China, South Asia suffer from severe water stress and non-availability. The crisis is looming and set to assume formidable proportions.

I was deeply disturbed by these statistics. Here I am concerned about improving my organization's bottom-line and top-line, expanding the revenue streams and creating more competitive edge, innovation in our line of business even while so many people are struggling for something as basic as water.

The above thought made me to think deeply of helping those who don't have access to drinking water. and I did a lot of efforts by giving speeches, writing articles and investing in projects over the years which led to me being
recognized by mayor of Cannes in France in 2007, I was awarded the Gold Medal of the 9th International Symposium on Water which was hosted by Cannes, France for its environmental efforts.

There is a world which is spoiled by choices and people choose and pick bottled or mineral water, sparkling water, chilled or room temperature. They drink whatever quantity they want and throw away the rest.

It was an early morning for me rushing to work where I noticed a branded bottle of water was thrown near the trash bin of my neighbor. I stopped my car and noticed that the bottle was yet 80% full. I felt so bad about it....

There is a class of people which is more worried about the 'best before' dates on the bottles before drinking rather than its blatant wastage. Several studies have revealed how much safe water goes down the drain as sheer wastage.

World War III

The question which rocks my mind is how many people would benefit if we did not waste so much and remain so insensitive to others' needs? They say the next world war would be fought for water. Would it be really happening and called World War III?
What are we doing about it? What am I doing about it? I come from a privileged segment of the society and in a position to make some change. Am I doing anything for these people?

**Ground Realities**

The fact about water is though we have such huge water bodies surrounding us, atleast 95% of all the water on earth is in the oceans. It is the remaining 5% out of which only 1% is drinkable. A large part of water is said to be locked in the form of glaciers.

With the ever growing population especially in certain pockets of the world, the water stress is constantly growing and turning into an uneasy mess.

Agriculture consumes close to 70% of water followed by manufacturing industries, and housing. However, in many third world countries, there is no consideration about the efficiency and yield of per unit water used for agriculture. Unlike say electricity generation where we can define and monitor how much water is needed for output of 1 MW power or household consumption based on number of people, agricultural consumption is uncontrolled and often wasteful. This is one of the major reasons for water stress. We take water for granted and use it incessantly without any calculation or consideration about how it is being used.
Well Done Sharjah

The Economist, an international news and business weekly, has recently in its laudable comments stated that 'Sharjah's per capita consumption of water is consistent with the recommendations of the United Nations (UN).'

Pointing to the Emirate's numerous efforts in water conservation, Sharjah Media Centre in a recent report published in a magazine titled “The World in 2014”, highlighted the fact that daily water consumption in Sharjah is estimated at around 200 litres per person, which is the average recommended by the UN. I feel proud of this achievement by my city

The magazine has also praised the efforts made by Sharjah Electricity and Water Authority (SEWA) in rationalizing Sharjah's water usage, which is the least in the UAE. It listed water sources in the UAE in general and the possible challenges facing these sources in the near future.

In an effort to preserve water and avoid its blatant misuse, His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, has envisioned a long drawn program. His vision is to make Sharjah Electricity and Water Authority (SEWA) one of the global organizations with expertise in preserving our natural wealth - the wealth of water. Under the direction of His Highness, an initiative known as 'Tarsheed' was introduced with the aim of raising
awareness towards the need to conserve and preserve our natural resources, especially water, which is the lifeblood of every city and civilization so essential for our progress and our very survival.

Being the Chairman of SEWA, I am indeed happy to say here that 'Tarsheed' has borne out excellent results and the initiative has been able to touch lives with its awareness message about the rational consumption of water in Sharjah.

'Tarsheed' has recently reached out to a number of housewives in the suburbs of Sharjah to make the homemakers aware of the many facets of this natural resource by spelling out importance of water conservation. It has been successful in sending out the message in a multiple of media such as posters and text messages, as well as TV and radio commercials.

I am indeed happy that Sharjah's message of rational use of water consumption has been noticed by not only local but international media also. 'The Economist', a prestigious international magazine has recently praised the emirate's explicit message in this regard. 'The Economist' has also underscored and appreciated SEWA's free distribution and installation of water-saving devices, which reduce consumption of water by up to 40%. This is one of the best known examples of water conservation, which has won many admirers.
A Lofty Gesture of His Highness

During one of my recent meetings with His Excellency, Yousuf Madahoma, Consul General, the Consulate General of the Comoros in the UAE, he informed me that His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, has shown exemplary gesture by wholeheartedly supporting Comoros in energizing with solar lights the 6 kilometers long stretch of one of the main streets in the capital Moroni island. This renewable energy project, the first of its kind in Comoros, is sure to add to the development agenda of the island. This gesture shows His Highness's commitment in supporting the lofty cause of renewable energy research program and its implementation not only in the UAE but also beyond its shores.

Thank You Your Highness

I feel much inspired by the thoughts and the vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai who recently observed that "we recognize that preserving our energy resources will be one of the greatest challenges in our drive towards sustainable development. This, however, will not materialize unless the different facets of our society..."
adopt energy conservation principles in their core values. The future generations will be the chief beneficiary of our achievements and the best judge of what we accomplish in this field.”

Actions Needed

In this 21st century, water more than anything else needs to be used in a scientific way with strong control over usage and yield. Uncontrolled usage and no plan for replenishment or recycling are adding to the fragile water availability condition. And the problem is not just restricted to physical availability of water but the ensuing political power play.

Water demand and stress will grow more in major parts of Asia, GCC and some of parts of Eastern Russia as compared to the rest of the world. This is also the place of much higher population growth.

Water scarcity will become more acute by 2025-30 and I am not even thinking what will be the state of affairs by 2050 unless we decide to sit up, take note and do something constructive about it. We must be proactive not reactive!

What is more worrisome is that the scarcity is getting further acute due to incessant pollution (where rules are
still circumvented and people get away with it) and inadequate technology to manage it.

Water and Productivity

Why is water such a critical requirement for human life? By all means it plays a pivotal role for sustenance and is a precursor of diseases if quality is compromised.

It is roughly estimated that (and there is lack of more focused data) close to a billion people are affected by water-borne diseases like diarrhea, cholera, hookworms etc. These diseases kill more people than are accounted for.

Apart from these, pregnant women and infants require clean water to remain disease-free when their immune system is most fragile. Barring nutrition and healthcare, water and poor sanitation are main contributing factors in pushing up infant mortality rate and post-natal complication in women. Clean water is the main component for maintaining sanitation and hygiene. It is said that simple acts of proper hand washing had cut down on lot of post-pregnancy deaths in the late 1700s.

Water-borne diseases affect young and adults alike in many countries. It might not be fatal but it is surely a problem. There is a whole issue of loss of productivity that is linked to health and lack of safe drinking water. People
in countries with poor water quality are often susceptible to variety of diseases especially affecting our digestive system. Though medical science has made humongous progress, it takes its toll on human body. Recovering from any stomach bug/ infection takes considerable time and one needs to take lot of precautions. And the person is susceptible to swift remission. What does it mean? It means loss of work days, pay and high medical expenses due to medicines or hospitalization. Imagine what it does to poor families who are anyway leading a hand to mouth life. Missing work not only reduces efficiency but also security of job and income. It further sucks families into poverty and often drives them to take desperate measures.

Women and girl child often have to walk miles to gather drinking water for their families which leaves no time for them to become economically engaged or for little girls to attend school.

**My Heart Misses a Beat**

I remember that in 2001 when I was leading a humanitarian mission to the border areas dividing Bangladesh and Myanmar to help the Muslim refugees deported from their homeland, we came across over 200,000 refugees in Cox's bazaar (Bangladesh) alone. There were many more scattered over more areas also.
While I was distributing the articles of basic needs like food and clothing moving from one area to another, I witnessed a cluster of kids walking barefoot and carrying water containers called *powls* (meant to store water). I was told that these kids trudge a very long distance to get water every day. The scene was very pathetic and touching. I told myself *'it's not little children's job.'*

I stopped and asked about the kids. I learnt that these kids have to walk at least two times a day to cover a distance of 5 km from their camp. “Where are the elders who must do this job?”, I asked in agitation. I felt very sorry when informed that most of these kids have lost one or more of their parents and grandparents. My heart missed a bit. The scenario is still fresh in my mind. I feel contended and blessed that I tried to help these helpless little children in my own humble way by arranging to dig a water well as close to the camp as possible.

**Limited Resources and Pollution**

Rise in industrialization and economic activities have had very good impact in areas like job creation and improvement of standard of living. Many countries have consolidated their position and have become lucrative locations for investment and setting up of manufacturing centers. The more industries are attracted, higher is the investment and scope for the country. In this race for
economic supremacy, corners have often been cut and rules flouted. The resultant factor is pollution of our environment. Many companies have been involved in wrongly disposal of wastes and discharging effluents into the rivers, lakes and seas. Often, these effluents seep through the ground and find its way to the ground water. The effect of this pollution sometimes manifests in a short while whereas in other cases a generation ends up suffering from diseases and health challenges due to genetic disorders.

Water is a very fertile base for life to grow. As flora and fauna depend on it so do bacteria and other germs. Issues are cropping up in cities due to improper disposal of sewage and garbage. When recycling is not carried out properly, it starts causing diseases or contaminating water bodies. The wrongful disposal of heavy metals is causing serious life threatening diseases through water. Chemicals used in agriculture are also finding its way into our food chain by mixing with ground water and polluting it.

As it is, drinking and potable water is a scarce resource. If it is further polluted then what will be left for human beings or animals?

A question needs to be addressed globally!
Water Governance

There is a greater need to induce creativity and innovation in the water management techniques. In my opinion and through various formal and informal interactions with specialists and academia, there is an immediate need for established framework for *water governance* all over the world. We need independent watch bodies to monitor the pattern of usage, the shifts in trend and the gaping holes, suggestions to plug them and then oversee the execution of the plans.

Town planning has become a more significant issue as far as resolving the water scarcity matter is concerned. Too many unplanned growth mainly in developing countries has led to skewed supply of water at the cost of depriving another segment.

However, there are some more areas that require our attention. Population, scarcity and poverty are deeply intertwined. Unless we are able to curb the rapid growth of population, other problems will only compound and keep expanding. There is a trend of population growing more rapidly in areas where the density is already high and putting extreme stress on resources. I do not know but probably well-planned development of cities and towns to spread out the population might be a good solution in the long run. It calls for some serious introspection in this regard.
The problem of drinking water will never be solved with few disjointed approach. A change of plans is necessary to alter our lifestyle and create more cohesive forms of living by creating synergy with nature and our environment. Our eating habits, the process of cooking, cleanliness everything needs a paradigm shift.

We need new technology to help in water conservation and recycling. Our infrastructure is outdated and slowly crumbling. There are too many leaks and weaknesses. We have to install efficient and viable solutions for managing aquifers which are otherwise fast depleting due to over and unjustified use. There are so many modern solutions for water treatment, storage and distribution. It is high time these solutions are implemented on a war footing. Innovation in water management will become an overnight best seller, rock the stock markets and become a darling of both the venture capitalists and business angels. One area that needs some serious efforts is rain water harvesting. If we are determined in our efforts to recover and store this water it can be used in times of shortages or need. Government has to put concentrated efforts in this direction by making it mandatory.

Water resources have to be managed in the coming years like management of any other precious resource. And it has to have an inclusive approach where water is shared with people from all segments of the society without any prejudice or discrimination.
The far reaching effect of water availability and quality finds its roots into social development and eradication of poverty. People in villages and economically poor areas continue to remain so since they spend much of their time fending for basic needs including water. The cycle of illiteracy, exploitation, discrimination thus gets a foothold. Who will replenish water resources? Who will conserve them to ensure sustainability? We need concrete plans for recycling and reuse of water and a fresh outlook towards this whole water issue.

Future is grim and if people like you and me do not sit up and take notice it will be surely doomed. Each one of us has to stand up and get involved in assessing the magnitude of the problem and suggesting solutions that are lasting and practical. Steps have to be taken to counter the issue brick by brick piece by piece.

In the future we have to start thinking and approaching water as a shared resource whose availability and continuity will depend on geographic sharing and cooperation. Countries will have to discard their shallow political outlook and come to the table for adopting newer means of conservation and replenishment.
Sadly, lot of politics is surrounding the concerns about access to water. Be it cross border issues like the Nile flowing through countries or that of a river flowing between various states in a country. Honestly, it is time to elevate ourselves from shallow and petty politics of water and start behaving like human beings with conscience. Because when water politics are played out in the large board rooms and meeting halls, the venue is *awash* with bottled water for the gathered few who are deciding the fate of many! It is the poor and the weak that are deprived of drinking water or access to sanitation and hygiene. Basically, we are robbing them off their right to live. We have to start behaving responsibly.

In this world with fragmented views, diverse conflicting interests and people often coming into opposing positions, water sustainability will become one unifying factor.

In the previous chapter we talked about energy security. In the years to come, water security will hold equal or more importance in lives of people. One can live without electricity to an extent but not without drinking water.

We must bear in mind that no advancement in science can 'invent' a substitute of water. Scientists may have derived that water consists of two parts Hydrogen and one part Oxygen. Well, we have both Oxygen and Hydrogen. Can we make water? After all, we can never conquer nature.
It is well said in The Holy Quran: “see ye the water which ye drink? Do ye bring it Down (in rain) from the Cloud Or do We? Were it Our will, we could make it saltish (and unpalatable). Then why do ye not Give thanks?”
Chapter 5

Only Education Can Change the World

(…and say! My Lord, increase me in Knowledge.)

- The Holy Qur'an

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the depth of truth;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
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Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way.
into the dreary desert sand of dead habit; Where
the mind is led forward by thee into ever-
widening thought and action;
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country
awake.

Written by the great Indian father figure of literature
Rabindranath Tagore, the poem enlightens about his
dream for India as it gains independence. This
commendable poem expresses profound thought and the
deep vision of the poet on fundamentally restructuring the
future of a nation.

How can a country realize such a dream?

How will the mind become free of fear, prejudice, bias or
confusion?

How will we develop a questioning mind that seeks reason
in solutions and not blind faith?

How do we broaden our thoughts and bring clarity to our
purpose?

How do we create a just world where people are honest
and accountable, discharge their duties with utmost
sincerity and diligence?

How do we build an entire economy on a sturdy platform
that remains unshaken in the face of turmoil and chaos?
There is a simple yet effective tool for such a renaissance for mankind, a tool that moulds cultures, instills values, empowers people to think and act suitably through equal opportunities, a tool which drives innovation and research, inventions and startups, powers the entire economy. It is the tool that enforces good governance and integrity at all levels. The tool is education. Yes, education!

The first word revealed to the unlettered Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) was, however, 'read.' Allah, the Exalted, says:

(Read! In the name of your Lord and Cherisher, Who created – created man, out of a mere clot of congealed blood: Read! And your Lord is Most Bountiful, - He Who taught with the pen-taught man that which he knew not.) –
- The Holy Qur'an

**Enriching Culture, Ethics and Values**

“The soul takes nothing with her to the next world but her education and her culture. At the beginning of the journey to the next world, one's education and culture can either provide the greatest assistance, or else act as the greatest burden, to the person who has just died.”

- Plato, The Republic of Plato
If we observe, it is the nations with the oldest and strongest civilizations that have survived in the face of time and challenges are the ones that had strong cultures and governed by people with distinctive value system.

The administration was run with certain ethical approach to create harmony and peace rather than antagonize and cause disputes and conflicts.

These civilizations had rich knowledge of science and arts. They were way ahead of others in areas like architecture, music, food preparation and preservation, attire, social norms and guidelines; they had laws governing the people, they continuously improved their tools and systems.

The leaders of civilizations continuously stressed on the need for learning and sharing of knowledge. The thinkers of the society wrote many scriptures and original works which are still the basis of what we learn in schools and higher education today. Our social laws and society structures still find their root in these great writings which have been like a guiding light for mankind for centuries. It is education that has emancipated man since the early days.

How did we know that the earth's shape and that it is not the center of the universe? How did Newton identify gravitational force? How did Archimedes discover the
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How did we know that the earth’s shape and that it is not the center of the universe? How did Newton identify gravitational force? How did Archimedes discover the floating law? How were the steam engines invented to which we owe our industrial revolution?

Education and schooling opened up vistas to people and allowed them to think and question. The culture of inquisitiveness, to come up with new ideas, to create something new finds its roots in education. Once the fundamentals are clear to us, we can use a whole gamut of learning from various streams to converge and give birth to something revolutionary.

The technology that has become inseparable part of our lives today is all initially due to the extempore by men of knowledge and perfected by testing and practice.

What education does for cultures is to foster a value system grounded in learning and sharing of information and knowledge. The shared belief is in the power of uniting millions with education to build a formidable nation.

Look at the Germans and the geographic size of the nation. They are also a part of European Union but in the face of economic turmoil they are still standing tall and remain unwavering. It is not sheer luck or destiny; it is the strength of their cultural fabric that social values focusing on learning and specialization.

A deeper power of education lies in embedding ethics in the psyche of man. In my various sojourns, I have
observed many cultures. I have found people willing to work longer hours and attending to my queries whenever I requested and there were others who worked as per schedule and a certain system from which they never strayed. I would find it irksome but realized that the ones with systems were more clear and efficient in how they handled situations. Others were simply trying to please me and were improvising continuously. Though the latter would make me feel happy, output was more in the former. It is my experience that working with people having sound ethics and value system with a deep-seated culture of learning is a lot more beneficial than dealing with unscrupulous people simply trying to please me by misguiding and confusing.

The culture of a nation finds itself in the veins of the countrymen. The stronger and broader the culture, the more stable and upward moving is the nation because it is not intuition but knowledge that powers them ahead. I remember once reading an intense Jim Rohn quote –

*If someone is going down the wrong road, he doesn't need motivation to speed him up. What he needs is education to turn him around.*
Empowerment and Creating Equal Opportunities

I have experienced it in my own life and that of the lives of people around me. Education empowers us. It simply lights up a world erstwhile unknown to us. It gives us the power to experiment and analyze. Together with *intuitive* skills and an *analytical* bent of mind we can transform the world and that has what caused the difference between developed and developing nations.

I would often wonder why some nations are so far ahead of others and some are still trying to find their foothold. In my moments of *introspection* and *engaging* interactions with some learned people around the world, I have realized that the only differentiating factor has been the reach of education deep into the population of the nation.

The developed world has used the entire pool of human capital – man or woman, young or old, rich or poor, strong or weak by giving them access to quality education to change their own world and thus the world that they live in.

In developed nations, the talk is about gender equality; in poorer nations females are often deprived of basic education. That hampers their ability to think what is good or bad for them. I believe in the saying – *the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world*. That is the reason enough
to allow the power of education to spread into the length and width of a nation.

I have a slightly different view on this whole gender equality issue. America till date does not have a female president but a large number of females are in the administration at very important positions including the head of their secret service. In comparison, a more male-dominated country like Latin America has female country head. But if we compare the nations, where do they stand on counts of economic activity, on society, security and sanctity of life, on ability to dream and chase their dreams?

I am not a proponent of gender equality. Man and women are two distinctive entities and they are pivotal in their own right. I believe the term “gender equality” to be limiting and narrow. We should be more concerned about providing equal education to people of either gender and then let them choose their path in which they feel comfortable and capable to shine.

The aim of women should not be to fly fighter jets just like men or stand shoulder to shoulder in combat situation. They should be given the weapon of education and allowed to unleash their potential in anything that they feel like. That is empowerment and emancipation in the truest sense. Sheryl Sandberg has written a moving book titled *LeanIn* where she coaxes women to come into the
mainstream. It is millions of women like her who have taken the world by storm solely with their arsenal of education.

As more people become literate and then learned, the tremendous human capital that is formed will be able to move the strongest of the mountains. I have seen women in advanced nations driving huge trailer trucks across geographies where the population is sparse. It means each and every unit of human capital is contributing the creation of economic force. If there are a million people in a country and only ten percent are economically productive how will the nation grow? And these ten percent are only productive because the others are not skilled or capable enough to contribute. Why? It is simply due to the lack of education.

Education strengthens the democracy in a nation. By providing opportunities for becoming economically engaged and creating more enterprises and jobs, it helps the country to grow at a faster pace. Democracy also allows people to move around anywhere in the country or world to seek employment and pursue their dreams. Entire Arabian Gulf region was once powered by the working class coming from around the world.
Increasing Innovation, Research and Indigenous Development

The Arabian Gulf example is a big learning point for us. We had the resources but lacked the technology or the know-how to manage them. We became dependent on the outside world for helping us. In due course we realized that if we educate ourselves well enough, we will be able to manage our resources much more efficiently.

Good education provides a platform for better quality of research and original work. It opens up paths to create indigenous patented technology and methods that can be successfully used for economic dominance and social upliftment.

Much of the proprietary technology in the world is still dominated by the Americans and Europeans. They are the proponents of a lot of ground breaking research and technology, management systems and economic excellence. The ability to think and research and question is embedded in their primary education system which is more vibrant and liberal. Many cultures promote rote learning and the children end up being boring and uninspired. The teaching methodology that is holistic and organic not mechanical, a system that promotes questions and reasons is more relevant and productive. No wonder the primary education system is undergoing a sea change.
all over the world. Dr. Seuss's books are now being read world over.

Man did not land on moon sans any efforts. It was the years of painstaking research but more important was the ability of man to visualize that they can fly. The Wright brothers have a lot of contribution in this field. If we did not dream of flying, forget the moon we would still be sailing across the world or maybe not because we might not even know how to make boats.

Steam engine to steam turbines to generation of power to heat recovery system generators that bring more efficiency and help us generate power that lights the lives of millions. Each invention and improvement has brought manifold changes in our lives.

The problem of energy security, the lack of clean drinking water, the challenge of low cost generation of renewable energy, building sustainable buildings, reducing carbon emission, better food production and storage, providing good healthcare solutions, availing cheaper drugs and basically living a good quality of life can all be realized through research and development of new technology. And new technology will be developed when more people have education and the facility to use their education for productive purpose.
The education system itself has to be inspiring, original and evolving to allow new ideas to step in and people to use unorthodox methods to achieve unimaginable results. Man used instruments and information technology and today we have control systems and instrumentation which even run aeroplanes and cars on auto-pilot. Think of the change in communication due to Whatsapp and the social media!
Fueling Economic Growth

The learned ones are the heirs of the prophets. They have knowledge as their inheritance; and he who inherits it, he inherits a great fortune.

- Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him)

People for a long time were used to the concept of working in companies after completing their studies. The current breed of students is more inclined to build their own startups fuelled by innovative ideas to change the world. Suddenly entrepreneurship is not longer a foreign or scary concept. People are plunging in like never before. All companies were once a startup till they turned into conglomerates but they were far and few. Today the number of startups are more and they are
growing larger much swifter. One of the key reasons is the idea generators and the startup entrepreneurs are more educated and skilled to manage their venture in the globalized world.

Education removes the shackles of fear in the mind of these entrepreneurs and armed with knowledge they move sure-footedly in the business world aware of the cause and effect relationship of their actions.

The larger social impact of startups and more entrepreneurial ventures is the creation of jobs even in the remote areas of a nation which truly facilitates inclusive growth.

When we talk of poverty eradication, we need to approach it from the education angle rather than doling out few dollars under some random scheme. The poor do not need money always. They need education, skills and opportunities to work and sustain.

Education is the panacea for poverty eradication. When people live on the margins and have to fend for their basic necessities, they often fall victim to corrupt methods and get entwined in all kinds of anti-social activities. These people become a menace to the society and are destructive. They are narrow-sighted and do not understand beyond their shallow objectives. The real sufferer in the bargain is the society. These perverse
elements cause trouble and disturb the regular functioning of a community. Whenever there is any fight, crime, disturbance, mass destruction by human elements, the economy takes a beating. The investor sentiment shakes and people become cautious. Investments are put on hold. On the other side loss of property hits the economy too. What happens when roads and bridges are blown up? The infrastructure is damaged. Communication is hampered. Basic amenities are hit and life in general gets disturbed.

Education has a multi-dimensional effect on the economy. It fosters more economic activities thus creating for value creation jobs which improves standard of living. People get access to better healthcare systems and live a hygienic life. And it moves in a chain fashion where the same values are inculcated in the children.

If a generation does not have access to education, they do not appreciate its value. This percolates to the next generation. We are left with a lot of mouths to feed and few to create the food. What we need is that each hand works and feeds itself.

**In Search of Answers**

Economic growth will manifest when there is economic empowerment of the masses. But how do we deliver education into the remote corners of the world? How do we help people who earlier did not have access to
education to make up for lost time? How do we get more out of our human capital by multi-skilling them?

**Technology is Revolutionizing Education Delivery**

Information technology has been the biggest blessing of this age. It has not only shrunk the world but has created a dynamic impact on almost all industry. Education is one of the main beneficiaries of the power of technology.

We, at Alleem Knowledge Center have experienced the use of technology for delivery of education and learning to a huge cross section of people around the world.

The ability to store lectures and webinars online and make them available on demand across time-zone is a miracle in itself. Today, people do not have to leave their desks to gain access to world-class content, lectures and study sessions. They are also able to interact with faculties from the worlds' best universities and hone their skills.

In my childhood days, we used to depend on specific set of books for learning. They were plain black and white with lines and lines of text. Everything has undergone a change. Our children have access to dynamic content which is being steadily upgraded. There are discussion forums to share views and learn new insights. Ours was more of a *monologue* now education is a steady *dialogue* between
the students and teachers. Children have access to lot more information online and they are better prepared in their classes. The content in itself has become richer. We have gone back to the basics. Hieroglyphs which were common in Egyptian culture many ages ago are how children are learning today. The impact of pictures is more than a hundred pages of elaborate text. The current education system is more of practice and pictorial content rich with audio and video. Animation has found its way into education. It is simply amazing and transforming.

The content that is served is broken down into simple logical parts with the aim to increase understanding and comprehension. People can pace themselves according to their learning abilities. And with technology, we can take up learning at any age.

Technology has also made education cheaper and more mass oriented. The same content can be used across the world. There are tutors from Asia who are teaching the children in the West through the use of Internet. A few decades ago it was nothing but a dream.

The most significant impact of technology on education is Accessibility. Now we can even reach out to the people in the remotest corners of this world, into poorer nations of Africa and Asia and change their lives. When each and every person on earth has access to education, imagine the world that we will live in. There is a lot that can be done in
this area and whatever we do will fall short of the requirement.

**Intensifying Governance and Integrity**

*Whosoever follows a path to seek knowledge therein, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise.*

-**Prophet Muhammad** (Peace Be Upon Him)

Education and its strength give me hope. I never underestimate its transformational powers. I have started believing that a utopian dream today might become a reality tomorrow all due to the power of education.

In my opinion, the biggest impact of education is on governance and integrity in man. It is through education, man learns to become a man, to be compassionate for others, to grow up above petty issues and do something life changing not only for the self but for the community. It teaches us to become honest in our approach, to be accountable for our actions. It fundamentally alters our thinking pattern which becomes more inclusive and holistic.

Education is a social leveler. It is only with education that a person with some physical challenges can be an equally great banker, teacher, accountant or scientist like a physically normal one. It breaks the barriers of caste, creed, age or gender.
Education teaches us the ability to question wrongdoing and pointing out pitfalls and lacunae. It teaches us to choose from the right to wrong. Gone are the days when politicians could give a moving speech and mesmerize people. Media *per se* has also lost its clout. Nowadays it is the social media, online sites and forums where opinions are formed and refuted. Governments and policies, ministers and their actions are dissected under a powerful microscope of intense intellectual debate which was non-existent even a couple of years ago. Now these discussions have a global element to it and in real time. No one is insulated.

Law, justice, commerce, trade requires ability to understand economics, global politics, culture, local factors, regional geographic characteristics, mathematics and statistics. Education has empowered people to enter into government structures and revolutionize the entire administrative mechanism. This new breed is the harbinger of change, of development, of improvement and growth.

When we have learned educated people at the helm of affairs they lead growth. They are like light houses that guide ships to their rightful destination. These people are the happiest too as they are freed from the illusion and shackles of money, possession, mere luxury of cars and houses. They learn to live a life of purpose. In the end,
these are the people to whom we owe our existence and sustenance.

In a poem Hazrat Ali has beautifully presented the meaning of knowledge saying:

“The beautiful dress does not reflect beauty. The beauty is the beauty of knowledge and morals. The one whose father dies is not an orphan, The real orphan is he who brings bad name to his tribe.”
Holistic Healthcare

There is this difference between the two temporal blessings- health and money; money is the most envied, but the least enjoyed; health is the most enjoyed, but the least envied; and this superiority of the latter is still more obvious when we reflect.

-Charles Colton

There are certain things that we, who live in a developed country take for granted. Accessibility and Quality of healthcare is one of them. It is beyond our wildest imagination to perceive a world where a medical specialist or super specialty hospital is unavailable for us 24 X 7.

The harsh reality is that such a world exists and that includes most of the third world countries and even the slightly economically better ones.
A simple statistical data on healthcare spending speaks of the enormity of the issue.

The percentage of GDP spent on Healthcare is 16% in USA which is one of the highest in the world closely followed by Nordic nations, Switzerland, Germany, France and Japan. The private sector spending in Singapore is 67%+.

The same statistics are the lowest in African nations and equally so in most of South East Asia and Latin American nations.

99% of births in high income countries are managed by skilled people whereas a meager 47% in low income nations which is less than half! I shudder to imagine what happens to the other half bereft of any medical aid or skilled personnel.

It is estimated that globally the average life expectancy is 70 years but the numbers are skewed in favor of certain nations because WHO stated that 6.9 million children below the age of 5 died in 2011!

While we are spending trillions on defense and technology, banking and retail; healthcare sector is being largely neglected in the larger developmental agenda. Why?
Appalling State of Affairs

During one of my numerous visits to Africa, an acquaintance quoted some horrifying numbers on healthcare in an off-hand conversation. He said that 74% of child death occurs in Africa and South-East Asia whereas in US the number is as low as 6.7 per thousand.

The numbers remained stuck in my mind for a long time. I started looking up for more details because I was feeling restless trying to wrap the gravity of the situation around my mind. In the developed world of ours, the major challenges are lifestyle diseases and we have enough support, facility and guidance to live a good quality of life with proper medication and timely medical intervention. However, in the rest of the world, these medical challenges are aplenty.

The most disturbing area is that of infant, child and women healthcare. They are most susceptible and deserve maximum attention.

The simple lack of efficient pre- and post-natal care can lead to such huge number of fatalities and life challenging conditions. In America where 94% births are attended by skilled personnel the number is as low as 49% in Africa and 59% in South East Asia.

There are 28 still-births in Africa for each 1000 babies born compared to 6 in Europe. High income nations have
6 in 1000 mortality in children below 5 years of age. This number is 107 in Africa, (average 95 in low income countries) and 55 in South East Asia.

The average life expectancy of males is 59 years in low income countries compared to 72 years in high income ones. The corresponding figure for females is 61 and 76 respectively.

The disparity is clearly linked to the economic state of the nations. The countries are poor so they lack basic resources. The state is unable to provide adequate healthcare facilities. The population is not economically well off. So the private sector is not very keen to step in and strengthen the healthcare facilities. The population is less productive and people remain poor due to health issues and inability to work and sustain jobs. It is a never ending cycle unless a major disruption occurs and breaks the chain. Wealthy nations and large corporate can really make fundamental difference by taking up the mantle of improving lives and stepping in, helping nations improve their healthcare facilities in terms of quality, accessibility and affordability.

**Ominous Signs**

Primary healthcare is missing in most places of poor life expectancy and high mortality. Healthcare services are
elusive in African countries. People do not get access to a basic qualified doctor, nurse or mid-wife. Simple antibiotics and frontline drugs are missing to save lives. There are huge disparities like delay in services or even denial of services in some instances.

The number of skilled personnel is lean or non-existent, the doctor to patient ratio is appalling.

The broader numbers speak of 0.5 – 20 Doctors/ 10,000 people in most nations apart from Russia, Argentina and EU nations where the density of medical professionals is much higher.

Though the numbers may be 5 in 10000 for example, but if half of the population is sick due to malnutrition or other health causes then the burden on these 5 doctors is humongous. According to WHO; Diarrhoea, Cancer, HIV, Measles, Malaria and Sepsis are the most common health causes faced by nations. Some of these require simpler medicines but fast medication and medical attention. A simple IV can work wonders in diarrhea. But is it available to the afflicted?

Sepsis raises an issue of reliability of services. Quite often when medical care is provided, patients still die as they contract some infection which is missed by the care givers. A common reason is lack of hygiene and sanitation. Often lack of clean water is the primary cause.
OMINOUS SIGNS

And even if it is available, the professionals lack stringent protocols to contain diseases and their proliferation.

Measles, chicken pox and mumps require only a vaccine during childhood. Even that is missing in poor nations. Many do not take the vaccines due to its price.

However, the biggest challenge is fighting with cancer or HIV which can make many go bankrupt. The cost of cancer drugs are often debated in the media and other medical circles. The side – effects are not even been considered.

Certain other diseases require treatment with properly monitored course of antibiotics. However, simple life saving drugs is not accessible to many and even if they are then the cost is back breaking.

When we talk of people not having access to doctors and nurses, there are other associated issues like lack of cheaper generic drugs which can save many lives.

In the 1600s and later too, childbirth deaths were very common. There would be an outbreak and wipe out lives of many women before suddenly coming to a halt. Today, with modern medical care and drugs such cases can be totally eradicated but can everyone afford them? On the contrary, are the drugs rightfully priced?
LEGITIMACY OF COSTING & PRICING

Legitimacy of Costing & Pricing

The cost of medical care is a burning issue. Some countries have very strong taxation system and offer sound medical cover for their nationals. But that not the case with developing countries. It is time to ask how realistic are the rates both of hospital care and drugs? What are the actual cost components? What is being loaded onto the patients by taking advantage of their dependency on healthcare? What is ethically justified and what is extortion? There are fine lines and they are crossed often. It is the common man who bears the brunt and does not have legal recourse or otherwise.

Let us take the example of a cardiac complication. When a doctor recommends angioplasty or opts for bypass surgery what options does the patient or his/ her family has but to accede to the advice? Who will judge whether the stents used in angioplasty are the correct ones or not?

Elective procedures are on the rise. Delivery is one such area. Doctors often suggest elective caesarian which is more expensive, invasive, and infectious notwithstanding the fact that patients take more time to heal. For the doctors and hospitals, it saves time and rakes up a larger bill.

Often doctors prescribe numerous tests. Asking for a CT or MRI is like making patients undergo routine blood
tests. Who decides whether the test is necessary or not? Who protects the interest of the patients?

I have a painful story to share. I was once being treated for ear infection. The doctor prescribed me more medicines than was normally required to treat my ear. When I asked him why, he was candid enough to state an atrocious fact that the hospital is setting a financial goal for all the doctors to increase the revenue.

Hospitals and drug companies would contend that why not go for medical insurance to save oneself from bankruptcy. Yes, one must have medical insurance but this area too is riddled with holes and obstacles. Just by getting an insurance cover is not enough. Why the devil is still in the fine print and eluding many? Why common man still does not understand what is covered and what is not? And why everything that he is afflicted with comes under exclusion. State health protection as given by countries like Canada is what draws many to migrate there.

Families become bankrupt in many countries while getting treatment for diseases like Cancer or even lifestyle disease like CHD, Diabetes etc.

Here I would like to acknowledge Sharjah TV for their weekly program ‘Pain and Hope’ for highlighting such issues and collecting donations for the destitute and the needy.
About 67% population living in Africa is said to be affected by HIV/AIDS. Are they getting the right kind of medicines and healthcare advice to lead a better quality of life? Or are they being used as unethical medical trial patients so that drug companies can later on launch wonder drugs and mint trillions!

The question is of affordability of services and products. And there is a huge lacuna. The blatant abuse of compliance checks and the compromise in quality of drugs is rampant. Continuous surveillance is lacking or poor. FDA in most nations is a compromised body that either lacks teeth or the will to tear down malpractices. There could also be the reason of inadequate leeway to act.

Another area of growing concern is excessive reliance on testing and diagnostics. Patient care or comfort is secondary. It is a trend to order CT for each and everything but what about the side effects? These machines are huge money spinners for diagnostic laboratories and hospitals.

The private laboratories in many countries have a free hand and no major surveillance body to monitor their inadequacies or malpractices. The tests are expensive and shrouded in secrecy where common man does not have any idea of the economical justification. It is like a seller's market and there is definitive collusion though not overtly stated so.
Healthcare spending is a contentious issue in many countries. As per WHO data, per capita healthcare spending by government is USD 24 in low income countries whereas it is a whopping USD 2850 in high income ones. It is USD 73 in Africa and USD 1697 in Europe. The numbers speak a lot of things. There is a price that is paid for quality and availability of healthcare as well as efficiency in discharging duties.

Medical Tourism

All this has given thrust to medical tourism which is on the rise. Patients prefer to visit countries like India, Thailand which have good medical facilities at a fraction of the Western world prices. I am aware of Arabs who visit Pune in India for knee replacement or hip/spine surgery with five star facilities and also Bangalore for heart surgery.

It is time we start focusing on inclusiveness in healthcare and accessibility for the poor or the economically mediocre ones because everyone deserves the right to live and sustain. Drug companies and hospitals must play a bigger role.

Technological Optimism

The brighter side of healthcare is technology. There has been astonishing progress in how technology is improving
healthcare delivery and critical disease diagnosis. It is becoming a glowing reason for increase in preventive healthcare which not only benefits people but countries too by strengthening productivity.

On one side CT and MRI are being incessantly prescribed to patients and that is debatable and questionable but as a technology they are simply marvelous. The level of insight that these provide to doctors is actually saving lot of lives and preventing many debilitating health challenges. Acute issue like brain clots, aneurysm are confidently identified and treated effectively. These facilities must reach the poorer sections in this planet.

Cell Banks

Stem cell therapy is another promise that is fast emerging. People are now storing their cells in stem cell banks for future use. The research in this area is quite promising. With the growth of nuclear families, finding donor matches is going to be challenging. It is in this scenario where stem cells will prove a blessing. Even the developing countries are fast creating their cell banks and offering services at a reasonable cost for people.

Prosthetics

Prosthetics is another development which is evolving and
we have athletes with prosthetic legs who are competing with able bodied people in the world. This is a boon for amputation patients or even those born with physical birth defects. Something like this was not even in the horizon few decades back. The Jaipur foot was one of the innovations that revolutionized prosthetics.

The problem of sepsis discussed earlier is often caused due to infection caught after a medical procedure. The new surgical method called keyhole surgery is a boon for many patients who not only recover faster but are less susceptible to infections due to lesser invasive surgery. Gall bladder stones are being destroyed using laser surgery.

The future will be of disease prevention and minimally invasive surgery. There will be serious growth in private and proactive diagnostics, preventive tests etc. People with history of lifestyle diseases are today getting regularly investigated for probable markers. Angelina Jolie's example is a case in point. There are tests like HsCRP for identifying Heart-risk markers. The list simply goes on and is promising.

One of the ways of increasing accessibility to healthcare and providing primary services is by implementing the Hub-Spoke Model. Smaller and remote areas can have a primary health center which is linked to a larger specialty hospital in the nearby town which can help issues that are
escalated. Thus, it will be better use of resources and have more reach.

Drug research though contentious is coming up with newer drugs for health issues earlier not known to man. Immunization options are increasing which is directly helping to reduce infant mortality instances. But there is also a downside. We are seeing occurrence of more viruses and outbreaks in the recent times. And each virus is mutating. This calls for a more stringent disease control, containment and prevention body as well as minutely sharp protocols applicable in all countries. People are travelling from one nation to another and rapidly with time. If one country has good systems and other does not, the entire premise of disease prevention will fall apart. We have to start thinking of the planet in entirety when we think of healthcare.

**Ethical Dilemma**

As I meet a cross section of people in course of my travels or business meets, I have come across some serious concerns not related to basic healthcare but definitely concerned with our lives. These are concerns of genuine people and are worth pondering. One such issue is organ donation. Each religion has a different view on death, rituals and after life. But how do we make a sound decision? Suppose there is a brain dead
family member with perfectly functioning organs, how do we take the call on whether to pull the plug or not? Also, whether we should be donating the organs of this person which can help many others live a normal full-length life? Donating organs would be the right thing to do. Eye donation is always promoted. Imagine lighting up someone's life! But there are views and counter-views. Much of this debate and thought is clouded with contradicting views and reasons. But somewhere we have to move beyond the shackles of religion and culture and first try to be a human being. We need some serious thought and thrust in the area of organ donation. My first step would be to increase awareness and educate people in this area. I am sure there will be a tide in favor.

Euthanasia is being debated everywhere. Mercy killing in some societies are seen as trying to play God. Is it really so? What is the quality of life of a person lying in bed with excruciating pain and suffering? How do we decide what to do? The condition of family members and care-givers need to be factored in. I have acquaintances who have been judicious enough to write a health will. This is similar to the Do not resuscitate wish of patients often seen in the US. A health-will should clearly state if one wishes to remain brain dead as a vegetable or with any self debilitating challenges till death occurs or authorize competent medical professionals to pull the plug. I admit this is not a simple mathematical formula but something
that is extremely complicated and full of ethical and moral concerns. However, it is time we start thinking in these lines.

Where organ donation and euthanasia is about ending lives, surrogacy is the newer concern that is to do with giving life. In certain corners of the society, this is a trade and is again morally questionable. But this is also proving to be a boon for families who are childless; families that can have children and give them a good life. As a society, we have to come together and build a system where surrogacy is celebrated for the joy of giving lives and not as a means of income and exploitation. We have to ensure that the surrogate mother's life and well-being is protected. They are not treated as machines or pods who are being financially compensated rather afforded fair amount of respect and dignity.

With each revolution of the earth, newer issues will crop up. We will face situations that have never occurred earlier and we will be expected to act to the best of our judgment. I hope that in each such trial we remain human and think like human beings while responding. Everything else will naturally fall in place.

**Right to Health**

There are indeed huge financial constraints causing blocks in healthcare services. Public healthcare programs
are not very effective. The need for PPP model in healthcare arena is clearly stipulated based on average global experience. The thrust should be on immunization, disease control and eradication. But the fundamental requirement is awareness. Most lives are lost as people do not pay attention to the health concerns or try self diagnosis. Nowadays even heart specialists and awareness groups advertise not to visit general physicians in case of heartburns or chest pain. They most likely diagnose it as gas related pain and the patient loses the “golden hour” that is crucial in heart cases.

Government spending is less, healthcare facilities are few and not easily available, drug costs are high and private insurance is full of loop holes. This is the common scenario in economically weaker countries. There are 34 WHO member-states where combined healthcare spending by government, private sector, household, independent donors is less than USD 50!!!

Everyone living on this planet deserves a good life and adequate healthcare. It is for the state and private sector to work in conjunction ensuring this basic right. The state has a duty towards its people. How to make healthcare affordable should be the concern of both state and private parties.
Rise of Religious Fundamentalism & Intolerance

If we make religion our business, God will make it our blessedness.

-H.G J. Adam

Religion has been a prime binding force of societies since times immemorial. It has been providing cultural and social bonding amongst people. The scriptures and beliefs have often acted as strong guiding forces for civilizations. People have often resorted to their religious books to understand right and wrong, duty and obligation, authority, responsibility and accountability, how to act and react in their day to day lives towards the self, family and society.
But many wars have also been fought in the name of religion since the medieval ages. Lives lost and cities ravaged. History is replete with such instances across the world.

In the larger part of the previous century there were wars still being fought but overall things were becoming quieter and peaceful. People were more concentrated towards trade, economy and productive growth. Many large companies have flourished in this span. Information technology has revolutionized our cultures and changed the way of life for many. We have this phenomenon called social media that has brought people closer and is helping forge very good connections and network. The world is becoming a smaller and closer place. There is also a downside to all things shining in our world today.

Of late, there has been a resurgence of extreme social damage and cultural destruction including that of heritage structures and properties and everything is sadly linked to religion at the end of the day.

The Missing Peace

When you look around, you will find that our obsessions and hot pursuits of our goals leave a trail of disappointments. Today, everybody is self-centered with hardly any thought for sustainability, which needs to be
kept in view all the time. The rat race must end and we need to devote not only our thoughts, but also actions to ensure that there is peace around our efforts at sustainability.

But the moot point is where the peace springs from. In the ultimate analysis, it is the *spiritualism*, which provides the very basis to peace and harmony. But then, the big question is how to attain peace and harmony. Individuals cannot do this for apparent reason of their being too much occupied in worldly pursuits and are lost in their battle of survival. We need a concerted effort, a massive agenda to address and attain peace. We would probably need to synergize our endeavors to strengthen the roots, the foundation of spiritualism.

Spiritualism alone can form the foundation for peace and happiness (which is different from pleasures). Strong spiritual foundation can work to erase tears, remove pain, mitigate miseries to bring smiles on the faces of the anguished and the aggrieved. We must build platforms where one can seek solace in the tranquility and soothing care of spiritualism to heal wounds of despair.

We must remember that sustainability is only possible when we are at peace with ourselves.
Taliban Story

In more recent memory, the Taliban acts of destruction of heritage cannot be forgotten. The world's two largest standing Buddhas – one of them 165 feet high and a Bamiyan statue over 150 feet high above a small town situated at the foot of the Hindu Kush mountains of central Afghanistan, the 1,700-year-old sandstone statue of Buddha were blown up by the Taliban.

The destruction of the statues is almost certain to lead to even greater condemnation and the isolation of the Taliban by the international community. In January, the United Nations Security Council imposed sanctions on the Taliban.

Base of all Hostilities

It is indeed sad, today religion which was supposed to be the beacon of hope, peace and guidance has turned into the cause of most hostilities. It has permeated into all walks of life and has cunningly shrouded itself in the garbs of fanaticism and faith turning into a hugely destructive force.

There is a rise of fundamentalism and immense fanaticism in the society today which is extremely unhealthy and will lead to more violence.
Emotions have become fragile and touchy. Communities are resorting to violent means of protest and displaying displeasure at minor instances of creative liberty of artists and public figures or even commoners. The media is playing a huge role in blowing facts out of proportion to their shallow interest of sensationalizing issues. There is no doubt that at times the perpetrators are knowingly pressing the wrong buttons. Artists have often tried to play with religious sentiments in the name of art. And when one community reacts it acts as a fuel for the other to retaliate in the same form.

Suddenly, we find that our resilience is particularly shaky and weak. Our sentiments are being stoked at mere provocation of a selected few vested interests. The social media as it is good is equally playing a negative role in spreading damaging news like wildfire. We have videos and photos and detailed texts and tweets online within minutes of an incident creating a global noise and going viral. The information is based on the personal bias and interpretation of the reporter who can be anyone today. The idea is not to denigrate the power and reach of social media or technology but an assertion of how things are affecting the world and everything is not in a good way.

Today, there are too many sub-groups, sects, cults, tribes, social groups that are playing havoc on mankind. Faith has become a matter of convenience and selective
interpretation. Finally, it is the common man whose life is at risk and is paying the price. Who dies in blasts and wars? Whose resources are being plundered and damaged? Who all are left behind trying to gather the broken pieces? Who gains and who loses?

What happens due to fundamentalism? There is gross intolerance in societies. It means rampant lawlessness, damage of public and private property, infrastructure and lives. There is plunder and killings. There is also a point of mob mentality where people are violated and scarred for life. There is no respite for the old, women or children. Most often these categories of people bear the maximum brunt of religious intolerance and hatred. What is their fault?

It takes huge amount of time and resources to build infrastructure. We also have to contend with natural disasters. Add to that if we start damaging them at the slightest pretext, then probably we deserve the difficult and marginalized life that many of us get. In the haze of fundamentalism, people stop thinking about their actions.

Nations are slowly driven towards serious racial profiling and discrimination. The atrocity against the marginalized is on the rise. They do not have a voice and people enjoy stamping and walking over the weak and powerless. There are too many religious sanctions nowadays and many of them are atrocious.
People are also to blame for their plight. Their ignorance is used as a weapon by the learned few who drive the masses in their own shallow pursuit. There is no place in the world today that is untouched by religious fanaticism and discontent. And surprisingly things gain momentum with the slightest instigation that otherwise might be ignored and left to automatically die down. The larger concern is an act of intolerance in one part of the world translates into many related incidents in other countries. It is extremely difficult to predict how an incident will play out elsewhere and when. This is creating all sorts of uncertainty in people's lives.

I do not think any God of any religion or faith is deriving pleasure in what damaging acts man is committing. It is our perverted minds that distort religious texts to suit our anti-social needs and wants. We are convincing ourselves that this is what our God would want us to do. Who validates what God wants us to do? Who decides what the true and destined path is for us? Sadly; most of us are not educated enough to read our scriptures and religious texts in depth and use our mental faculties to analyze and understand the message. We are more prone to hearsay and third party interpretation. And this is our greatest weakness which convoluted few are feeding upon to the best of their interest and belief. It is a sad state of affairs that people with the same belief fight with each other because of the shallow knowledge they carry.
Life of Vanity

Look at the incidents in Bosnia, Serbia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Angola, India, China, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Indonesia, USA, Western and Eastern Europe, Egypt, Libya, Iran, Iraq, Syria, many countries of erstwhile USSR. We can probably list all the countries as per UN.

The conditions of healthcare, education, sanitation, water, energy, basic standard of living are all appalling in many of these countries. Each has its own dark underbelly which is seldom projected to the world except by NGOs or some Hollywood and Bollywood movies. And everywhere religious fundamentalism is rearing its ugly head and proliferating each day. Politics is also laced with religion and alliances are based on extreme selfish need and objectives. There is total disregard for life in general and deaths are considered as normal collateral damage. I am not sure how people justify such acts and live with it.

The problems of these fundamentalism and intolerance crop up due to all sorts of economic imperfections. There is a gross divergence among the global distribution of population and resources.

The issue is more acute as poor economic trends are killing jobs, trade and manufacturing businesses. With dwindling jobs and people being laid off, a huge vacuum
is getting built up. People are struggling for basic wants like food, water, medicines etc and inflation is pushing prices in an unchecked manner. The daily necessities are moving beyond the reach of common man. In this state of despair, it is very easy to sway people towards negative forces. With 10-12 hours of well-paid jobs, belly full with food and children acquiring education, I do not believe people will be inclined towards fanaticism and hate.

**Ignorance**

Another contributing force is ignorance. Average people do not understand the scriptures of their own religion let alone what others teach. Further, they do not even try to read and analyze what they say or mean. Whatever parochial knowledge that we possess is based on what our religious leaders or speakers profess or through tidbits here and there on the Internet and some magazine or newspaper articles. How many people honestly understand the real meaning of Jihad? It is probably one of the most twisted terms in the 21st century wreaking havoc in the lives of peaceful Arabs who are trying to lead a normal life working and spending time with their family. But they are all type-casted due to the acts of a selected few with vested interests. All religions are promoting peace and humanity not hatred and distrust. These distortions are man-made to suit specific cloaked needs.
Time to Think

Sadly, we are getting swayed by all kinds of unnecessary issues which do not deserve the attention that we are bestowed. I am from the Middle East. We are some of the largest consumers in the world. Why are we paying the rest of the world for our needs? Why cannot we have our own Bechtels and Schlumbergers? Our Boeings and Airbuses? Why cannot we have our own Glaxo and Novartis, our Google and Microsoft, our Prada and Gucci, our Yale, Princeton and Harvard? Why we are not focused at excelling as nations with immaculate performance in the field of engineering, arts, sciences, medicine? How many of us are nominated for Booker or Nobel prizes? Should not we be concerned about that instead of passing issues which we are blowing out of proportion? Isn't it time to look inwards at our obvious deficiencies and try to work on empowering ourselves? Maybe we should look at much smaller and younger nations like South Korea? The domination of Samsung! There are millions of instances and we can go on forever. These are issues which should stoke our sentiments. These are the concerns which should cause us to gather together, forge alliances and work harmoniously towards a larger holistic accomplishment. We should be working towards creating indigenous solutions that make us masters of our own destiny and not depend on others.
Religion of Humanity

Religion is a dominant part of our lives and it is a permanent fact. Let us work towards making it a matter of trust and faith rather than giving it a color of being contentious. Let us not distort religion to suit our needs and perceptions rather resort to it to live an honest and honorable life.

There was a fable about the old man and his sons. He gave them sticks to break individually and when he tied them together, the sticks could not be broken. That fable is most significant in today's world.

Caring & Sharing

The survival of mankind is slowly becoming a challenge and so is the rapid depletion and deterioration of the fragile environment. We have greater issues to contend with.

"None among you will believe until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."

- Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him)

Our generation and the future ones have to start working towards peaceful co-existence. We must learn to co-create and strengthen the social fabric on a sturdier ground and interests.
Harmony, dignity and respect amongst all religion is the need of the hour. Each and every man has to look beyond fueling fire of discontent and hatred and focus on more critical issues like food security, clean drinking water, woman and infant healthcare, towards economic development and tackling the issue of poverty and its ills with firmer lasting sustainable solutions like providing quality education at all levels and stable jobs.

We also must try to spend time knowing each other's religion, to understand what each religion teaches and to have meaningful discussion to dispel myths and wrong interpretations.

Our aim should be to improve the quality of life rather than leave people fighting to save their lives. It takes a lot to create life; we must learn to respect that. It takes a fraction to end a life and not much of an effort.

There has to be sanctity of life, a certain degree of inclusiveness and freedom of religion with mutual respect and accountability. People should be motivated to make their lives meaningful by making good contribution to advancement of mankind.

This world needs a religion of humanity for each and every living being not just man.
Towards One World

When you're finally up on the moon, looking back at the earth, all these differences and nationalistic traits are pretty well going to blend and you're going to get a concept that maybe this is really one world and why the hell can't we learn to live together like decent people?

- Frank Borman, a celebrated US Astronaut

The last couple of decades have made us witness a period of great renaissance of science and technology. It became a major force for accelerating social and economic change. It is called the 3rd wave of economy.

The big question, however, remains why the technology-driven modernity failed to solve the problems of hunger and poverty, of ill-health and illiteracy. Why the modern
world continues to have countries inhabited by starving millions? With each specialized research areas and micro areas are emerging newer challenges? Science and technology may have reduced our world into a global village; the sad fact, however, is that humanity continues to live in a state of perennial threat from within. Human brain is working so fast that it has answer for every material need.

It is unfortunate that science and technology has been used both for development and destruction. Major chunk of the global wealth today is spent on building defense and security measures because of persisting war threats which have divided not only countries and peoples but have greatly influenced our thought process. Today human brain is more used for destructive purposes rather than developmental purposes.

Look at what games your kids play and enjoy the most to see the shocking fact!

**The Paradox: Inclusive Happiness and Global Poverty**

The rich-poor divide is widening and the ratio is alarming. What is necessity for one is a luxury for others. The fruits of our ongoing progress have failed to touch the world's teeming millions living marginally.
THE PARADOX: INCLUSIVE HAPPPINESS AND GLOBAL POVERTY

Gallup, The American Institute of Public Opinion, conducted a study to find out which country had the happiest citizens. The revelations only added credence to the fact that possession of wealth is not all about happiness. The study discovered that citizens of the poorest countries were the happiest. The list of the happiest countries was topped by El Salvador, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Should we be satisfied with the fact that the poor is happier than the rich. They are happy because the realms of their world are very small. Information and communication age eludes them. Development and change has not touched their lives.

The study amply proves that happiness is not an event. It is a state of mind. And I must say that happiness has no correlation with richness. The celebrated nineteenth century English novelist, poet, playwright and politician Edward Bulwer-Lytton described it best: Happiness and virtue rest upon each other; the best are not only the happiest but the happiest are usually the best.

World Wealth Report says that the top 1 percent alone own 46 percent of all global assets. The paradoxical scenario does prevail.

During my service as a volunteer when I was the General Manager in Sharjah Charity International, I have seen
more smiles on faces of those who are economically weaker than on the faces of those branded as the rich and the powerful.

Let us face some facts. Of the 7 billion people living in this planet, about 900 million – one in eight – do not have enough to eat. The situation in some underdeveloped countries is worst.

**Where Does the Answer Lie?**

Now the pertinent question comes to the mind as to: *why then everyone of us is relentlessly engaged in amassing more and more wealth even while we all are engaged in pursuit of happiness and peace? Why do we all have to be like Oliver Twist who wanted more and more?* In my opinion, the answer is very straight and simple. It is due to a feeling of extreme insecurity.

Are we so insecure that we want more and more wealth to secure ourselves? Are we really living in an age of blatant insecurity? Can more wealth secure us? Can more wealth make us live happily? But poor people are known to be better secured and living happily. So where are the fault lines?
The Onslaught of Modernity

We all are born equal. In our quest to explore more and more, we started heading towards progress and explored avenues for our comfort. The age of inventions and discoveries soon dawned on us. We started amassing material wealth in our race to be better than the other. We started making boundaries and then making efforts to secure these. Advancement came our way and freely touched our lives from everywhere. Continuous advancement in science and technology changed the way we live and behave. The impact of technology or say, advancement, was so great that we became slaves of the technology. The process of transition is continuing. The advancement did offer us more opportunities and opened more doors for us to work and prosper. But it took toll on human values and culture we were once so proud of.

The Looming Insecurity

Insecurity started looming as we started waging wars to secure our borders. Ethnic strife too became an order of the day. We started spending our wealth on armaments for our defense. Fighting cadres were raised at huge costs. Militaries ruled the roost at many places. Soon the age of nuclear armaments dawned threatening our very existence.
Two World Wars changed the very concept of peaceful living. People died in millions. Civilian population was targeted for military purposes. The atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki which killed over 150,000 people is an shameful example. The recent conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan took a tremendous toll on the people of these countries resulting in the killings of hundreds of thousands of civilians alone. In Syria itself over 200,000 were killed and sadly to say most of them were children and women.

Our best efforts to bring peace in the world failed. As a peace keeping measure, United Nations was born in the aftermath of Second World War to "save successive generations from the two scourges of war which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind". Millions have since died post the establishment of the UN.

The Universal Message and Prayer, 'May Peace Prevail on Earth', was conceived 'in a moment of great inspiration' by Masahisa Goi of Japan. The message may have greatly influenced lives of global citizens everywhere but the threat of wars looms large. Peace is yet far and the dream of One World seems to be far cry. However, our quest for building a world which is free of fears and where people co-exist peacefully and with dignity continues.
VICTORS AND VICTIMS

No generation ever was as vulnerable as it is today. The present generation is passing through the hardest times of our life. There is so much bad news. Terror and strife is the order of day.

Victors and Victims

The question to ponder over is wherefrom the threat comes? We ourselves are the offenders (attackers) and we ourselves are the victims. When wars take place, no one becomes the victors as we humans become the victims.

Where have we gone wrong? The cult of mindless competition, our quest for supremacy, lack of respect for others is the basic reasons for our faltering.

Literacy, Education and Knowledge

Today the stress is on gaining literacy, not education and knowledge. Literacy can be achieved by working hard on books and papers. Whereas education is a long learning process and takes its own time. No wonder, most of us may be literate, not necessarily educated.

During my long working career, I may have come across thousands of people, of all shades and hues, literate and illiterate, rich and poor so to say. Not surprisingly, I found all the literate not knowledgeable and all the knowledgeable not literate. Knowledge is not a learning
process like getting through in examinations. Knowledge is a long process of vision, experience and mind. You don't have to pass umpteen examinations and surpass academic standards to become a knowledgeable being.

We are living in an age where modern education equips us to win ways to earn material wealth. Learning to live with morals and dignity seems to be out of agenda of the modern education system.

Never in the past are discussed 'values' in such seriousness as we do today. Are values more relevant today? We comfortably ask ourselves. The answer is yes. With changing global urban environment and progress taking place on every front, the most sacrificing factor is degradation in values held so close by our ancestors. Do we mean that the progress has taken its toll on our values? We have, sadly enough, failed to strike an even balance between advancement and values.

True education should essentially influence our thoughts, our emotions and our actions. The great Indian spiritualist and philosopher Swami Vivekanand once said that “education is not the amount of information that is put into the brain running riot there, but it is the assimilation of ideas.” He also said that education should give us character that would make us flower into the best of humans – full of love, self-confidence, self-service, self-reliance, fearlessness, compassion and a spirit of service.
Today, we are all going through our tryst with advancement and progress. But it is material progress. We are only wrapping a layer of modernity on our originality. It is a temporary phase. We are nearing its saturating point. That is why even the advanced Western world has started realizing the importance of values in education and the way of life that spills with ethics and culture.

**The Powerless Poor**

We must keep in mind that the poor of the world are also powerless. That is why today we are talking of empowerment. What a paradox? The majority of the millions are powerless and the minority is powerful. The big question is: *why a miniscule percentage of people should influence the lives of the formidable majority?* Most of might feel powerless to help people mired in poverty conditions.

The problems seem too big. Our perspective: We can't change the whole world at once, but together, we can transform one village at a time. The trouble we see so much of in the world today is not so much a clash of religions, but a clash of individual egos of people who associate their bodily identity and cause with their religion.
We must give rise to technology that meets the basic human needs and be closer to people. We must create an environment where exists a cohesive relationship between tradition and technology. It must work to narrow the gap between haves and have-nots. Then only we can create a just and harmonious society and build a world of hope, faith and fortitude.

We have to act now. We must bear in mind that our generations to come will not forgive us if we fail to build a world of peace and prosperity where hope, not hatred, flourishes.
Final Thoughts

The hardest decisions in life are not between good and bad or right and wrong, but between two goods or two rights.

-Joe Andrew

Aptly said! Our minds are generally so conditioned that we tend to distinguish between what is apparently good and what is apparently bad, but it is the grey areas of a number of right choices or wrong choices that offer real challenge. Such situations, which require one to use discretion and there can be multiple choices and each choice has a number of options with varying degrees of pros and cons.
This is truer in case of economic development, which is an evolving situation and falling in the domain of economics, where, as the general impression goes, there are seven opinions from six different people. But then, the sustainability is the latest culmination of economic development.

We need to view the latest - the Fourth Wave of Economy - in the context of urgent and important need of sustainability which should fit into our vision of the future for the good of our generations to come. There could be some disagreement in some quarters, but it could be based on lack of vision, now that we have realized how important the sustainability for the future growth and development is.

We need true leaders who can use both their mind and heart to change the world with breakthrough ideas that lead to a better tomorrow. As Walt Disney said: “Get a good idea and stay with it. dog it, and work at it until it's done, and done right.” It's about sustainable leadership, which knows how much of the future can be introduced into the present.

It might appear to some that sustainability could be a good idea, but not necessarily practical or workable. But if you 'with it, dog it and work at it until it is done', it should be possible to adopt sustainability. While everyone knows that Federal Express is one of the truly great business
success stories of our era. Its founder, Fred Smith, received a 'C' in his economics class for the paper which outlined the idea for an overnight delivery service. His professor said it was okay but it wouldn't work. Great leaders believe in themselves and their dream, even when others say it cannot be done. They have the self-confidence and the vision to make it a reality. And they don't give up.

However, there is another pre-condition for anything to be successful i.e. synchronization of both head and heart to provide the basis of self-confidence and vision and the steadfastness of both these forces, which could ultimately lead to success.

The challenging fact is that the modern education is sharpening the brain, but we are neglecting the heart. Education of the heart is very important to our continued development as a human being to have sustainable tomorrow. There lies the crux to perpetuate the process of development without which our very survival becomes at stake.

Are we committed? And in what measure? These basic questions stare at us and only we have the answer.
About the Author

Dr. Rashid Alleem is widely known as a visionary and thought leader in business, socio-economic, academic and cultural fields. Known for his strategic thinking, he is respected by peers as a man with qualities of mind and heart. Dr. Alleem dons many hats and hones various skills and passions. Chairman of Sharjah Electricity & Water Authority (SEWA) - UAE. He served for over a decade as Director General, Department of Seaports and Customs and Sharjah Free Zones Authority. He was the driving force in transforming the zones into a strategic commerce hub empowering thousands of businesses in the region, thereby contributing to the development of the UAE economy. He has been instrumental in bringing on board over 12,000 companies from across 157 nations attracting a whopping $40 billion FDI.

An honorary visiting faculty in numerous local and international universities addressing almost 15,000 people a year, Dr. Alleem truly believes that excellence can be achieved only through sustainability by aligning commercial, social and environmental objectives.

Dr. Alleem earned a Ph.D. from the University of Salford, Manchester, UK, and received an honorary Ph.D from Atlantic International University (USA) in recognition of his achievements in the socio-economic fields. With honorary
doctorates from Somalia University for Humanitarian Services and American Global International University in the US for his global business contributions and numerous academic achievements, Dr. Alleem is an embodiment of a lifelong learning and harnessing intellectual capital.

Acclaimed for his unique leadership qualities, Dr. Alleem has been conferred with the Middle East Business Leaders Awards 2012 as a tribute to his acumen in Training & Human Capital Development. He has also been decorated with the Jewels of Muslim World Award 2012 in Jakarta in recognition of his achievements as one of the top nine movers of the Islamic economics. He was bestowed with the honour of Environmentalist of the year 2012 by the Prime Minister of Malaysia Dr. Mahathir Mohamad in recognition of his contributions towards sustainable environment. Dr. Alleem is recognized as one among the 100 UAE nationals who have contributed immensely to the ‘happiness’ of the UAE, on the eve of the United Nations’ ‘International Day of Happiness’ 2013.

In 2013, he was conferred with ‘Certificate of Knight Award’ for his outstanding contribution in the field of ‘Leadership & Development’ by International Organization for Standardisation (ISO) and also bestowed with the Arab Organisation Award for Social Responsibility from the Arab Organization for Social responsibility in recognition of his CSR initiatives. Dr. Alleem has also been decorated with the coveted ‘2013 Extraordinary Human’ Award by the United Nations-World Peace Organization, Washington, United States on the occasion of international day of people with disability.
Early 2014, Dr. Alleem was conferred with ‘Award of Excellence’ by Daimler-Mercedes Benz Germany for the efforts in protecting the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) of Mercedes Benz in the Emirates of Sharjah, UAE. Later in May, Dr. Alleem received the prestigious ‘Global Economic Development Leadership Award’ in Cochin- India.

In a rare tribute to the wisdom reflected in ‘Management in the whole of the Arab World’, Dr. Alleem was honoured with the ‘Golden Arrow Award’ on 18th Feb 2014 in Dubai. On 3rd April, 2014, he was recognized as ‘Goodwill Ambassador for Peace, Care and Relief in GCC Countries, Middle East and North Africa’ by the International Organization for Peace, Care and Relief and Member of the Economic and Social Council of The United Nations. Many people also recognized him as ‘Green Ambassador of the UAE’.

Dr. Alleem was recognized as “The Knowledge Ambassador of UAE - 2015” by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai.

Dr. Alleem was selected as one of the “Best Government CEOs 2016” in the Middle East by Middle East Excellence Awards Institute.

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