*(Draft paper to be presented at the Hanumangarh Conference, Rajasthan, India)*

# Present World Corporate System —The Root Of All Ills; Needs To Be Restructured On The Basis Of "A Nature-Human Centric Agenda"

## I-The Issue

The Hanumangarh Conference is being held at a time (27th December to 30th December 2002) when human community has been facing the most serious crisis in its existential history. The crisis is so serious that either the humankind defuses it in time or the latter turns us (that is, the humans) upside down.

Since its origin, humanity has come across innumerable crises. And it has always succeeded in overcoming them through its human rationality and practical commonsense and ingenuity. However, this time the crisis is so serious that, despite several human attempts, it (that is, the crisis) has refused even to slide down a little.

It is well known that every crisis presents a threat as well as an opportunity. Humanity had always seized upon the opportunity, countered the threat and thus overcome all crises.

The reason why humanity had been able to overcome all the past crises and to seize upon the opportunity in every crisis rests with the fact that the former (that is, humanity) had always followed the scientific formula of managing all past crises by first analysing the respective character and the cause of each one (that is, crisis). The whole human historical experience concerning every problem demonstrates that only after identifying its nature and ground, one can handle it properly.

## II-An All Embracing Environmental-Biological Crisis Characterises Our Planet Earth

Natural as well as social sciences tell that human society is based on two basic factors, that is, natural (or environmental) and human. Hence, any crisis in human society means trouble in its one fundamental or the other or even the two.

The environmental aspect includes all its components (that is, air, climatic change, water, land, forests, bio-diversity, minerals and other natural products, etc.), while the human side denotes all human matters (that is, all problems concerning a given human development model, and its politics, economics, culture and security).

All hitherto-occurring crises in human society have been concerned with either one or some environmental components or with a single or many human matters. But this time the crisis is all pervading which covers the whole range of the two basic factors of human living. This means that the crisis confronting us today has engulfed the entire set of environmental and human resources. Environmentally, the pollution of air, decreasing quantity and quality of water, soil erosion and degradation, wholesale deforestation, extinction of many living species, overuse and wastage of minerals and other natural products have been going on for decades together without any stop. In the same way, the totality of human issues has all along got degenerated. In the human domain, an anti-environmental, in-equalitarian, iniquitous, war-mongering and military solution-based development model, and its politics of corruption and criminalisation, self-focused economics centering on naked individual greed, fundamentalist cultural values marked by violent, sectarian, confrontationist and undemocratic features are proceeding with full speed.

This all-inclusive (or environ-bio) crisis is now a common phenomenon. Its sensation can now be found among one and all. On the top-level, the UN and other world institutions and 190 Nation States are continuously holding their summit meetings to chalk out a proper response to the ever-increasing challenge. On the intermediate level, all environmental groups whether international or national (including NGOs), social development thinkers and planners, human right activists, political parties, economists and cultural groups are stressing various agendas and proposals to

combat this threat. The common man is, with his continuous suffering at the hands of natural and social calamities (that is, natural troubles like drought, floods, cyclones, EI-Nino phenomena and unpredictable weather, etc. and social injustices like inequality, deprivation, diseases, human rights violations, etc.), also talking in terms of setting things right, despite his lack of awareness about the serious implications of this crisis.

The scientific community has since been highlighting the worsening state of the environmental aspect. A large number of reports have already been released by various renowned scientists on different environmental issues. Of these numerous reports, those which have calculated the timeframe in regard to the maturity of the crisis, two are particularly worth-mentioning. One is the warning sounded by 6000- famous scientists of the world in the year 2000 which emphasised that if the human community did not stop the production of Green House Gases (GHGs) in a short span of time, the global warming would make the earth uninhabitable for bio-life by the end of the 21st century. The other is the 2002-WWF study which has warned that if the human community (especially the rich nations and rich persons) does not change its extravagant and wasteful lifestyle, our planet earth will become unsustainable for human life within 50 years. Other scientific experts, who have not committed themselves to any time-table, do admit that the environmental situation is highly alarming.

On the social plane almost all the global institutions concerned with human growth, that is, the UNO, World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organisation (WTO), etc., have now been stressing the unsustainable mode of our existing development model. This development model is mainly characterised by economic inequality, inequity and injustice; political corruption and crime; degeneration of all cultural values; increasing grip of various fundamentalist approaches; rising volume of violence, confrontation, conflict and attacks on human rights and money and power as the only aim of human life.

The 2002-UN Human Development Report, expresses: the world's richest 1 percent receive as much in terms of income as the poorest 75 percent. And the average poor person in a developing country wanting to sell in global markets confronts barriers twice as high as the typical worker in an industrialised country. It is still a terribly unfair world.

Global progress on reducing poverty has slowed to a "snail's pace" and the international goal of halving the share of the world's population living on less than $1 a day by 2015 is likely to be missed.

The rich countries control over the IMF and the WB must be reduced. Suggesting an end to the veto-rights of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, it says, the poorest countries must also have a bigger voice in the WTO.

The 2001-UN Human Development Report writes: as the 21st century dawns, the challenges of human development remain large. Of the 4.6 billion people in developing countries, more than 850 million are illiterate, nearly a billion lack access to improved water sources, and 2.4 billion lack access to basic sanitation. Nearly 325 million boys and girls are out of school. And 11 million children under age five die each year from preventable causes—equivalent to more than 30,000 a day. Around 1.2 billion people live on less than (the equivalent of) $1 a day (1993 PPP US $), and 2.8 billion on less than $2 a day. Such deprivations are not limited to developing countries. In OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries, more than 130 million people are income poor, 34 million are unemployed and adult functional illiteracy rates average 15 percent.

Global inequalities in income are also high. In 1993, the poorest 10 percent of the world's people had only 1.6 percent of the income of the richest 10 percent. The income of the richest 1 percent added up to that of the poorest 57 percent. The richest 10 percent of the US population

(around 25 million people) had a combined income greater than that of the poorest 43 percent of the world's people (around 2 billion people).

The report admits that in most spheres today matters relating to technical progress—research, designs, production, propagation—are governed not by considerations of social benefits, but by calculations of profitability of economically powerful private agencies.

In 2000, Brazil had nine billionaires with a collective worth of $20 billion, India had nine worth $23 billion, Malaysia had five worth $12 billion, Mexico had 13 worth $25 billion and Saudi Arabia had five worth $41 billion.

The report noted that the worlds of finance and development are linked through the mechanisms of saving and investment. An estimated $7.5 trillion was saved or invested worldwide last year, of which $1.7 billion was invested in developing countries. But the net transfer to wealthy countries amounted to $4.50 billion, three-fourths of which was absorbed by the United States.

The foreign debts accumulated by many poorer countries, the report said, have become heavy constraints on their ability to reduce poverty and reach other development goals. While debt relief is just one of various financial assistance instruments, it is important to recognise that in some cases debt burdens represent insurmountable obstacles and need to be addressed urgently.

The unequal distribution of benefits and the imbalances in global rule-making, which characterise globalisation today, inevitably will produce backlash and protectionism.

Besides the above-mentioned UNDP Reports, the most worrying feature of the present day human community is that it is today living under an unfair and unjust social order where the powerful dominate the weak and the haves ride over the have-nots—with money, might and privilege constituting the accepted norms of justice and truth, both on the global as well as the national levels.

This fact is, firstly, obvious from the theory and the functioning of all the world bodies. For instance, the UN and its agencies are regulated by the 1945-charter which gives veto powers and permanent membership of the elective security council to the militarily most powerful 5 states of the world—that is, the US, China, Britain, France and Russia. Obviously, such a privilege based rule is totally discriminatory and unjust because it reduces the role of the remaining 180 UN members to nullity. Morally and legally, it negates the world accepted principle of political equality, the one entity-one vote norm of the universal suffrage and the human right of every nation state. When the UN has been interfering in the affairs of different states on the basis of human rights violations, why should not it restructure itself on a rational basis in order to make itself relevant to the new era?

Secondly, the same irrational and undemocratic style prevails in the two international financial institutions—the IMF and the WB—in which the economic weightage determines the voting strength of each member. Thus, these institutions are definitely governed by the financially developed countries, especially the US having 26 percent of the total voting strength.

Thirdly, the newly created unjust CTBT regime gives virtual nuclear weapons monopoly to the five big nuclear powers—thus making them the invincible overlords of the world.

Fourthly, a handful of the developed countries, with hardly 15 percent of the world population, today control over 80 percent of the world's material and financial resources, leaving less than 20 percent for 85 percent of the world people, living in over 130 developing countries.

Fifthly, one-half of the world population, constituting the female part of the human community, continues to be the victim of ill-treatment and misbehavior the world over.

Sixthly, the national situation in every country is not much different from the prevailing global order. Despite variations among the 190-plus countries due to their different physical settings, historical backgrounds and socio-economic conditions, there is a great deal of similarity in

the quality of social life, especially among the developing countries. For instance, the political process in almost every country (whether developed or developing) remains dominated by money power which, in case of the developing countries, is also compounded by muscle power and primordial norms. The economic process in general operates through cut-throat competition, speculation and black money. The unscrupulous norms constitute the common behavioural forms everywhere.

Seventhly, in almost every country, a few are more privileged than the overwhelming majority. Everywhere, the legislators enjoy certain immunity from common laws under the law providing special parliamentary privileges. In the developing countries, the ruling groups often abuse the law with impunity. Nowhere in the world is the judiciary accountable to the people. Instead, the universally prevailing contempt of courts law empowers it to silence every critic. The official secrets law, existing in nearly all countries, authorises the bureaucracy to cover up all deals and thus ride roughshod over the people. The law enforcement agencies enjoy wide-ranging powers the world over. In the 3rd world, they behave as law unto themselves. Everywhere the law favours the rich and the law-breakers and is biased against the poor and the deprived.

Eighthly, the US today stands as the unchallenged policeman of the world. After its single-handed military success in Afghanistan, it has become more unilateralist and belligerent. Now, it has declared a perpetual war against its alleged terrorism, so far defined neither by the UN nor some other UN member. The first targets of its offensive include its so-called "rogue states"—Iraq, Iran, North Korea, etc.—which are UN members and cannot by any logic be characterised as terrorists. There is worldwide disapproval, including that from China, Russia and EC, of the newly declared US offensive plan. But the US has so far not relented on the launching of its new war project.

Ninthly, the US-led world corporate sector is in a serious trouble. Corporate profits are falling. Many top corporate companies, especially in the US, have been found involved in big frauds and scandals. The corporate claim of its being a social institution of wealth creation and of prosperity and progress generation has got exposed.

Tenthly, the corporate-based global development process is facing an unheard of crisis, posing a very serious challenge to mankind. Rich/poor divide is increasing at on unprecedented scale. Poverty and unemployment are spreading fast. Military budgets—a drain on sustainable development—are sharply rising, while spendings on social development are declining. Area of corruption, crime, violence and suicides in the world is vastly expanding, taking political and economic spheres and their executives in its fold. Human rights violations, discrimination against minorities and other weaker sections and atrocities against women are on the increase. Ethnic tensions are heightening. Various types of fundamentalist concepts, both new and old, are misleading and dividing the people.

Today, we are in a world where unscrupulous politics, black money and "yes sir" conduct have been the most profitable professions, signifying the parameters of the prevailing unfair order.

All the afore-mentioned serious challenges and dangerous threats reflect disharmonies within human society and between the latter and the nature. Essentially, they indicate the imbalanced state of the human community.

The above-stated facts put a heavy responsibility on the shoulders of all humans to deepen their understanding of the fatal implications of the ongoing crisis, try to find out its real cause and do everything in their power to answer it with a realistic agenda.

## III-Cause Of Enviro-Biological Crisis Rests With World Corporate System

There is near unanimity in the world (comprising the UN, WB, IMF, WTO, etc., Nation States, Natural and Social scientists, thinkers and planners) that the ongoing global crisis is the

outcome of the human activity. Even the most diehard critic of the idea of the fatal nature of the present crisis, the serving US President, George Bush, has now publicly admitted this fact. But none of the above-said prestigious entities has defined the concept of public activity. Neither the World Summits—that is, 1972-Stockholm World Conference on Environment and evelopment, 1992-Rio UN Summit and 2002 Johannesburg UN Summit on Sustainable Development—has touched this question. While adopting the agenda of sustainable development, they have made only a passing reference to the unsustainable human ways and lifestyle, but shirked to pinpoint the specific structural form in which humanity, in given conditions, operates in various modes, shapes or appearances. Obviously, all the above-mentioned chief social actors have left this essential point quite vague by putting an equal blame on every human? According to this high flown theory, every human is a polluter but everyone knows this fact that the responsibility of producing pollution rests with those who own pollutant producing factories or means and not the workers engaged in those enterprises.

Historical experience shows that humankind, its lifestyle or way of life or any other activity has always existed in an organised social form, that is, society. Clan, tribe, feudal monarchy and industrial social forms have been various types of societies in human history. Each social form is distinguished by its social system (comprising constitutional and legal principles), which forms the bed-rock or the distinguishing feature of that society.

Today, human community is living within a global corporate system, operating through a multiple organisation of nation states. All of them follow the same corporate principles in their thinking, functioning and organisation. The only difference between them pertains to their respective variations in territorial and population sizes. On the social level, they follow the same ideology, politics, economics, culture and security mode. There is no human activity, lifestyle or way of life independent of or apart from the concerned social system.

Going by the above facts, it can be said that the existing corporate system constitutes the basis of the present furious crisis now shaking the world. The faults of this basis require to be properly studied in all the four dimensions of this system—that is, sociological concepts, systemic principles, operational norms and historical experience.

## Sociological Fault

The fundamental sociological fault lies in the one-sided philosophical understanding of the Adam Smithean and the Marxian Development Models (both of which have functioned as two standard development models of the ongoing, but now retreating, nation-state system in various parts of the world). This one-sided understanding is that Man constitutes the supreme phenomenon in the system of nature on our planet and even in the universe. Obviously, it projects people as the sole builder of human society and every thing in it, disregarding the social truth that the change and development in human society takes place due to a 2-sided inter-action—that between nature and society, on the one hand, and within human society itself, on the other.

The second fundamental sociological mistake arises from the one-sided understanding of the Adam Smithen and the Marxian development models about the human nature. The Adam Smithean economic model holds that humankind is selfish by nature. The Marxian economic theory takes a confusing stand on the question of human nature. Firstly, it emphasises that mankind is social by nature. The next moment it transfers the quality of being absolutely social to the industrial proletariat (who is, according to it, destined to be the liberator of humankind). And, finally, it passes the entire monopoly of social characteristic on to the communist party which alone, in its view, has the capacity to bring a social transformation in human society.

In reality, however, humankind bears a 2-sided character: biological, on the one hand, and social, on the other. The biological aspect reflects the individual existence of mankind, while the social side denotes its social living, functioning and organising.

## Systemic Flaw

The basic systemic flaw emerges from the corporate system's aim which sorts out profitmaximisation or attaining the highest growth rate as the sole aim of its development model. Both the Liberal and the Marxian versions accept the growth rate as the single criterion of judging social prosperity and progress. In their search for achieving the highest growth rates, both have been running havoc with the environmental and the human development factors.

The second, but a highly damaging, systemic flaw lies in the universal acceptance of the rule of monetary growth as the sole standard of measuring social prosperity and progress. The projection of money as the defining feature of social advancement has highly ignited the human ambition of money-making which has, as is obvious from the facts today, become the main motivational factor of near about every human being, determining his perspective, mindset, aim, priority and means and forms.

Since the attainment of money and power represents the maximisation of one's (or self) interest, the whole world is now chasing after these two "life-extending elixirs". The money and powerhunting business (by bringing in the most unsustainable environmental order and a highly unjust and inequitable human system) has now led the world to the brink of a serious environmental and human disaster.

In fact, self-interest is the basic instinct of the animal sphere, while man has, since his evolution as homo-sapien, become bio-social by nature. The characteristic of being half-social is the only quality that distinguishes human species from the animal ones. When man becomes devoid of social aspect, he turns out just like an animal in his lifestyle.

## Operational Defect

The principal operational defect is related to corporate system's operational agency or the government.

Oriented solely by self-perpetuation, the leaders of the national govts (based on the party system in every country) are mainly concerned with the amassing of their own wealth and the holding of an ever-lasting power, by fair means or foul, with no consideration to the mass interests or any enviro-bio issue. Their pet lifestyle is "to say one thing, but do the other". They always shed tears for the poor and the deprived, but at all times serve the rich and the dominant.

From the foregoing facts, it is apparent that unless the present corporate system and its development paradigm is restructured (or updated) on a sustainable, just and equitable model, there is not much possibility of giving an effective response to the highly dangerous social challenge of inequality and poverty.

## Historical Experience Of The World Corporate System

How the world corporate system constitute the root of present enviro-bio crisis can be seen from its 200 year old past and present history (which began with the industrial revolution, passed through various phases of development—industrial, competitive, colonial, post-colonial—and now has entered the global phase).

Firstly, it (that is, corporate history) shows the unsustainable working of the corporate development model—thus misusing and wasting the environmental resources, on the one hand, and inhumanly treating the human resources, on the other. This has today resulted in the depletion of

environmental resources and the impoverishment of human resources—thus causing the deadly eco-bio crisis on our planet.

Secondly, it brings forth its sociology of self-interest as the motive force in human society. This has generated the motivation of selfishness all around—thus maximising the tendency of personal greed and gain and negating the other human instinct of social interests.

Thirdly, it displays its politics of "might is right" as the only social principle of maintaining stability, security and order in society at all times and places. Thus, it conditions the mindset of power-seeking at all costs, by means foul or fair, thus leading to the criminalisation of the political process. Further, the politics of "might is right" boosts confrontationist, quarrelsome and warmongering attitude among individuals as well as in society.

It creates a social environment of the domination of powerful over the weak—thus preparing the ground for the establishment of its world hegemony.

Fourthly, it projects its basic economic principle of profit optimisation as the only determinant of social development, thus disregarding all social interests and concerns, including those relating to environment, social justice, fairness, equality, generosity, etc. Further, the sole objective of profit optimisation, combined with the sociological principle of self-interest, has set in motion the race for money-making all over the world, mainly through corrupt and depraved means. The role of corporate sector in the money-laundering business can be seen from the recent cases of corporate frauds and scandals in the world's top-most multinational corporations (MNCs), especially the US-based.

Fifthly, it approves of all double-dealing values (like "saying one thing and doing another"), justifying them in the name of market rules and exigencies of power-structure.

Sixthly, it makes use of all sorts of fundamentalist concepts and techniques which while contributing in strengthening its economic and political objectives, divide the people on sectarian and extremist lines.

Lastly, but more importantly, the corporate based sustainable development model undermines the multilateral process of sustainable development, provides a handle to the corporations to manipulate and exploit the world environmental and human resources—thus carrying the eco-bio crisis to a dangerous point.

## IV-A Realistic Response To The Environ-Bio Crisis Lies In Restructuring It On The Basis Of A Nature-Human Centric Agenda

Given the world corporate system as the cause of the current environ-bio crisis, a realistic response to the latter (that is, the crisis) is, and can be, to restructure (or update) the world corporate system on the basis of A Nature-Human Centric Agenda, comprising the following points.

**Vision:** The nature of our planet and the 21st century's social reality of inter-dependence of nation-states provide the nature-human centric paradigm the vision of one world while the 1945-UN charter gives one the vision of sovereign and independent nations, a vision contrary to the existing reality.

**Fundamental Principle:** The fundamental principle of the above-mentioned vision should, firstly, be to put the people and the environment at the centre of global activity (that is, to serve the peoples interests, on the one hand, and to take care of the environmental conservation, on the other).

**Global Order:** The fundamental principle of Nature-Human Centric vision and its enviro-human priority demands that the UN be restructured on a democratic basis, style and organisation. But the UN, as it stands today, lacks this quality. The UN general assembly's structure and functioning is quite democratic. But its top decision-making body, that is, the security council, is

characterised by highly unfair and totally undemocratic norms, that is, the permanent membership for the militarily most strong five nations and their special veto-rights.

Obviously, any attempt to fully democratise this body would, at this moment, encounter stiff resistance from the 5-member privileged club. So, taking into account the existing global power structure, it seems that the full democratisation of the security council will take some more time. For the time being, the rule of special veto-powers should be done away with, while retaining the norm of permanent membership till the change in the on-going balance of power. All other seats in the security council should be filled through election by the general assembly.

The rich countries control over IMF and WB be reduced and the poorest countries be provided more voice in the WTO.

**Development Model:** The fundamental principle of people-environment priority (which is imperative for human development) demands a new type of development model that stands for a fivefold fundamental principle, that is, environmental sustainability, equity (with 1:5 difference in incomes), productivity, democracy and transparency. This five-fold fundamental principle corresponds with the bio-social nature of humankind, that is, it co-ordinates the man's self-interest with his social interest.

The people-environment based development model represents the updated concept of development in contrast to the two traditional national development models, that is, the corporate-led and the government-directed. While the corporate-led development model singles out profitability or productivity (which ensures the interests of money-owners alone) as its sole aim, the govt-directed one opts for socialisation (or the nationalisation) of the means of production as its only goal (which serves the interests of the ruling politicians and bureaucrats). Both these traditional national models serve only the self-interest of humankind contrary to his bio-social character that is, comprising both the self-interest and the social interest. Again, they do not accord any priority to environment and any place to the upholding of democratic and transparent norms in the economic or growth process. Further, while the corporate model totally rejects the principle of equity (or social justice), the govt-directed one fully ignores that of political equity and productivity.

This model differs with both the corporate-led and the state-based development models on the issues of their purpose, management and style.

While the corporate model stands for developing the capital and capital owners and the state model advances the interests of its ruling politicians and bureaucrats plus the labour aristocracy, the Nature-Human Centric one serves the interests of people and environment in general, and the poor and deprived sections in particular.

In management, while the corporate sector upholds the monopoly corporate management and control and the state sector supports the monopoly bureaucratic management and control, the Nature-Human Centric development model stands for democratic management and control of public limited companies by elected joint committees, each comprising two-third elected members from ordinary share-holders, and one-third elected workers representatives in place of permanent corporators.

In style, contrary to the authoritarian and secretive corporate and state style, the Nature-Human Centric development model stands for democratic, transparent and accountable style.

**Global Peace And Security:** A Nature-Human Centric development model, first of all, needs a stable and durable peace and security. To establish such a peace, it is necessary that the politics of domination, privilege and special powers be discarded, mode of confrontation and military solution be ended by total disarmament and vesting the full control of nuclear weapons in

the UN, political, economic and cultural inequalities be ended and the development gap between the developed and the developing countries and that between rich and poor be removed.

**Politics:** Nature-Human Centric politics requires a politics that is based on fully democratic principles, functioning and structure. Such a politics necessitates the ending of the rule of special veto-powers in the UN system and the introducing of the principle ensuring the maximum-possible empowerment of the people in decision-making corresponding to the necessary dilution of the party centralised power.

**Economics:** Nature-Human Centric economics demands a rational and realistic economics whose concepts, laws and rules are required to be framed in the light of former's 2 top priorities (that is, humankind and environment) and 5 principles (that is, environmental sustainability, equity, productivity, democracy and transparency). In view of human's bio-social nature, both Adam Smith's basic economic principle of "self-interest" and Marxian basic economic rule of state nationalisation of everything are one-sided in view of human's bio-social nature. But, ironically, both measure development, prosperity and progress in terms of monetary growth and not in the context of human and environmental development.

**Value System:** Nature-Human Centric value system calls for a way of life (or lifestyle) that is embedded in basic human and environmental values and promotes rational humanist and environmentalist thinking, behaviour and organisation among the people.

**Approach:** Nature-Human Centric approach should stand for scientific realism which studies and interprets natural phenomena in the light of scientific facts and social objects on the basis of authentic information and data.

The above agenda will enable us not only to face the challenges created by the corporate mismanagement to the environmental and human resources, but also provide us the way to make their judicious use in future.

## V-India's Unsustainable Social Order Needs To Be Restructured On Nature-Human friendly basis

As India proceeds ahead in the first decade of the 21st century, the mass mood remains as usual marked by despondency and despair. Obviously, such a mood is always an outcome of peoples perception of an uncertain future which (that is, perception about future) evolves out of the disorderly state of ongoing matters.

### A Topsy-Turvy State of India's Ongoing Matters

This is, firstly, obvious from the mismanagement of the day to day mass problems (or infrastructural facilities)—decreasing quality and quantity of drinking water in the rural and urban areas; horrible picture of sanitation in towns and villages; power cuts and its irregular supply and some times even non-availability; dilapidated condition of roads, traffic jams, late running of trains and even air services; deterioration of education which inculcates the sole motivation of self-seeking, moneymaking and power-grabbing, rising costs of health services making them non-available to poor and deprived, poor working of telecommunications and postal services, spoiling of peoples health by daily rising pollution, insanitation, food adulteration, sub-standard drugs, illicit liquor, etc.

Secondly, it is visible from the all-pervading corruption in every walk of life, that is, obtaining of a ration card or a gas facility, getting of water, electricity or telephone connection, admission to hospitals, schools, colleges and professional institutions, hiring of a shop or a house, reservation in railways, purchasing of a ticket for any significant debate, exhibition, test match, picture, music, or dancing show, etc., can only become possible by paying an illegal (or black)

price. Sub-standard goods, short-weight and overpricing go on unchecked. Bogus employment exchanges, false universities, forged currency dealers, hawala firms and fake passport and visa agencies, chit fund companies, etc., continue unhindered. Tax-evasion, money-laundering, smuggling, drug-trafficking, manipulation of foreign trade, transfer of black-money to foreign banks, bank frauds, securities scams, stock market racketeering, arms, heroine and gold smuggling and infiltration on the border and at the airports with the connivance of security personnel, etc., thrive quite at ease.

Corruption has become the general way of India's governance. Nothing moves in the country without illegal gratification.

Thirdly, corruption is also evident from the black money generation in Indian economy. It constitutes nearly 60 percent of the GDP and is concentrated in the hands of about 3 percent of India's population it imposes a very heavy burden on the Indian people by sapping their purchasing power.

Fourthly, India's human development record shows a massive level of deprivation and a subhuman level of living. Complied on the basis of data released by WB, UNDP and Indian government, the state of human development emerges as follows: 62 percent of the people come under the category of poor. Nearly 40 percent live in absolute poverty. 40 percent have no access to basic health facilities. 75 percent have no proper lavatory arrangements. 10 percent live in urban slums. 48 percent are totally illiterate. 5 percent are unemployed and 33 percent under-employed. 33 percent have no houses of their own. 10 percent are invalids. About 12 percent are landless, constituting the poorest strata. Over 53 percent children are denied the right to basic and quality education. Nearly 75 percent women suffer some form of oppression.

Fifthly, India's environmental performance, as per the UNDP Report (1999), reflects a disgusting position. According to it, India may be paying a very heavy price for its developmental process which is bringing in its wake ecological devastation and numerous health problems.

A conservative estimate of environmental damage puts the figure at more than $10 billion a year or 45 percent of the GDP in 1992. If higher estimates are used, the Indian development model is causing a loss of $13.8 billion or 6 percent of the GDP.

The above report further adds that the urban air pollution costs India $1.3 billion a year, while water degradation leads to health costs amounting to $5.7 billion every year, nearly three-fifth of the country's total environmental damage.

According to Indian official figures, out of a total of 143 million hectares of cultivable land, nearly 60 percent suffers from soil erosion, water-logging and salinity. Another 16 million hectares is afflicted with ravines and rivulets.

Sixthly, India's economic working is so poor that, despite having the one-sixth of world population, it is, on the basis of its inadequate performance, considered to be one of the least developed countries by all the international bodies and the developed countries.

Seventhly, India's political process aims at moneymaking and power-seizing as the only goal of human life. This goal is to be attained and retained at all costs, whether by hook or crook. All Indian political entities—that is, political parties, executive and legislature—faithfully adhere to this goal in their respective decision-making processes and action plans. While all unfair means are adopted to achieve this goal, corruption, double-dealing (that is, saying one thing and doing another) and muscle-- power (organised into mafias) count a lot.

Eighthly, India's systemic norms of behaviour, deriving their inspiration from corporate culture, emphasise money and power as the basic inputs of decision-making and promote manipulatory ways to achieve these inputs.

Ninthly, India's diplomacy and defence, while waving the flag of Gandhian non-violence, has always followed the politics of gun in its external matters. The gun approach has logically adopted militarisation and domination as its main themes. This is obvious from the fact of defence having been the country's top priority during the last five decades.

Tenthly, India's administration of justice is based on antiquated laws which help the haves and disfavour the have-nots. The first condition for a proper administration of justice is that it should be guided by socially just and relevant laws. But the Indian legislation lacks this quality, having been riddled with loopholes. This has provided favourable occasions to those unworthy elements who had been able to sneak into the ranks of judiciary and police for bending the law according to their convenience. It has also enabled the offenders and their counsellors to exploit the loopholes in their favour—thus tinkering with the process of justice.

Besides defective legislation, thousands of obsolete and archaic laws have created a jungle of rules, regulations and procedures. As many as 1,300 outdated laws out of a total of 2,500 central laws and nearly 15,000 useless laws out of a total of 25,000 state laws have been the source of corruption in the central and the state government offices—thus causing trouble in the disposal of public business

The tardy judicial process of imparting justice with a backing of three crore cases pending before the courts is another form of the denial of justice to the people.

The citizens access to law remains restricted due to the enormous costs involved in the lengthy process of justice in which the endless series of appeals tire out the contenders, particularly the victims.

The problem of defective legislation, delayed justice and high costs involved in the process of seeking justice is as old as independent India. Various commissions and committees have made a number of recommendations as remedial measures. But the problem has only aggravated.

**Why Matters Have Gone Wrong**

The first reason lies in the misconceived version of Indian nationalism which stands for majoritarian nationalism at home and hegemonism abroad.

The second reason rests with India's centralised and unaccountable social system.

The third reason resides in India's corporate-based development paradigm which favours the rich and shuns the poor and deprived.

The fourth reason is located in the money and power-oriented motivation of political parties as well as people.

The fifth reason is contained in the unscrupulous lifestyle of politicians who file false returns of their election expenses, enter into shady deals with the mafia dons, rouse religious and caste sentiments to achieve their ends, make false promises with the people, follow the politics of Aya Ram, Gaya Ram and say one thing today and another tomorrow.

The sixth reason exists in India's communal and casteist policies which divide the people in the name of religion and caste.

The seventh reason is based on India's politics of gun which generates quarrels all around.

The eighth reason is found in India's perpetual confrontation with Pakistan, particularly on the question of Jammu & Kashmir state.

The ninth reason is connected with fundamentalism of various hues—Hindutva, casteism, free market ideology, class-based revolutionary theory, etc.

**Managing Matters Realistically**

The problem of the realistic managing of matters requires the restructuring of India's corporate system on Nature-Human friendly basis. This involves the taking of following measures.

Adoption of a new vision of nationalism, based on the present fundamental social reality of the inter-dependence of nations by discarding all classical national visions—i.e, Gandhism, Hindutva or Mandalism, etc. The first two of which are religion-oriented and the third one caste-based.

Recognition of people and environment as the two top priorities of national agenda.

Upholding of global peace and discarding of the politics of superpowerism and confrontation in all matters. Resolving of all conflicts through peaceful means by reconciling the interests of parties concerned, defusing of regional tension-points, proceeding towards complete disarmament, vesting the control of nuclear weapons in the UN, doing away with the special (or veto) rights of a few countries in the international bodies, establishing of the relations of equality among different countries and step by step ending of the wide developmental gap between the developed and the developing countries.

Resolving of Jammu & Kashmir problem by a tripartite settlement (between India, Pakistan and Jammu & Kashmir people) which entrusts the management of Jammu & Kashmir state's defence and foreign affairs to an Indo-Pak (or SAARC) condominium, ensures an independent status (minus defence and foreign affairs) to Jammu & Kashmir and the maximum possible autonomy to each ethnic region in that state. Similarly, other tension-points among the SAARC countries be resolved either bilaterally or through SAARC mechanism.

To establish a peoples-based political system in India by taking the following steps. To organise India on a federal-confederal basis—giving a federal status to the states and a special status to Punjab. This will help in resolving ethnic, communal, casteist and lingual tensions in India. All the existing conflicts—whether peaceful or non-peaceful—to be resolved through dialogue. All institutions to be fully democratised. The rule of law to be upheld and exercised through the empowerment of the people which will, step by step, be developed from the village to the central level. People to have the right to information and also the right to call for a plebiscite on any national or state issue. The interpretation of the law to be vested in the judiciary.

Any controversy between the judiciary and the legislature on any law to be decided through a plebiscite. All laws giving special rights or privileges to a group of people or individual (whatever his status), except those meant for weaker and deprived sections, to be abrogated. All social and economic disparities to be ended. Elections at all levels to be state-funded, free from black money and muscle-power.

The aim of development to be peoples friendly and environment friendly. That is, to promote peoples interests, on the one hand, and to protect environment, on the other. To involve the people, especially the women, in the work of population control and environmental conservation. This development model stands for a five-fold fundamental principle, that is, environmental sustainability, equity (with 1:5 difference in incomes), productivity, democracy and transparency. This five-fold fundamental principle corresponds with the bio-social nature of humankind, that is, it co-ordinates the man's self-interest with his social interest.

The people-environment based development model represents the updated concept of development in contrast to the two traditional national development models, that is, the corporate-led and the government-directed. While the corporate-led development model singles out profitability or productivity (which ensures the interests of money-owners alone) as its sole aim, the government directed one opts for socialisation (or the nationalisation) of the means of production as its only goal (which mainly serves the interests of the ruling politicians and bureaucrats). Both these

traditional national models serve only the self-interest of humankind contrary to his bio-social character, that is, comprising both the self-interest and the social interest. Again, they do not accord any priority to environment and any place to the upholding of democratic and transparent norms in the economic or growth process. Further, while the corporate model totally rejects the principle of equity (or social justice), the government-directed one fully ignores that of political equity and productivity.

This model differs with both the corporate-led and the state-based development models on the issues of their purpose, management and style.

While the corporate model stands for developing the capital and capital owners and the state model advances the interests of its ruling politicians and bureaucrats plus the labour aristocracy, the Nature-Human Centric one serves the interests of people and environment, in general, and the poor and deprived sections, in particular.

Nature-Human Centric value system calls for a way of life (or lifestyle) that is embedded in basic human and environmental values and promotes rational humanist and environmentalist thinking, behaviour and organisation among the people.

To adopt a foreign-cum-defence policy, based on peace, co-operation and friendship with every country in the world. To organise the regional defence in South Asia and reduce the defence expenditure by 50 percent after the resolution of Jammu-Kashmir problem.

**VI- Every Basic Social Change Demands Peoples Movement Based on Mass Awareness & Involvement.**

The above title has been aptly summed up in an old saying that "the people get the government they deserve". Both history and sociology demonstrate that no change can be brought about or any social justice or fairness be attained anywhere through any constitution, institution, party or leader if the concerned people remain unaware of the need for such a change. Thus, the only route to solve any social problem rests with a given level of public awareness where it develops the public mindset for action and organisation.

To raise the mass awareness to the desired level, two things are most essential for campaigners, that is, (a) to have sufficient understanding of their nature-human friendly agenda (enabling one to deal with any question) and (b) to have enough knowledge about the social consciousness, specific problems, political affiliations, cultural values and the prevailing mood of our given public audience, targeted social group or individual.

Here, it is necessary to firmly keep in mind that the present level of mass consciousness adopts, in general, a three-sided wrong criteria for deciding social right and wrong—that is, money, power and might (the three-dimensional main corporate objective). In this respect, our main task is to refute this half-truth by contrasting it with the five-fold realistic principle of nature-human friendly agenda, viz., environmental sustainability, equity (with 1:5 differences in incomes), productivity, democracy and transparency.

But, this will happen after a series of our inter-actions with people that will take some time.

As to the public awareness campaign, it needs to be started among those social groups who are neglected by the existing system and whose interests conform to the nature-human friendly agenda. Those groups, in the main, include: the rural and the urban poor, houseless, unemployed, widows, women (those belonging to poorer sections), working children, girl child, invalids, scavengers, agricultural labour, bonded labour, unorganised labour (such as building workers, rickshaw-pullers, etc.), tribals, prisoners, undertrials, old people having no attendant, lumpen elements (such as beggars, etc.), factory workers, office employees, students, youth, minorities, etc.

These groups may be broadly classified into 4 types: (i) group-specific (ii) area-specific (iii) problem-specific and (iv) trade union-specific.

While preparing the agenda of any neglected target group, it is equally desirable to keep in view its other allied characteristics, that is, political affiliation, cultural values, prevailing mood, etc.

In raising the social consciousness of each target group, it is essential that our communication with them should be simple and easily understandable that integrates three main features, that is, the neglected state of the group's specific problems, mismanagement of the main peoples concerns in each region and state and the positive way in which nature-human friendly agenda will affect the common people in general and the targeted group, in particular, in the domain of politics, development, culture and security.

After some inter-actions with the given targeted groups at a few occasions, the next logical step should be to get their respective core-teams elected with the task of further mobilising the remaining members of these groups.

Following the development of certain level of social awakening and organisation, the problems concerning each target group should be addressed to the concerned official quarters and the pressure of public opinion be exercised to get them redressed. Rational, peaceful and cooperative ways should be our tools to highlight the issues and getting them done.

The working style and the organisational structure of the peoples movement should be sorted out on the basis of its agenda's fundamental principle and the parameters of its (that is, agenda's) politics, development model, culture and security sectors.

Every person, may he be a member of any party or organisation, should, subject to his adherence to the nature-human friendly agenda, have the right to join the peoples movement based on the nature-human friendly agenda.

Since the nature-human friendly agenda stands for the restructuring of the on-going corporate system, its related peoples movement should have a two-sided role—restructuring (updating) of the present system, on the one hand, and organising the people for the redressal of their problems under the present system, on the other.

However, before launching any such peoples movement, every effort should be made to have proper consultations with all those groups—who are already serving and organising the people on identical agenda in the environmental sector or any of its components (that is, air, water, land, forests, bio-diversity, etc.), or any human development concern (relating to equality, equity, social justice, human rights, women and minority rights, etc.)—to build a common platform of the peoples movements or even a united front of all such movements despite their (that is, the latter movements) non-involvement in any agenda of systemic change.

The peoples movement for nature-human friendly agenda should also be prepared to join the already existing United Front of Peoples Movements.

by R.P.Saraf - on 29th November 2002

# Nature-Humen Centric Peoples Movement, INDIA


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