

MARCHING AHEAD IN THE REVERSE

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After an extensive flirting with many different forms of allopathic medicines, people are getting back to nature cure. Homeopathy and ayurvedic medicines are back in circulation. Even Reiki and other forms of ESP are back again for curing the diseases. The holistic approach to curing of disease is being attempted. Living in sync with nature is being purported as the future cure for all ills of mankind. The nature cure centres have an interesting menu of alternative therapies ranging from yoga, therapeutic massage, healing touch, energy balance, dream decoding, talking circles, art, sonoluminescent healing (sound vibration), auriculotherapy (Chinese system that stimulates points of the ear), meditation, to healing laughter. These procedures basically aim at integrating mind, body, and spirit. Yoga and meditation are now offered in corporate corridors as a remedy for stress and strain. It is expected that the cure for some of the modern diseases like AIDS, cancer and diabetics will emerge from the ancient medical systems.

It is reported that Best & Crompton have abandoned the inauspicious front-gate of their company guesthouse in favour of the back-door, in a sudden awakening to the tenets of the *vaastu*. After trying out many revival plans, the engineering company seems to be resorting to reengineering on an astral plane. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi plans to rebuild the world according to Vaastu Laws. And he has already attracted \$500 million into a fund that he has set up for a \$23 trillion project to do so. Yogi's vedic vision will be propounded daily by a 24 hour TV Channel. Maharishi Housing Development Corporation Ltd. (MHFDC) is planning to propagate the use of vaastu on a global scale.

Vaastu is an ancient Indian science of designing and constructing buildings such that the dwelling unit in accordance with the natural law. According to MHDC, a bad vaastu creates a bad climate – tensions, death, and financial loss – because of which one gets stressed and compounds one's existing problems by taking incorrect decisions. This leads into a vicious circle. When one lives in harmony with nature which vaastu ensures, ones performance and good fortune starts to peak.

Astrology and palmistry have reached greater heights. There is no single newspaper or a magazine that does not publish star forecasts. Even satellite channels have started giving daily forecast based on the relative position of the celestial stars and your data of birth. More than 20 percent of Americans believe in astrology and close to 90 percent of America's 1556 daily newspapers carry an astrology column, and there are more than 100,000 practicing astrologers in the U.S. Horoscope matching is going beyond marriage to corporate corridors as well for recruitment of employees and setting up of project teams comprising of compatible members (in an astrological sense!). It is also finding its entry into medical sciences to forecast periods of possible illness. Parallel interests in ghost sightings, divine apparitions, angels, faith healing, near-death experiences, UFO encounters and voodoo are developing in the western world.

A popular adage in South India goes as follows: "When you are sick you try allopathy. If that does not work, you turn to homeopathy, then naturopathy. And finally desperation drives you to Thirupathy (Tirupathi Temple)." With too much materialism man is feeling a certain hollowness and rootlessness inside. People are trying to find a meaning to their lives and are looking for an outlet to drain their pent-up feelings and insecurities. Hence the need for soul searching and the reemergence of religions.

Soul searching is all about Relationships: Relationship with your self & relationship with higher consciousness – God. Each of us is given a soul mate or companion – called by Christians a guardian angel and by the Greeks a daemon. The daemon will protect you. People indulge in soul searching for genuineness, deep satisfaction, and meaning in life. Even with all the material comforts, man feels empty inside. There is a constant search to replace emptiness with soulfulness.

People are getting fed up with eating vegetables grown using chemicals and pesticides and drinking milk that is treated with chemicals. One generation has completely lost the opportunity to drink fresh cows milk. They do not even know how a good fresh vegetable will taste. People are now longing for the natural taste of the fresh vegetables right from the gardens. There is a revived interest in organic foods – food items obtained from plants cultivated with natural organic manure without the application of any chemical fertilizers or pesticides. Naturally raised meats are growing in popularity and people are willing to pay a higher price for fish caught from unpolluted waters. It is up to the

marketers to exploit these sentiments by designing appropriate products. Sterling Farms, Anubhav plantations and many others have started exploiting these sentiments in a very clever way. There is also a scientific basis for getting back to the old system.

It has been found that ninety-seven percent of the cultivated plants our grandfathers feasted on in 1900 have been lost, replaced by an army of bio-engineered food. The enemy according to Ausebel, is modern agriculture's obsession with the hybrid. Hybrid varieties are perpetrated by multinationals for uniform breeding, uniform harvests, and uniform profits. Problem is, hybrids almost always produce uniform, less-than-yummy produce. From an eco-crusader perspective, all this inbred, incestuous sameness leaves a crop more vulnerable to disease, setting the stage for history to repeat an Irish-potato-style famine of vast proportions.

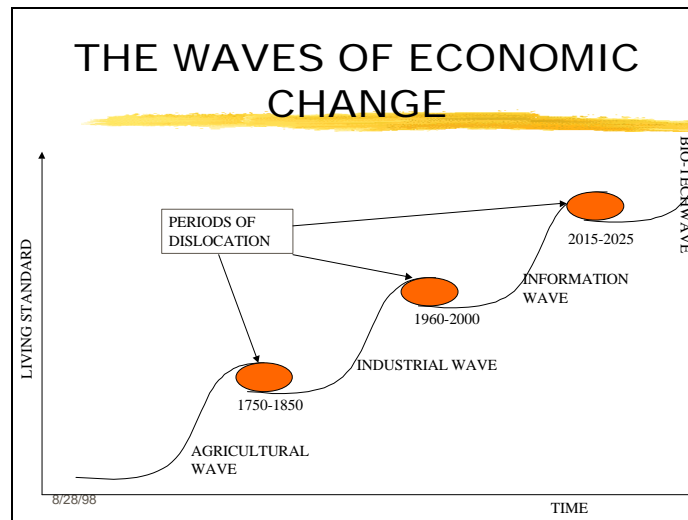
According to two different studies, the amount of semen an average man ejaculates has decreased significantly over the last generation or two. Scientists have found that the quantity of sperm in a typical man's release in 1990 was half of that in 1940. No one really knows, but chemical pollutants might be behind the gobbling up of our vital reserve. Hence the fate of the human race itself is at stake.

However we cannot ignore the fact that the green revolution has increased our crop yield and helped us feed millions of people. We also have interesting new hybrid varieties that have brought down the cost of the produce. For example, we would soon have a variety of mangoes that would be a cross between *alphonsa* and *malgova*, retaining the goodness of *alphonsa* in the large size of *malgova*. But the point is that we may eventually lose the original *alphonsa* which has survived for several thousands of years. An examination of our food habits will reveal that people in the south have become predominantly rice eaters and same from north are wheat eaters. But our grandparents had a variety comprising of ragi, bajra, jowar and several cereals. They are dying a slow death.

In every walk of life, we see a marked preference for things of the past; be it medicine, agriculture, astrology, architecture (*vaastu shastra*), arts and crafts and so on. There is also a backlash against the mindless exploitation of nature in the guise of scientific developments, which has landed us in severe ecological problems. In a way, the

reaction against the modern developmental activities can be justified, as we have thrown out the knowledge and wisdom of our forefathers, developed over several thousands of years in favour of industrialization. While our forefathers believed in living in sync with nature, industrial revolution taught us how to conquer nature for which we are paying a heavy price now. In a sense, industrial revolution was an aberration in the development of human race and the information revolution is being used to set right the wrongs committed by industrial revolution.

After all, the developments that took place over several thousands of years cannot be dismissed outright, just because they did not fit with the paradigms of the industrial age. Now with the move towards the fourth wave (See Figure), we notice that it is possible to combine the goodness of the pre-industrial days with the comforts of the industrial age.



While the industrial revolution strived for uniformity and consistency, we are now moving into an era which is going to demand variety and diversity. While the industrial society went for mass production, mass communication and mass distribution and strived to develop uniform tastes and preferences, we now see a move towards demassification.

God never created men and women out of a cloning machine, but used mass customization to make every one as unique and different. Consider the case of finger-prints; it is amazing as to how God could make so many different varieties out of the patterns on the index finger. It is no wonder that our forefathers used finger-prints and

not the handwritten signature for identification. In the internet world, we are going back again to finger prints for authentication (irrespective of whether one is educated or not!).

It is in this back-drop, I was amazed to find that marketing has also completed one cycle to get back to the primitive marketing in the form of electronic barter system. The advent of mass production led to mass marketing. After a while it was felt that people have differing needs and hence the need for segmented marketing. This further led to the fine tuning of segments in the form of niche marketing. But the current trend is towards one-to-one marketing, which is basically the old barter in a new form. (See box for an interesting example of one-to-one marketing.

MASS CUSTOMIZED CLOTHES

The 150-year-old Levi Strauss (<http://www.levi.com>) brand has come a long way since its days as an outfitter of rough goldminers. Now a leader in make-to-order clothing, Levi's envisions a day in the near future when a large percentage of its garments will be made to order, or sold directly to consumers.

More than half of all people do not fit well into standard clothing sizes. With this in mind, the company is in the process of introducing a body scanning device that can ascertain more than 300,000 points on the body using six cameras and light patterns that create 48 video snapshots. In addition to pleasing the customer, the body scanning device has the potential to shorten manufacturing cycles dramatically - down to as little as 48 hours in some cases. While body scanning technology does not currently exist in America's retail stores, it has been introduced in stores in Europe and Japan. Of course, there's no reason the device has to be in stores at all - as opposed to airports, shopping malls, or at county fairs.

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In my recent book, 'Marketing in the New Millennium' (Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., Pages - 264, Price Rs. 240/-) I have traced the evolution of marketing and contributions from other disciplines to marketing and finally identified 36 trends that are likely to change the course of marketing and business in the new millenium. These trends have been identified using the 'yearning for the pre-industrial society' framework which can be exploited by marketers. Revival of ancient medicine, respect for ancient knowledge, preference for goodies of the grandma and soul selling are some of the trends highlighted in this book.