

The Way You Measure!

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How do you measure things? There are just four parameters to measure everything measurable in this universe. One is number, second is weight or mass, third length or distance and fourth is time. Out of these, last three are called fundamental parameters. Mankind has learnt to measure the universe by these parameters till today. There is nothing else to measure. Rest all, like temperature, work, energy and electrical power is measuring any one out of three fundamentals or a combination of any two or all three. We measure a circular displacement by an angle and temperature by vibration of molecules of mercury which in turn causes the mercury to expand. All this is basically counting three fundamental values in relation to each other. Concluding these opening words, Indus civilization was most accurate in their measurement of weight, length and angles. The other contemporary civilizations were Andes, Mesopotamia and that of Nile. Greek work is a story of later days.

However, some people measure life by more meaningful accounting units; especially their own life. These accounting measures are relative to current times, therefore, relevant to the social values. This also implies that these may not be relevant to the absolute values. And what are absolute values? These are laid down by the absolute authority, the absolute Truth, the Creator, the Sustainer, the All knowth.

Let us look, in simplified terms what does change in accounting unit could mean. A Chairman of Federal Flood Control Body can measure his efforts of last one year in the following terms:

- a. Number of coordinating meetings held, and the nature and type of members who attended.

- b. Expanding the scope of bodies by greater representation, more statutory and regulatory powers and technical know how.
- c. Consultants hired, especially the foreign consultants and the heavy funds allocated for them.
- d. Number and level of training sessions, activities and the number and qualification of new entrants.
- e. Equipment bought and the funds spent on the boats and other equipment and the technology.
- f. Structural changes in the bodies at various levels to improve the efficiency.
- g. New IT introduced to make flood control a modern and Hi-tech organization.
- h. Addition of new sub-departments in the organization. For instance IT department, Quality Control and Human Resource Division.
- i. Enhancement of women representation. Hundred percent increase achieved, by taking the women representation from 2 to 4%.
- j. 25% increase in the pay and allowances of all employees, and other welfare measures like provision of transport for the families.

Now let us look at another set of accounting measures of the performance of same Flood Control Body.

- a. Length of water courses being monitored, and the reduction in reaction time, by hours, in case of flood.
- b. Length and breadth of water courses dredged. It can be measured in thousands of metric tons of sediment removed.

Thus keeping excessive water within the traditional banks as much as possible.

- c. Areas coming under flood as compared to last year and proportionate to the severity of flood.
- d. Number of villages saved as compared to the millions of rupees spent and the total number of employees.
- e. Number of people (and animals) evacuated before flood.
- f. Number of people (and animals) evacuated after flood.
- g. Number of sick and injured and those treated and evacuated relevant to the yearly increase in the budget for medical cover.
- h. Number of houses, culverts, bridges and roads protected as compared to the increase in budget and the efforts of last year.
- i. Number of acres of crops protected relevant to the budget and the severity of the flood.
- j. Measuring the money spent and the management practices followed with reference to the purpose of the establishment of the Organization over the last one year.

If I could conclude the comparison of above two sets to measure the performance into one word, it would be 'objectivity'. It is adherence to the objectives or losing sight of the objectives, on the contrary. May we call it two approaches to proceed in life. Each one of us would like to be objective in our lives. Why not, we all long and strive for objectivity.

Let us look at another set of comparative accounting measures. This time the department is not 'Flood Control' but life itself. Some people measure and count their gains, success and achievements by

measuring the following parameters. And some of these parameters have their own specific accounting units.

- a. I am eighty plus, therefore I am better than those who are below eighty. It is seniority in years which adds to the greatness.
- b. I am in better pay grade; I will become superior when I jump to next rank, or next pay scale. The volume of pay or the size of rupee bag which one carries home is everything.
- c. I am 5 feet 5 inches; therefore I am inferior to those who are six footers. I must do everything to be taller.
- d. I was born with two squares of best agricultural land in my name; therefore I am better than my cousin who had to share rupees two lacs of loan against his father's name right at birth. When I am wealthy, I am better; therefore, I must stay wealthy. My father did the same. I would see my son excelling me.
- e. I build one house every five years in a posh society.
- f. I have always bought stuff from ABC Bakery, the costliest in the city, and have always taken mineral water. We are part of elite club. Will try for yet superior social mobility.
- g. In my family we have always maintained Mercedes. I am going to buy my next Merc next year.
- h. I am better since I have two sons, than the one who has one or none. I must improve my self in the number of children.

And this particular set of parameters describing and defining the progress of life can go on. Where is the objectivity? Or may be these are the real objectives of my life. Sometimes following the majority becomes the end all. The focus in this set was on

‘getting’, ‘gaining’ and ‘self growth’ as animal self and excelling in collection and grabbing.

Quran says:-

الهكُم التكاثرُ ﴿١﴾ حتى زُرْتُمُ المقابرِ ﴿٢﴾

Quran 102:1-2

Translation:

1. *Rivalry in worldly increase distracteh you, until you come to graves (M.M. Pikhthall)*
2. *The mutual rivalry of piling up (the good things of this world) diverts you (from more serious things) until you visit the graves. (A Yousaf Ali)*

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said:-

خير الناس من ينفع الناس

A Translation:

The best amongst you is the one who is best for the people.

Some references from Sahi Bukhari.

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Let us look at the last portion of this article, whose extended title should be, 'The Way You Measure Your life'. This is another set of measuring units for the life. Some are already following these, so nothing new; but how many? And how big is the number who practically oppose it, it is huge. Do you follow these? Yes. How great. What an objective life you have. For those who oppose these and do not follow it, let us have a careful study of all these points. However, there is a pre-requisite. You have to be ready for the change. Are you ready for a change or at

least ready to think to make a change? Following two points are cardinal to take a start.

- a. One, I am a supreme product, best of the creatures of the Creator. Biologically I am no less than a son of a Prophet. The sweepress who works in my house is my sister since the Father Prophet is her father also. I must make a difference by my conduct.
- b. Second, my ideology is my topmost identity. For only this would decide how I behave or how I discharge my responsibilities and prove befitting to my status as viceroy of God, Almighty.

Now I suggest a DIY (do it yourself) drill or a bit by bit life measuring chart. Ten points to follow.

- a. Can you count the number of people to whom you give lift in your car. You can count by days or weeks.
- b. The number of people you feed everyday or by weeks or by months.
- c. Number of bottles of blood or number of times you donated the blood in last five years and do you intend increasing the frequency.
- d. Number of times you went to the Police Station or a court of law to be evidence or bear witness in support of a victim, while the victim was not related to you or you did it to be a support for justice.
- e. Number of times and the methods you adopted to stop an oppressor. It would be of value when you were not the oppressed one.

- f. How many times have you stopped, got down and walked up to the driver of the car blocking your way. Only to ask him or her why was the car stuck up and if you could extend any help.
- g. Number of months or years spent in teaching and the number of students taught. If you can take into account how did you contribute to their lives it would be still more objective.
- h. Hundreds and thousand of rupees given in Zakat, charity or various taxes. Have your contribution increased over the years or decreased. Are you making an effort to increase it?
- i. Number of lost people led to their destination or patients attended.
- j. Ladies can enjoy additional opportunities to measure their growth, their success and value thereof. In addition, to above a lady can measure herself by following measures:-
 - Number of children raised and to which level.
 - Number of loafs baked, utensils washed and pieces of furniture dusted. The count can be per day, per week or per month. It has been a very valuable service, why let it go unmeasured.
 - Number of plants potted, lawns developed and the gardens looked after.
 - Number of family feuds settled, number of divorces saved and other such deeds of value in interpersonal relations.

There can be one huge and knee jerk reaction to this suggested change. That is, how can one spend if one does not earn? The one raising

this question is in fact not fully convinced or not clear on five issues. One, there is a life hereafter. Two, Allah is the Owner and the Giver. Three, all what one has in the form of physical prowess, mental potentials, property and hard cash does not belong to the possessor, in absolute sense. One is a proprietor or a manager with lot of attorney, at best. Four, all worldly belongings are not directly proportional reward of one's efforts and the abilities. It is His mercy and His (*Fazal*) bounty. Fifth and last, a person is as good as he or she can be benevolent. If one is clear on these issues and a bit brave, the change would be considerably easy. Then one will have enough to spend to start with and earn more to spend more. Then gaining would become intermediary stage and giving the destination.

How much do you agree and how much you are willing to change?

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