22. The Art of Wealth Creation– A Special Reference to the Ancient Indian Wisdom.

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ABSTRACT

Wealth creation refers to the process of building wealth in a systematic manner backed by a process of thorough understanding of the various financial products available. It is the channelising of the savings that can lead to fulfilment of all the financial goals in the present as well as the future. The all-time great economist Chanakya quotes that "SukhasyaMulam Dharma, Dharmasya Mulam Artha" meaning thereby that Dharma (righteousness) cannot hold itself in the absence of Artha (wealth). This indicates that India paved the path for wealth creation in the righteous manner. Wealth creation is indeed imperative for sustenance in the current dynamic economic scenario. This paper attempts to link ancient Indian wisdom in the form of various Sutrasand Neetis (formulae and principles) on wealth and money to the contemporary theory of wealth creation which is heavily influenced by Western ideologies.

Keywords*: Wealth creation, Ancient Indian Texts, Dharma, Neeti (principles).*

Introduction

Wealth or *Artha* means a total of all the assets owned by an entity after reducing the value of outstanding from the same. Wealth in the current times may be in the form of gold, real estate, cash and cash equivalents, stocks, mutual fund units etc. Wealth in itself is a completely subjective term as it is individual specific. Wealth refers to the possession of adequate resources to take care of the cost of living in the present as well as the future with reference to the exigencies or adverse situations. This has a reference to self-dependence (*Atmanirbharta*) and self-sufficiency (*Atmaparyaptata*) in order to fulfil the relevant needs for a healthy and balanced living.

The process of wealth creation is a conscious effort to augment the savings and channelise them into fruitful investments that generate returns over the future period. The process of wealth creation leads to the fulfilment of financial goals in a structured manner.

The principles of wealth creation are deeply rooted in the traditional Indian customs, practices and ancient Indian financial wisdom. There are numerous practices that Indians have been followingdiligentlyas a tradition over many centuries. However, a formalised system of wealth creation can be devised on the principles propounded by the sacred Indian texts and rich literature. This paper attempts to connect the dots and establish a linkage between the process of wealth creation as is currently practised and perceived and its strong association to all the practices and customs followed since the ancient times in India.

Need and relevance of the study

The sacred Indian texts have a plethora of techniques and methods that are simple to understand, follow and apply easily in our day-to-day lives. The Covid-19 pandemic taught a valuable lesson to everyone at large that adverse situations can come up without any prior warning or signs. It is advisable to be prepared to face any financial difficulty with proper planning and management of resources. The connection to our roots reiterates the fact that proper management and gradual augmentation of resources can lead to sufficient wealth creation for an individuals, businesses and society at large.

Literature review

Chanakya, one of the greatest minds in ancient India in the fields of economics, strategy, philosophy etc has propounded numerous principles popularly known as *Chanakya Niti.* Some of the important ones related to wealth creation are 1) Identifying the source of wealth 2) Understanding the areas of wealth creation 3) Management of wealth through a right balance of savings and investment 4) Distribution of the excess wealth back to the society (Pillai, R.). The ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) model results in a high level of value and wealth creation for the businesses at large. (Henisz et. al). The ESG model can be traced effectively to the Vedas and ancient Indian scriptures. (Khan S.). The *Rigveda Samhita* prescribes five duties for a human being in order to attain wealth in the righteous manner viz. 1) *Brahma Yajna* 2) *Deva Yajna* 3) *Pitra Yajna* 4) *Manushya Yajna* 5) *BhutaYajna*.(Kannan S.). As per the Vedas, the fourfold virtue prescribed for human race (*Purusharthas*) is Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Thus, it is evident that *Artha* or wealth is at a level second to Dharma emphasizing on wealth creation in the righteous way (Dwivedi, D.).

Discussion

The aim of the study is to understand the teachings of ancient wisdom on Wealth, its creation and management and correlate them to the contemporary idea of wealth creation.

The four '*Ashramas*' of life viz. *Brahmacharya* (signifying *Vidyarjan* i.e., acquiring the wealth of knowledge), *Grihastha* (signifying *Artharjan* i.e. acquiring the right quantity of wealth to run the household), *Vanaprastha* (signifying the detachment from worldly pleasures gradually to reach the final stage of life), *Sanyasaa* (signifying the process of giving the wealth back to the society and tread the path towards renunciation). Thus, Artharjan or wealth creation is an important aspect of human life. However, an individual needs to draw a fine line between need (*Avashyakta*) and greed (*Lobha* or *Swartha*). This is a very important teaching especially in the Kaliyuga where humans are involving themselves in the rat race of acquiring wealth even in the unethical manner (*Adharma*).

The Indian businessmen traditionally worship the 'Shri 11/4' by writing this figure on all the books of accounts on the occasion of 'ChopdaPujan' at the time of Diwali- Lakshmi Pujan. This signifies an oath taken by the businessman to work sincerely throughout the year by requesting the goddess of wealth 'Shri Mahalakshmi' to increase the current invested capital of Re 1 to Rs 1.25 on a yearly basis. This signifies *Artharjan* through perseverance and hard work and not falling prey to tactics or gimmicks promising quick money.

The '*Saptapadi*' or the seven holy vows in a traditional Indian wedding ceremony is another classic blessing of wealth creation. As per the ancient wisdom, in the sixth vow, the wife asks the husband to make her an equal partner in all the economic and commercial projects and ventures and in turn vows to bless him as 'Shri Mahalakshmi' herself. This focuses on financial independence of the entire household with contribution from both the partners.

The *Rigveda Samhita* focuses on principles like 'Wealth to be won by deeds of glory', 'a man shall strive to win wealth by the righteous path' and 'One who helps others wins wealth'. The basic Vedic teachings emphasize on avoiding wastage of money or borrowing money for wealth creation. These principles also stress on saving at least 25% of the wealth and channelise them into investment in assets that shall be used exclusively for production of goods and services that are growth oriented. This is an important lesson in the current times to look out for investment in shares and bonds of companies that are growth oriented and can generate handsome returns for shareholders in the future. Another principle focuses on not playing '*Dyuta*' or gambling with the available wealth. This teaches everyone to stay away from venturing into highly risky speculative transactions/ projects etc without doing a proper due diligence or analysis of the same. The scriptures also discuss about not flaunting wealth or amassing only that much '*Artha*' or '*Dhana*' as is needed for self-sufficiency (*Atmaparyaptata*) and channelising the same in fruitful ventures as well as giving back to the society (Corporate Social Responsibility). This can be correlated to the current investment philosophy wherein the shares or stocks or debt related instruments of companies mainly engaged in public utilities (ie. the PSUs), hospitality/eateries, education, banking finance and insurance sector etc are considered to generate manifold returns over the future in spite of difficult economic scenarios at the global level.

The thrust of the ESG model of wealth and value creation for the businesses and individuals is on 'Environment', 'Society' and 'Governance' at large. The direct references to all these three elements are found in the Vedas. The concept of Environment is based on the '*Pancha Mahabhoota*' principle. The five basic elements that form the human body and the nature at large i.e., *Prithvi (earth), Jal (water), Agni (fire), Vaayu (air) and Akasha (sky or ether)* are a primary source of energy to life and hence their preservation and conservation is a dire necessity for the entire human race. The concept of Society at large is evidenced through the ancient Indian phrases '*VasudhaivaKutumbakam*' (entire earth is a big family) and '*Bahujan Hitaay and Bahujan Sukhaay*' (welfare and happiness of the society at large or placing society above self). The Governance model has been traced to the '*Traita Yug*' where in in the Ramayana, Lord Shriram advises his younger brother Bharat to follow the well-defined principles in order to be an able king and an efficient administrator. The '*Arthashastra*' which is considered to be one of the greatest works on Governance by Chanakya gives four backbones of good governance viz. *Raksha*- risk management, *Vruddhi*- Growth of the stakeholders, *Palana*- compliance to laws and regulations and *Yogakshema*-safeguarding the interests of the stakeholders.

Implications for future research

Thus, wealth creation or *Artharjan* is considered as one of the fourfold virtue and is an essential element of life. However, the means to achieve the same need to be through the ethical channels. The current generation of young working Indians who are highly influenced by Western Ideas of wealth and wealth creation need to be made aware of the fact that the ground work for the philosophies of wealth creation can be easily traced in our ancient Indian wisdom. The '*Simple living and high thinking*' way of life prescribed by our Vedas is a testimony to the fact that an individual, society or a nation can achieve the pinnacle of wealth creation by amassing the right quantity of wealth and giving it back to the society for the overall welfare of the public at large.

A well-structured body of knowledge needs to be developed on the principles of wealth creation based on the Vedas and Puranas. Various academicians and Indian wealth creation practitioners are constantly working on the same. The treasured knowledge has to be disseminated in an easily understandable manner to the Indian students at a preferably young age in order to enable them to create wealth at the appropriate time in a responsible manner.

Limitations

The gamut of knowledge under the Indian Knowledge Systems in the field of wealth creation is very deep and unfathomable. The paper therefore, discusses some of the common instances or examples that highlight the rich knowledge expounded by the Vedas and the ancient Indian scriptures. The basic aim of the paper is to stimulate the interest of readers in the domain of wealth creation in the Indianized way.

Conclusion

Wealth is created at all levels by the individuals, businesses and the State. The approaches, processes and the purposes at all the above levels may be different. However, the ultimate aim is the economic efficiency of the universe and nature that leads to evolution, growth and development. The Vedas thereby explain how the wealth can be best put to use invarious activities to achieve the above stated objective.

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