

# Quality for Societal Wellbeing

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## Abstract:

*This speech is based on the continuing work over the years in understanding the term prosperity from holistic perspective and its linkage to societal wellbeing that in turn is linked to human poverty index with important sub components of adult literacy rate and of health. In recent times the focus of quality has encompassed education and healthcare as well. However bulk of the quality initiatives in these two sectors have been on components of these two sectors with limited benefits. Some of the developed countries most difficult challenge has been to reform the education and healthcare system but no easy solutions are in sight.*

*This speech looks at the current situation in Asia vis-à-vis the developed world and attempts to offer the need for holistic view of these two sectors as a system operating in a larger ecosystem. Challenges the professionals from the field of Quality Management to use the ANQ Way to find systemic options to help the less developed regions of Asia to enhance literacy rates and reduce human poverty index in order to enhance societal wellbeing in harmony with the ecosystem safeguarding the earth and the interest of future generations. Thus contribute to the creation of prosperity in a holistic manner.*

## Main paper:

In 2002 at the time of formation of ANQ its slogan was agreed as ‘Quality for Prosperity and Integration.’ This was based on two important characteristics of Asia at that time. One relates to the low level of GDP per capita as compared to the developed regions particularly the North America and the Europe. Second relates to wide disparity in the income levels and diversity in terms of the language, religion, social norms, food and dress.

The ANQ Goal is ‘contributing to creativity, integration, prosperity and quality of human life in Asia.’ If the prosperity is to be seen in a holistic manner, than we need to consider it at the physical, emotional and intellectual level. In this context the published data by UNDP on the Human Development Index (HDI) and the GDP data per capita could be taken as appropriate measures in the absence of any other direct measures.

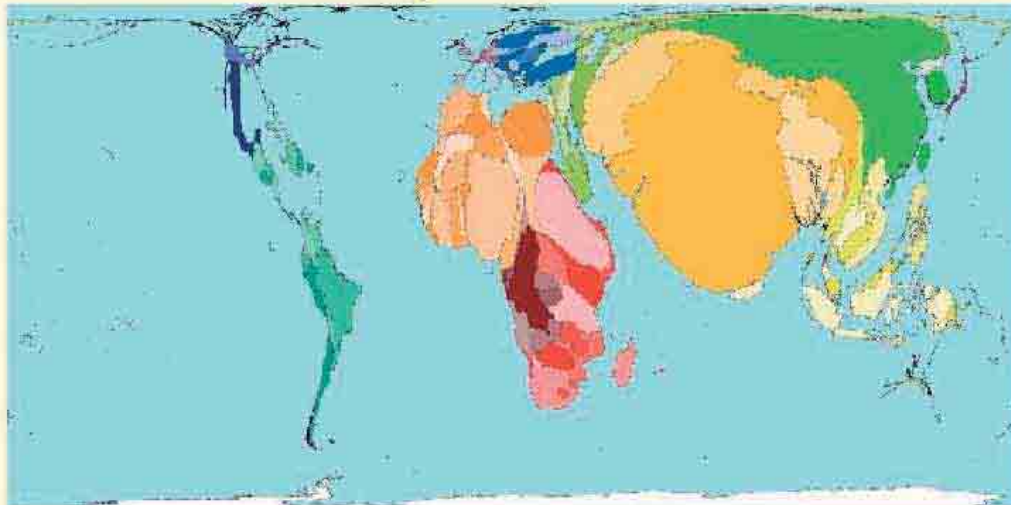
Asia’s per capita GDP on Purchasing Power Parity basis is about 25% of Europe and 18% of North America. Asia’s share in the world trade is about 27% while the population is about 60%. This shows the earning capacity of Asia need to increase four times to create prosperity in the context of developed countries.

HDI has a component of Human Poverty Index that is not only based on financial state but covers non financial indicators, such as life expectancy, adult literacy, water quality, and children that are underweight. As seen in Figure 1 (Published by the SASI group (University of Sheffield) and Mark Newman (University of Michigan) the Human Poverty Index in Asia is varying from



about 120 to 350 on a scale of 1 to 1000 as compared to Western Europe at about 10 to North America at about 25. This disparity is wider than the GDP per capita disparity

# Human Poverty



Poverty is not just a financial state. Being poor affects life in many ways. The human poverty index uses indicators that capture non-financial elements of poverty, such as life expectancy, adult literacy, water quality, and children that are underweight. The 30 territories of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development use a different index which includes income and long-term unemployment; and not water quality or underweight children. This implies that the poor in richer territories are materially better off.

The highest human poverty index scores are in Central Africa, the lowest are in Japan.

Territory size shows the proportion of the world population living in poverty living there (calculated by multiplying population by one of two poverty indices).



Land area

**Technical notes**

- Data are from the United Nations Development Programme's 2004 Human Development Report.
- The United Nations Development Programme uses one human poverty index for both its territories, and another for other territories. The scores of the latter can be divided by 10 to be the index as comparable.
- See website for further information.

## HIGHEST AND LOWEST HUMAN POVERTY INDEX SCORES

Rank	Territory	Value	Rank	Territory	Value
1	Burkina Faso	655	191	Japan	11.1
2	Niger	614	192	Spain	11.0
3	Mali	589	193	France	10.8
4	Ethiopia	555	194	Luxembourg	10.5
5	Zimbabwe	520	195	Germany	10.3
6	Zambia	504	196	Denmark	9.1
7	Mozambique	498	197	Finland	8.4
8	Chad	496	198	Netherlands	8.2
9	Mauritania	483	199	Norway	7.1
10	Guinea-Bissau	480	200	Sweden	6.5

Human Poverty Index-1 for highest, Human Poverty Index-2 divided by 10 for lowest, both on a scale of 0-1000\*

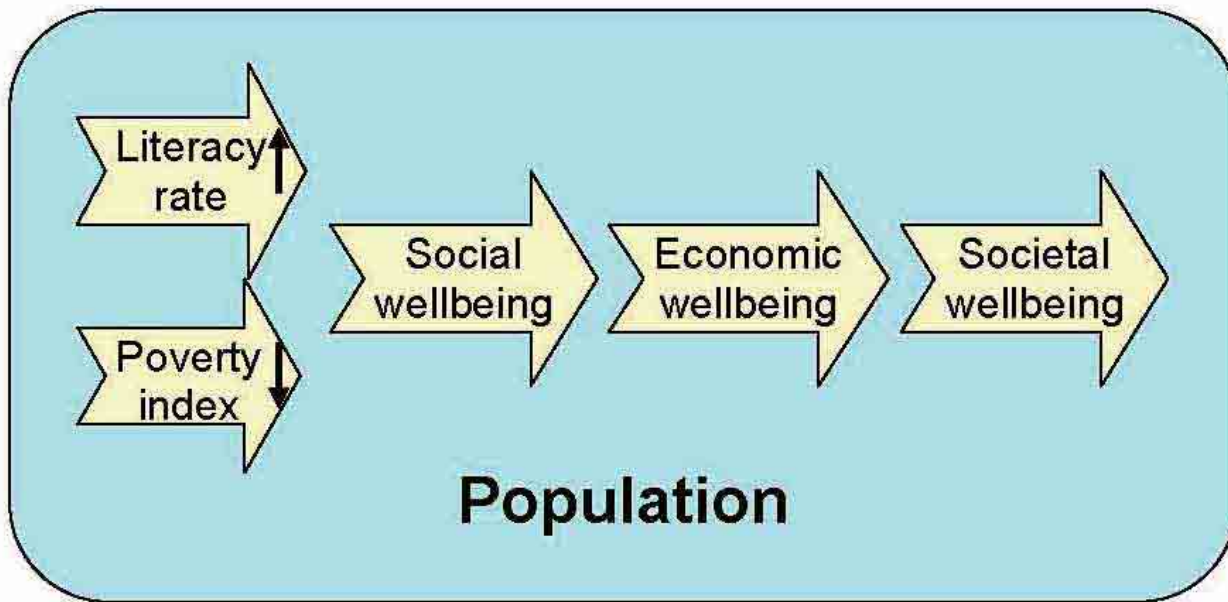


*"My field experience of the complexity and variety of country situations made me chary of stylised generalisations about 'the third world'."*

Angus Maddison, 2002

Figure 1 Human Poverty

There is an obvious correlation between higher literacy rate and improved health care with social well being. In conjunction with economic wellbeing the societal wellbeing is impacted as depicted in Figure 2.



**Figure 2 Population**

Enhancing the holistic prosperity of the people of Asia requires work on improvement in all elements of Human Poverty Index that includes the adult literacy rate, healthcare and water including food.

For the sake of brevity we will take an example of improvement in adult literacy rate by developing a system for 'Building people capability through affordable universal education.' It could be possible to demonstrate a probable approach.

North America and Europe have a high adult literacy rate developed over a period of time. Even in some parts of Asia the adult literacy rates are as good as the west and their economic wellbeing is also high. There are other regions in Asia that are still struggling to enhance literacy rate even though serious attempts have been made to improve but the results have not been encouraging. One of the factors could be the conventional approach where we tend to improve sub systems like hardware, inputs including information & students, methods and people often in isolation or sometimes as composite. We consider design and improvement of processes like accreditation, syllabus development, teacher selection & development, student selection, examination etc sometimes independent of each other. Often the aim of the system is not taken into consideration while improving the sub systems and sometimes all stakeholder needs are not evaluated.

Alternative could be to view the development of the literacy rate as a systemic approach in a holistic manner. A model is attempted in the Figure 3.

While we learn from the regions that have done good work in achieving high literacy rates it would be useful to understand the impact of the socio economic environment on the system being designed. For this purpose it may be helpful to study models from societies with different socio economic environment. Often in the past this aspect has not been given adequate emphasis. There



is a need to understand how the school education system is impacted by the socio economic environment and vice a versa.

In addition as a part of holistic approach and to consider the long term perspective it is suggested to consider the impact of and on the ecosystem within which the regional socio economic environment operates.

This is critical as one of the side effects envisaged in improving literacy rate and reducing poverty index is the increase in consumption rate adding pressure on the environment and difficult to renew resources of the earth. Enhancing literacy rate need to be done with an understanding of creating a new paradigm where consumption is not the primary criterion to evaluate wellbeing and prosperity.

This is the challenge for the professionals from the field of Quality Management to use the ANQ Way to find systemic options to help the less developed regions of Asia to enhance literacy rates and reduce human poverty index in order to enhance societal wellbeing in harmony with the ecosystem safeguarding the earth and the interest of future generations. This may involve application of current knowledge in different fields with appropriate changes and also development of new quality concepts, methods and techniques.

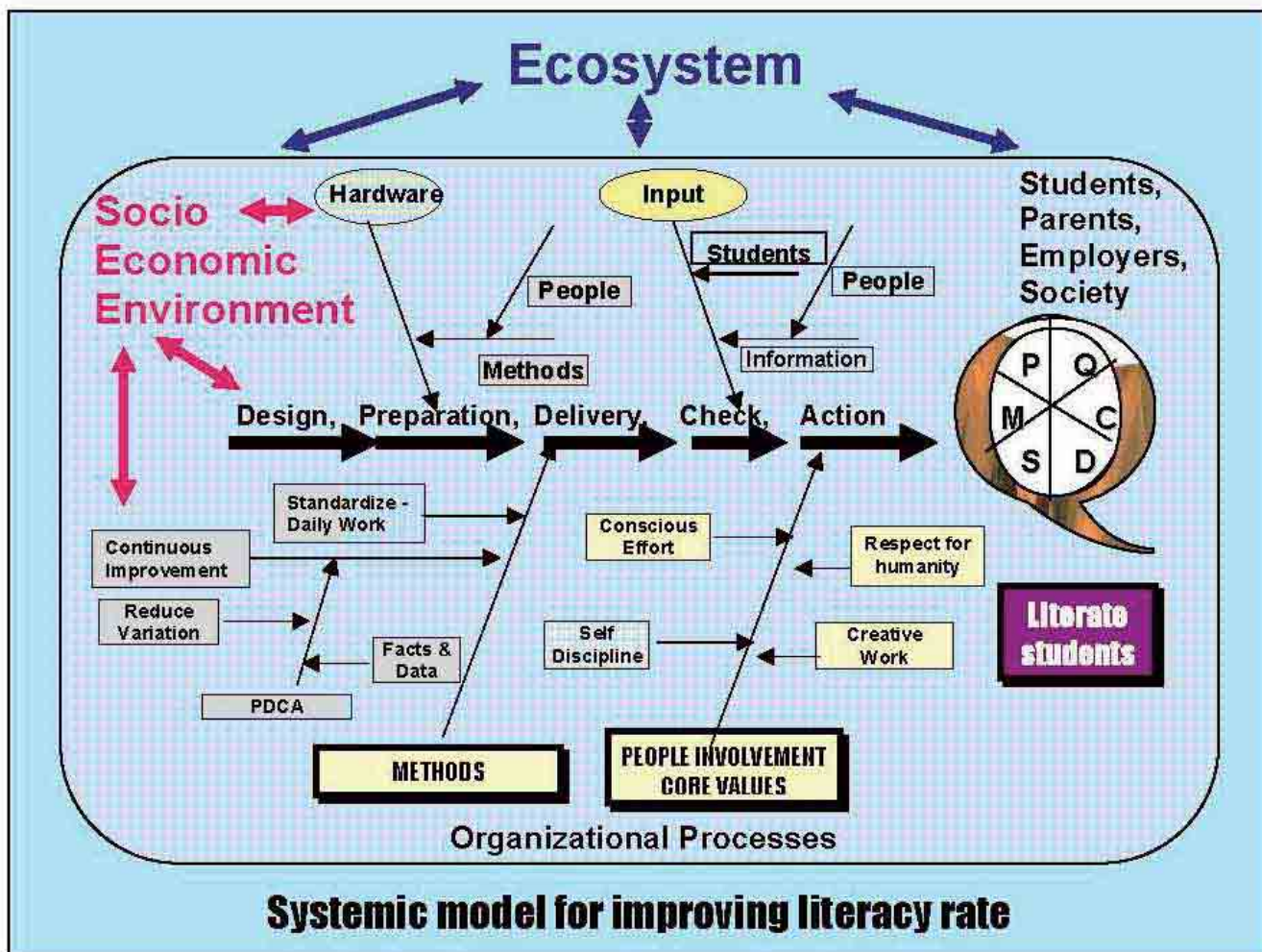


Figure 3 Systemic model for improving literacy rate

Similarly we will need to develop systemic and holistic approach to work on other areas of concern including:

- Providing affordable healthcare to all citizens
- Providing clean, adequate and affordable food & water
- Building and operating quality infrastructure with minimal consumption of difficult to renew resources with least harm to the eco system

Thus contribute to the creation of prosperity in a holistic manner not necessarily in competition with the developed world from the North America and Europe but in cooperation with them so that together we could maintain a balanced holistic prosperity with much lower levels of consumption. This learning may even be used to change the system in those regions as well as other regions. One of the most difficult challenges being faced by the developed regions is to reform the healthcare system that is not serving the purpose for which it was designed and it has become unsustainable. They are struggling for decades and have not found a solution. May be they need to take a holistic view and look beyond the current systems instead of tinkering with it? We could learn from their experience and take preventive measures. They could also learn from our experience. Better still we could work together.

If the paradigms have to change for saving the earth we need to begin with changes in the education system in all regions. The experience gained can be horizontally deployed.

**In this cooperative endeavor in Yagna spirit we shall not forget the people of Africa whose need is even greater.**

Maintaining constancy of **Purpose/Goal**, adoption of **strategies** following the **Asian Way** in consonance with the **Core Values** as stated in the **ANQ Way**, may be helpful in our journey together of creating **prosperity for all the people of Asia**.

Towards this Goal:

May we all exert together with a sense of enjoyment while protecting each other?

May our studies become brilliant without hate towards others?