CASE STUDY

Total Productive Culture
TOTAL PRODUCTIVE CULTURE

by

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1. ABSTRACT

The productivity nowadays is no more only the function of engineering and technology, but it is becoming an art too. A master piece of an art can only be produced by an imaginative, innovative, creative and committed human mind being cultivated in a distinct environment.

This distinct environment is a type of culture and I would call it the TOTAL PRODUCTIVE CULTURE (TPC). In this paper I have tried to find the roots of TPC in the teachings of Islam. Islam is a practical and universal religion spread over every aspect of human life. So why not the area of productivity & development! A model of TPC is being presented based on the four prime teachings of Islam which give enlightenment in respect of productivity, (technology/Innovation) and socio – economical growth viz. TRUTHFULNESS, CLEANLINESS, EDUCATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH. (4 elements of TPC).

The first two elements are related to muslim FAITH and the later two elements are OBLIGATIONS for every Muslim. This is explained through Fig: 1 and briefly discussed as under.

1.1. TRUTHFULNESS

Truthfulness means the positive approach in every action of an individual. The criteria for it can be derived by a saying of our holy prophet P.B.U.H that “what you like for yourself, like the same for others and what you don’t like for yourself, don’t like it for others” what a philosophy to foster the trust & respect among each other and justice for all, thus getting the optimum resultants as good leadership and team work which are the prime factors of TQM implementation. Many theories have been written so far on team work and human relations but I claim that the above formula of truthfulness stands above all.

1.2. CLEANLINESS

Cleanliness in Islam is so much stressed upon that it has been declared as the part of Muslim faith by the famous saying of holy prophet that “Cleanliness is the “half of the faith”

The actual importance of cleanliness is to make highest level of preparation and taking full interest before starting each work. This would certainly lead to optimum productivity added with the continuous improvements.

1.3. EDUCATION

Education in Islam has been made an obligation for each man & woman. Our holy Prophet (PBUH) has said to acquire knowledge since beginning of the life to the end of the life.
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**TOTAL PRODUCTIVE CULTURE (TPC)**
In the holy Quran it is said that “How can one with knowledge be equal to one who has no knowledge, only the wise people can understand it.” During 8th to 13th century, only due to emphasis & support of muslim emperors to the field of education, the muslim scientists and scholars ruled the world in almost every field of science. At micro level i.e. company wide, the investment on education of employees with the objective of long term technological development to advance the state of the art to give a company the real staying power is becoming necessary in this age of business competitiveness.

1.4. DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

This is another obligation for a believer of Islam. The same has been mentioned in Holy Quran at more than 15 places. The simple formula for distribution of the wealth as mentioned in the Holy Quran is “The wealth which is extra to your actual needs, must be spent (“on more deserving persons and/or productive fields.”) (This is other than ‘Zakath’) This element of TPC would foster the human welfare activities to build the socio-Economic harmony in the society. The Islamic society, state as much as the individual is under obligation to provide provisions of resources and a conducive environment promoting merit and justice to open all avenues of progress, even for those born poor.

2. WHY TOTAL PRODUCTIVE CULTURE (TPC) ?

One can rightly raise a question that having evidence of immense technological & economic progress in the developed countries, why shouldn’t we follow their theories & paths.

The answer is very direct & simple but yet it can’t be easily understandable for the present day advancement has put a leash on our eyes to hide it’s evils. Let yourself find the answer.

The special U.N. General Assembly session in Geneva (in June,2000), concluded that poverty, inequality and insecurity have increased in the world since globalism was launched.

People in the industrial countries are 74 times richer than those in the poorest. The wealth of only three richest men in the world is greater than the combined GNP of all of the least developed countries-600 Million people.

Globalisation as a phenomenon is the product of technological development. The failure of globalism, however, as reported has resulted from deliberate government policy choices made by the government of advanced economies.

The old noble philosophy of human relations was “LIVE AND LET LIVE”. The new age has taught us that “LIVE AT THE COST OF OTHERS”. But what Islam has presented 1400 years ago is, “LIVE AND HELP OTHERS TO LIVE”. This is indeed the “TOTAL PRODUCTIVE CULTURE (TPC).
3. IMPLEMENTATION OF TPC

A long term strategic planning is required for the implementation of TPC. It may be started through the element of ‘Education’. The first revelation to our holy prophet (PBUH) was also started with the proclamation as “Read/Learn” “IQRA”. Education is the most powerful thing to create a change (For the reason, it is discussed in detail in this paper) ‘Cleanliness’ may be started simultaneously, these two elements may be implemented through proper investment as “Plan & Do”. The other two elements viz. ‘Truthfulness’ and ‘Distribution of Wealth’ form a difficult part of TPC to implement. A strong commitment on top level is required to have a steady movement with revolutionary steps to build the character and humanity. A spatial model of TPC implementation is presented as Fig:2.

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4. EDUCATION

4.1 THE DIVINE BESTOWEMENT

The Almighty Allah has appointed the man as his viceroy on the earth and called him “The Best of the Creatures”. What was the authority conferred by Allah to man for establishing his rule on the earth was nothing but “knowledge”. According to Quranic description of the first human creation somewhere in the timeless, space less universe,
which provoked the angels, venturing to ask God about the purpose of making man the Al-mighty’s vicegerent on the earth. As the scripture puts it, the angels asked Allah: “Will thou place there in one who will do harm there in and will shed blood while we hymn thy praise and sanctify thee?”(2.31)

What followed was the Al-mighty’s command to angels to prostrate themselves before man because the latter had been “taught all the names of the nature”(Knowledge).

The man was sent to earth with the power of knowledge and it proved. Yet, the “anticlimax” to this high rank of man is what was the “climax” for the angels when they raise the objection on the creation of man that “who will do harm in the earth and shed blood”. Here is the point to ponder that why Allah ignored the worthy objection of Angels. Because He would consider the man his viceroy only on the merit (knowledge) and when the man transgresses, he is totally rejected by Allah and he is no more on the rank even he is no more a human being. The Holy Quran states “Surely we have created man in the best make. Then if he works iniquity we reject him as the lowest of the low” (95:56)

The first revelation to our Holy prophet “Iqra” also proclaims “Read in the name of thy Lord who created the man. Who taught man by pen. Taught man what he knew not. Nay! Man does indeed transgress, because he thinks himself to be independent. Surely unto thy Lord is the return”(96:5-9)

The importance of education is further endorsed by the following Quranic verses and Hadith\Sunnah.

1. “Seeking the knowledge is obligatory to each Muslim.”
2. “The ink of a scholar is holier than the blood of martyr”.
3. “He whatsoever in search of knowledge, to him Allah shows the way”.
4. “Seek knowledge even you have to go to china for it.” (a distant place at that time)
5. Our holy prophet (P.B.U.H) used to put a ransom to free the prisoners of war that each prisoner should teach ten un-educated Muslims(what a productive approach)

NOTE: By the last two Hadith\Sunnah it is evident that knowledge is not restricted to the religious education alone but every type of productive knowledge is permitted rather ordered and it can’t be labeled as a “secular” object.

4.2 THE DIVINE CONSTITUTION

Having learned the foundation of man’s creation and importance of knowledge it can be summarized as following by calling it the “Divine constitution” of the human life on Earth.

a) All-mighty Allah is the creator of all in the universe. He is the Lord of Sovereignty, the Omnipotent, the Omni Scent and Omnipresent.

b) The man is the vicegerent of Allah on the earth.

c) All the things & creatures have been subordinated for man.

d) The authority of man lies in his knowledge and good deeds.

e) It is an obligation for each man & women to acquire knowledge & wisdom where ever he finds. In brief it is incumbent upon a Muslim to study both the word of Allah(Quran) and work of Allah(nature).
f) The man, however is not independent, unless he uses his power for the betterment of life on earth. If he transgresses the limits, he would be thrown out of the rank and would be replaced by others.

g) Finally, the man has to return to Allah to report about performing his duties on the earth.

4.3 EDUCATION FOR SURVIVAL OR EXCELLENCE?

According to Ibne-Khuldoon as he writes in his famous book of History “Muqaddama” that to acquire knowledge is the innate of man. He further says that education is a spare time activity and man attends it after fulfilling his basic needs. Nevertheless, when he advances in the knowledge of a particular field, the same becomes a type of a industry (technology). In the further stages it develops the innovative abilities too.(R&D)

He added that at the peak of civilization the people tend to accumulate wealth, that means increase in comfort, better food and clothing and finally the larger buildings. This would certainly lead to the tendency to pleasure seeking worldly desires, and “the souls are coloured with all kinds of blame worthy evil qualities.” Here, Ibne-Khudoon presents an enigma, which occurs throughout the ages. It is the very advancement which leads to corruption both on the individual and the collective levels, accentuation of the differences between man and man and between nation and nation and finally to war.

If history is a lesson and surely it is. We may conclude the following aspects which would be useful to study the present day contemporary facts, to explore the fair opportunities and to decide the future strategies.

For the people of undeveloped countries like us, the education is not a matter of spare time but it has become the matter of their survival. The scope of education for the common people is to merely earn their living. Yet the curriculum offered is hundred years old, stereo type designed by the Britishers to produce “Baboos” and ‘Mistries’. OH! Pardon, yes, engineers and scientists too, but what is their standard of education? Engineers of house hold activities to run the routine production on machineries, process and materials of foreign origin. Far away from any Design, R&D and innovation.

The state authorities may remain no longer indifferent, sooner or later they have to categorically think of the survival of the state too. The survival of the state would be to facilitate the ‘Education for excellence’ (the spare time activity as narrated by Ibne-Khuldoon). This would be the real education on strategically planned as the national mission, employing the dedicated team of volunteers strictly on merit who would be independent of frantic worries of earning basic needs. Only these arrangements can lead to the foundation of technological advancement through constant R&D & innovation. But it should be quite clear that this type of education / environment is the product of huge investment. Less than 2% budget allocation on Education would not serve the purpose. If we are still not able to read what is written on the walls, we would become the Banana States very soon.

The other aspect of learning from the history as mentioned by Ibne-Khuldoon i.e. the eventual evil of advancement. This enigma of Ibne-Khuldoon can be satisfied and the
said evil be avoided only by following ‘The Divine Constitution’ as mentioned in article 4.2. The total productive culture (TPC) is also a humble projection of the same.

In this aspect, there should be a separate but simultaneous strategical plan/curriculum of long term nature to promote Islamic cultural, social & economic philosophies mainly focussed on ‘Truthfulness’ and ‘Distribution of wealth’. A productive breed of social scientists, philosophers, educationists and poets are aimed to turn over a new leaf to bring a new life to the country.

4.4. **DO WE NEED “INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY” OR “TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION” FIRST**

I humbly dare to raise this question. I am afraid of thousand stones from the I.T fashioned maniacs for this crime of my bunkum. What instigated me is the impetuous movement of Government with the huge investment to propagate I.T education and totally ignoring the debilitated condition of Manufacturing Technology, R&D and Industry itself in the country. It is like those who are being subjected to some kind of insidious plague, may be called as ATDS (Acquired Technology Deficiency Syndrome).

How the policy makers can dare to close their eyes on the miserable condition of Industry & technology in the country. In this situation the priority on Information Technology is like putting the “cart before horse” OR it is like sitting on the steering of a car without an engine and having illusion of going forward. What would be the result ahead, yet already on move.

About 10,000 I.T students are being qualified each year, only two or three thousands get proper job in the country. Many of these get the opportunity to seek jobs in U.S.A etc. thus our valuable investment serves the west. Whose agenda we are working on? The similar situation prevailing since ten years ago as a glut of M.B.A has been created in the country, where the job market is not in a position to offer them jobs.

Education in line with our actual needs i.e. to first reinforce the ‘Base of Technology’ is not only the mainstay of a nation’s development, nay its survival, but

it has now become the ‘National Security Issue’. We need ‘Technology Information’ first, not ‘Information Technology’. Let us put the “horse before cart”.

4.5. **EDUCATION-COMPANY WIDE**

Companies are under enormous pressure to improve performance. This is further aggravated with the non availability of competent employees due to deteriorating educational standard in the country.

This gap can only be bridged by starting their own employee education programme. The education of employees may be divided in two areas

Area-I : The education for upper and middle level managers/executives.
Area-II: The education for lower staff and workers.
4.5.1. **THE EDUCATION FOR MANAGERS/EXECUTIVES**

**A. The Curriculum:** The ever increasing competitive and progressive business now demands a new education programme more focussed on the target. Traditionally it was conceptional and generic, almost like mine-MBA programme (a little finance, a lash of Marketing, a sprinkle of human resources). The content now should be unique to the organizational needs.

The individual is developed to support organizational goals. The conventional role was a ‘Nice-to-do’ the strategic is focussed on ‘Need – to – do ’ role.

**B. Strategic Objectives:** The following are some of the strategic objectives to be achieved through the executive education programme.

i) Establishing corporate objectives: To get managers and executives identify with the organization to understand its values and strategies.

ii) Improving leadership: This critically important objective is a mandate of some of the best education programs. Not only the leadership qualities are the prime need for the CEO, but the second & third line of executives are required to be such good leaders that the CEO can depend on them to derive the company towards the future.

iii) Improving Innovative capabilities: The senior executives should be able to suggest changes to improve productivity, process/ product quality and cost effectiveness.

4.5.2. **EDUCATION FOR LOWER STAFF AND WORKERS.**

The importance of this part of education can be understood by the following lines taken from the editorial published in ‘Foundry Management & Technology’

“Now the US finds itself with a shortage of skilled workers. The productivity of our labour is high but this is more reflection of levels of capital investment, not a highly skilled work force.

This is in fact a big lesson for the developing countries. When such a developed country like US is threatened of the lack of skilled workers, then where do we stand?

In the country like Pakistan, where the literacy rate is less than 20%, the first curriculum for the workers training programme should be to make them able to read the work standards in URDU and to strictly follow the standards by educating them the importance of standardization. Secondly, the objective may be to increase the relevant work skill through workshops and seminars etc.
5. CLEANLINESS

Cleanliness in Islam has been declared as a part of faith. There are many verses of holy Quran and sayings of holy prophet (PBUH), highly stressing upon cleanliness. Few are mentioned here under
“Allah loves those who keep them clean”
“Cleanliness is half of the faith”
“Cleanliness is the part of faith, and faith leads to heaven”

Cleanliness has two aspects, viz.

5.1. COUNTRY WIDE: Beauty and hygiene: which leads to discipline, delight, personal & environmental health.

The cleanliness at macro level i.e. country wide would certainly require some investment initially, but when it becomes the perpetual habit of the citizens, it would lead towards a civilized nation. Thus a little investment would pay a huge return.

5.2. COMPANY WIDE: Preparation (the urdu word ‘Ahtmam’ is more significant): which leads to good quality of work.

This aspect i.e. ‘Preparation’ (Ahtmam) is more important as it is directly related to the productivity. This aspect of cleanliness as stressed in Islam may be derived from the institution of “ablution” (Wuzu). The practice of ablution has been described in other religions also, but the high significance given in Islam as making it compulsory before going to prayer yet with minute details is over & above. What is the real significant of ‘Wuzu’? In my opinion, it is the ‘Ahtmam’ which means the highest level of preparation before going to prayer/worship, taking full interest and with full importance. A man going to perform a sacred duty must be mentally & physically prepared.

Similarly according to the teachings of Islam, any right work or job is also considered as worship. So a man before start of his work should do “ablution” (best preparation). That is to clean the work place, and keep every thing in order, taking full interest and giving full importance to the subject job. This is a secret which works like a magic to improve productivity and quality of work.

Japanese companies have got this secret and they follow the 5 ‘S’ programme which is nothing but excellence to the cleanliness. According to Seiichi Fujita, 5 ‘S’ are five steps towards ‘Kaizen’ and according to Masaaki Imai, Kaizen is the ‘key to Japan’s competitive success’

6. TRUTHFULNESS (RIGHTEOUSNESS)

Truthfulness is far over and above to merely speaking the truth. Truthfulness is the name of moral and spiritual temperament. It leads to edification of souls, refinement and training of human virtues.

In the simple words, it is the positive approach in thinking & actions of an individual. Truthfulness penetrates and captures the inner man (conscience). The voice of Truthfulness is the voice of conscience. Truthfulness is the name of “beauty” and
‘fragrance’. According to holy Quran, its essential sprit is piety, goodness, knowledge, wisdom, justice & peace whereas a lie or falsehood is the name of filth, stink and ugliness.

Deceit, cunning, dishonesty, laziness, back biting, envy, flattery, greed, selfishness and abuse are all of a kind of lie or falsehood as our conscience do feel sorry on all such things. One should be away of all such things for no body would like to abide in the filth as it is not a human nature but of animals.

How can we remain out of this filth? Our holy prophet (PBUH) has given us a simple formula of truthfulness i.e. “What you like for yourself, like the same for others, and what you don’t like for yourself, don’t like it for others.”

6.1 TRUTHFULNESS & PRODUCTIVITY

Productivity now is every body’s business. The productivity in this age of competitiveness can't be achieved merely by purchasing sophisticated machinery and technology but it is more subject of blending the positive human behavior too. With the TECHNOLOGY HARDWARE it is also necessary to develop what I would call the ‘HUMAN SOFTWARE’. The prime element of this human software is the ‘Truthfulness’. If the employee in a company from a worker to the CEO are conscious of this element then they would become truthful to their fellow employees as much as they are with their own family members. This would create a family like atmosphere in the company which would be the strong driving force to meet the corporate objectives.

The basic & magic effect of truthfulness is building the trust and respect among each other. They would restrain from backbiting, misbehave, hurting others feelings etc. As a result of this unity, nothing is done or decided in an adhoc manner and everyone is clearly aware of his rights and responsibilities. Management-employee relations are harmonious as the both parties speak truth that mean nothing is hidden. Employees know what the company is earning and thus there would be no need of bargaining which is presently an evil practice to lead waste of time, production and creating hostilities.

Nevertheless, even in the ideal atmosphere of truthfulness, if any differences that creep in, may be resolved in friendly manner with minimum ill feeling on either side.

6.2 TRUTHFULNESS – QUALITY AS A CHOICE

The wise businessmen/Traders all over the world try to improve quality of their product to have the reliability & stability of their business and ultimately the profit. Can they be called truthful ? No! because their aim is the profit alone. To maintain the quality is not their choice but compulsion. Whenever they have a chance, they would not hesitate to exploit their customers. What are the teachings of Islam ? It goes far beyond. A businessman or trader is bound to tell to his customers, not only the good points of quality of their products but also the “hidden” deficiencies of . What is the philosophy behind it? That is, he would try the next time to improve the quality of his product, free of any defect. Thus the quality would become his choice not compulsion. Hence the ultimate aim would be not profit alone but to safeguard the interests of others too.
7. DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

The distribution of wealth shouldn’t be misunderstood with the call of charity alone. Rather it is a move towards organizing efforts for revitalizing the process of reconstructing the social and economic system of Islam which unfortunately has remained suspended for centuries. An Islamic state or society must reflect it’s true spirit. Every citizen irrespective of his religion, race or creed, living in that society should have equal opportunities to earn his living and share his prosperity. No one can be deprived of this fundamental human right granted by Islam and no one can be permitted to exploit others.

As a matter of fact, Islam tolerates inequalities in income, because all men are not equal in their capability, character and service to the society. What is, nevertheless, prohibited is the accumulation of wealth through exploitation. Yet, Islam does not order to snatch the wealth from the rich but it leaves to them as a religious obligation to “spend what is extra to their actual needs”. The second obligation to each civilian is to ensure that “his neighbour does not sleep in hunger”. I think that nothing is left to write after these two big philosophies to foster the economic harmony in the state.

Now the big responsibility lies on the state to formulate the strong system of social & economic planning to ensure

- Restriction of all means of exploitation
- Eradication of Poverty and managing equitable distribution of wealth.
- Providing all basic needs to people like food, shelter, water, health amenities & education.

In the Islamic economic system, concentration of immense wealth is just not possible. Honest and permissible means of living does not provide opportunities of amassing fabulous wealth. It will be still less, if the Islamic code for business practices, remuneration for hired labour and the rate of profit is strictly followed.

The above teachings of Islam are not mere a theoretical proclamation. In the early period of Islam, the such welfare state was formed where no one was available to accept ‘Zakat & Sadaquath’ (Charities). Can it be even thought in the so called developed rich countries today.

7.1. DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

Productivity improvement can only be achieved through every body’s participation. If the share of benefits are given to people first both at macro & micro level then the key factors influencing the productivity like enthusiasm, motivation and creative skills would be fostered in them.

The socio-economic situation in Pakistan is so miserable that I have personally seen the poor people standing in a long queue since dawn in Govt. hospitals waiting for one bottle of simple mixture. How can they be productive? People in many areas including women and children stand for hours even since 3:00 a.m to get a bucket of water. How can they be productive? For a large number of people, transport facilities are not available. How can they be productive? According to a study, the increasing rate of
The absenteeism of employees i.e. 20 – 25% is because they are engaged in home for managing their meager domestic needs / affairs.

The country has been brought to this sad pass by the corrupt ruling elite who are the major beneficiaries and plundering country ruthlessly. On the other hand, the Government has been extremely lavish, indeed criminally wasteful when it comes to spending public money. The government should curb the extravagant and royal style of ruling class. The public exchequer should be spent on providing the basic needs to the people to make them productive.

In short, if economic stability and prosperity to people exists, it means more buying power – more market – more productivity.

8. RESISTANCE TO ‘TPC’

The biggest resistance to TPC is the prevailing authoritarian society which is the product of feudal system which is still present in one form or the other.

The ‘modus operandi’ of this system is

- Try to get power by every mean
- Try to get money by every mean
- use power on every body who is weak
- use money to buy every thing in hindrance even the law itself.

The sad part of this system is that the every man who is living in the authoritarian society, becomes himself a authoritarian in the area of his jurisdiction. According to Ibne Khuldoon (Ref ‘Muqaddama’) the people tend to copy the living style of ruling class.

In brief, the ego, arrogance, exploitation and hypocrisy are becoming the order of the day, which are off course baneful for emerging the Total Productive Culture. This ‘Satanic agenda’ has to be thrown away by hook or crook.

9. COMMITMENT ON TOP LEVEL / ROLE OF NATIONAL LEADERS

Strong commitment on top level is the primary requisite to build the Total Productive Culture both at macro level and micro level. Keeping in view the present socio-economic situation in the country and to eradicate the resistance to TPC from the society, revolutionary steps with innovative sprit are to be taken.

All the national leaders are required to unite on one point agenda of country’s survival to all intents and purposes. They should support the Government leaders whosoever but above board to facilitate the difficult decisions, to be taken in the national interest.

For the most revolutionary change in the Govt. priorities of Pakistan and India, I would suggest that they should immediately go for a No War Pact for at least ten years, under the surity of UN. This would enable them to cut the heavy defence expenditure by at least 20% to 25%. The same may be spent on the areas of technology and social development. The majority of people in both the countries are living in hell of extremely miserable condition.
10. **THE LAST WORD:**

Total Productive Culture (TPC) is the need of hour for the world of productivity and Humanity. It is time to challenge the status quo, which would be the real turning point for us to have the renaissance in achieving the goal as our lost heritage.

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- I am also serving as a visiting lecturer in Dawood College of Engineering & Technology

**EXTRA QUALIFICATION**

- A number of my articles have been published in Daily ‘Jang’ on various scientific and Engineering topics
- I am the editor of our company’s news letter ‘BCL News’
- I had introduced the ‘Suggestion Scheme’ in 1992 in Bolan Castings Ltd. and remained incharge of the same for 7 years.