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<b>Business Research</b>	<p><b>Growth of Financial Derivatives Market with Special Reference to National Stock Exchange –An Analysis</b> <i>Dr.V.Usha Kiran Professor, and Kishan. Egurla, Research Scholar, Dept, of Commerce, Osmania University, Hyderabad.</i></p> <p><b>A Study on Job Satisfaction of Employees in K.G. Denim at Karamadi Coimbatore</b> <i>Mrs.S.Punitha Devi, Assistant Professor, Assistant Professor, Kongunadu Arts &amp; Science College Dr.M.Ponniah, Associate Professor, Post Graduate &amp; Research Department of Commerce, G.T.N.Arts College, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu</i></p> <p><b>Impact of B.Ed Curriculum in Changing the Attitude towards Teaching Profession of Millennial Teacher Trainees</b> <i>Amutha P, Ph.D. Research Scholar, Servite College of Education for Women Dr. M. Suganthi, Assistant Professor, Alagappa University College of Education, Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu</i></p> <p><b>Impact of Climate Change on Maize Yield in Cuddalore District</b> <i>A.S. Kalaivani, Ph.D. Research Scholar Dr. M. Ramesh, Professor, Dept. of Business Administration. Annamalai Universit, Annamali Nagar, Tamil Nadu</i></p>
<b>Success Story and Case Research</b>	<p><b>The Pioneer In Clinical Diagnosis: Mr.Mariappan Mani</b> <i>A Success story of Mr Mariappan Mani, Chairman, Micro Laboratories, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu</i></p>
<b>Revisiting Native Wisdom</b>	<p><b>The Art of Complete Living</b> <i>Dr.M.Settu, B.Com, MBA., Ph.D., FIMA CEO Syndicate Exports, President Coimbatore Productivity Council Fellow of all India Management Association and Past President of Coimbatore Management Association</i></p>

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# THE ART OF COMPLETE LIVING

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## REVISITING NATIVE WISDOM

Life is a mystery for the ignorant and a Joy for the wise and the realized. It is a pity that mankind is unable to understand and comprehend the meaning of life. In this book, I will try my best to explain the principles and practices of "The Art of Complete Living."

The founding questions

As a first step, let me start with certain basic questions and reasoning on human life.

- 1) Being born as human beings, *do we have any other option than to live in this world? The answer is a big 'NO'.*
- 2) Having understood that there is no other option than to Live, *why not we try to live in joy and peace?*
- 3) Everyone could clearly understand from the analysis of the lives of great men and successful people, right from Alexander the Great to Emperor Ashoka, Abraham Lincoln to Albert Einstein, that nothing is permanent in this world. **Wealth, health, power, fame, name and all that are materialistic and all that are seemingly powerful are impermanent.**  
*And therefore, why should we compromise or lose our joy and peace for those impermanent things?*

**Further, when we are living a happy and peaceful life, we should have the mind-set not to cause any kind of hardships, hindrances or agony to others either physically or mentally.**

These are the most basic questions that are put forward for a critical analysis. It is essential to understand that *the most important things in life should never be lost for the least important things*. The most important things are *joy and peace* and that should never be at the feet of the least important things that are impermanent in this world.

## **Goals of Life**

Having asked the above founding questions and having understood the answers for these questions, we should not keep idle. We must be in action. How do we do that? What direction do we have to take? Where should we move towards?

That is where we have to clearly define our objectives, our vision and our goals of life. In my opinion, we can classify the goals of our life into four categories as given below:

- 1. Personal Goals**
- 2. Professional Goals**
- 3. Social Goals**
- 4. Spiritual Goal**

*It is not necessary to think that these goals have to be achieved one after the other. Rather, the activities towards these goals can be taken up together and can go simultaneously".*

### **1. Personal Goals**

Personal Goals are those that relate to the needs and requirements of the person and his own family and the dependants. It is essential to clearly assess the personal requirements in terms of money, assets, the retirement plan, medical requirements and suitable insurance plans, planning for the dependants and for the education and marriage of the children and so on. The personal requirements of an individual depend on his or her family background and the environment in which he or she lives. People engaged in the normal family life must definitely anticipate and plan these requirements and work towards achieving these goals.

**Creation of wealth is not wrong. In fact, creation of wealth in the right way is a social responsibility.** The most important aspect to be noted is that one must be content enough with what has been planned to be achieved for the personal needs. Otherwise, there is no end in this journey of accumulating money and personal wealth. Drawing the line for the personal needs is the most critical aspect of one's life.

*One must have the courage to become content with that bottom line already drawn and should not be too greedy to revise the line more often; because, there is no end for the infinite desires.*

However, one must be clear that creation additional wealth could be considered positive as long as he/she uses the excess wealth for the benefit of the whole society and **has the mind to operate as a trustee of that wealth and not as the owner of the created wealth.**

**While a person engages himself or herself in achieving all these goals, he or she should ever neglect the health aspect, both the health of the body and the mind.** It is essential to take up at the earliest age, some suitable courses on physical exercises, prayers, yoga practices and meditation programs under the supervision of experts in the concerned fields.

It is equally important to adopt simple and appropriate food habits for the good health of the body and the mind. *Without taking care he body and the mind, it is almost impossible to achieve anything in this world, neither material nor spiritual.*

## **2. Professional Goals**

Professional goals relate to the profession in which people are engaged. For example, if you are a doctor, what do you want to achieve in that field? If you are scientist, what do you want to contribute to your profession? If you are an industrialist, what would you like to achieve in this field?

**Do you have a clear vision and mission for your business, profession or the organisation?**

You have to draw up a clear plan for your profession or organisation based on certain time frame and work out strategies to achieve these goals. Achieving these goals is equally important.

## **3. Social Goals**

Social Goals relate to serving the society. What are your goals towards serving the society? How do you like to contribute to the upliftment and well-being of the humanity? Along with personal and professional goals, it is essential that we do something for the benefit of the society. **In my opinion social goals are those activities, which do not fetch us any return in terms of personal assets or money.**

We do not expect anything in return for the time we spend or the physical or mental efforts, which we contribute towards serving the society. **This is done absolutely out of compassion towards the fellow beings.**

Each one can do something or the other to the best of his/her ability, knowledge and skill towards

the society. This part is equally essential in everyone's life. All these contributions ultimately lead to greater purpose for the well-being of the society and help building a strong nation. Retaining and enriching our cultural and spiritual values, improving the literacy levels, improving the health conditions of the masses, developing adequate and suitable infrastructure and contributing towards such social objectives are some of the essential components for building a great society.

Yet another dimension in the social goal is the duty that is entrusted with every human being to **protect the Mother Nature. It is important to save this Earth and its environment from pollution and global warming, so that the people of the future generations would enjoy their lives with great peace and without any danger.**

#### **4. Spiritual Goal**

**Spiritual goal is nothing but experiencing the Oneness**, which leads to tranquility and balance of mind, all the time and in all situations while we live in this world. In other words, in all the other three goals, we have a feeling of "I" ness; like, "I" have created so much wealth; "I" have done a great job; "I" have created a great hospital....so on and so forth.

**But the essence of the spiritual goal is to eliminate that "I" ness.** It is nothing but the "ego" which will be absent while experiencing the Oneness. Ultimate goal of all faiths, philosophies and religions is to eliminate the ego and experience the divinity in us. That is the spiritual goal and the ultimate path.

#### **Five Fundamental Principles of Living**

Now having had a clear understanding of these goals of life, let us think of how to achieve them. How do we fulfil all these goals? What are the ways? That is where we have to understand and adopt the **Five Fundamental Principles of Living.**

While explaining these principles of living, one has to understand that all these principles are inter-related and inter-linked. If we follow one principle with its core value and greater commitment, all the other principles follow automatically. People can take up any one of these principles depending on their understanding of the principles or based on their environmental factors.

They are as follows:

## **1. Purity of Mind**

## **2. Perfection in Duty**

## **3. Unconditional Love**

## **4. Selfless Service**

## **5. Sacrifice**

### **1. Purity of Mind**

Purity is everything. **Purity is the starting point and the ending point.** Purity in thoughts speech and action is the most important principle of living. **The degree of happiness or the degree of peace of mind is directly proportional to the degree of purity of your mind.**

Mind is considered to be pure when it is away from anger, greediness, envy, ego and such other things which affect the peace of mind. Anything or any activity or any thought or even a word, which disturbs the peace of mind has to be dealt with great care and with full awareness.

Mind is pure when it is at peace. There is no difference between 'purity of mind and peace of mind. When mind is not at peace, it is not pure at all. Mind is at peace when it rests with the Absolute Consciousness or the Supreme Consciousness. Any activity done when the mind is at peace or with the Supreme Consciousness, there is no disturbance. **Purity is not just a theory to be studied but a practice to be experienced.** We become what we continuously think and do. Purity becomes a way of life when we continue the practice of being pure.

### **2. Perfection in Duty**

A person is said to have done his duties perfectly, only when his mind is pure and when it is at peace. **Perfection in duties is nothing but adopting the concept of Karma Yoga.** Wherever we are and whatever is the position we hold, whether in the domestic or professional or in public affairs, let us do our duties with perfection. Let us do our best in executing our duties in the role which we play at the present; may be, as a son or a daughter or as the mother or the father or as an employee or an employer or;--3s husband or as wife or as some professional. "If I am a doctor, let me do my best; if I am a teacher, let me do my best".

When the mind is pure, our duties become perfect. **Perfection does not expect anything in return.** Perfection becomes automatic and natural when our mind does not attach with the results of our duties. Mind gets disturbed when it attaches itself with the outcome of the results of the duties, **Let us do our duties to the best of our ability and knowledge. There ends the matter.**

## **Rest follows with joy and peace.**

While it is important to perform our duties with great perfection, let us not forget to allocate some of our time for experiencing music, arts and the nature, and time for being, with children, friends, Elders and with valuable books.

### **3. Unconditional Love**

Love does not have any stigma. True Love is always pure and it does not have any condition. **I love you for no reason. I love you not for any return or reward.** My love to anybody or anything shall not have any condition otherwise, it is not pure.

**Rain does not fall on selected persons; it showers on all people without any distinction. So is love.** Love does not exhibit any distinction or difference. Love is unconditional. Love is pure when the mind is pure and is at peace. Love is purity of mind. When we do our duties with perfection and adopt Karma Yoga, we are in love with everything and everybody. Love is duty. Love is purity.

There is no difference between Love, Purity and Duty. They are one and the same. **Just like God is named by different people in different ways, different people understand love, purity and duty with their own knowledge and experiences. But everything is the same. Love, duty, purity, service and sacrifice are one and the same;** they are nothing but godliness; they are divine; they lead us beyond to the Origin. Origin is the Self, the Supreme Consciousness. That is the state of tranquility; that is the state in which one experiences the divinity or the Oneness.

### **4. Selfless Service**

The greatest men are the pure servants of fellow beings. Service is out of pure love. The hero and the villain of this life is our mind. When mind rests in consciousness, the hero in men works. When mind operates on its own, the villain finds his way to work. Service is divine. Any service that gives happiness, joy and peace to the fellow beings is great.

There is great energy in serving above one's self. Service is yet another route to reach divinity. It is the route to make the mind pure. It could be either physical or mental. Pure meditation is also a great service. In pure meditation, we do not ask for anything; but the energy dispersed creates and spreads enormous amount of positive vibrations to the environment.



## 5. Sacrifice

Sacrifice does not mean just giving away of certain material things or certain physical objects. It is beyond that. **The highest of the sacrifices is the sacrificing of the "I" ness; sacrificing the 'ego ness, that is the real sacrifice.** That is possible only when our mind is pure and when we do our duties with great perfection.

**Mind minus ego is divine. It is purity. it is Sakthi and Mukthi. That is enlightenment,. That is the liberation and the greatest achievement of human being.** When we execute all our duties without ego, we are already on the path towards reaching the Ultimate Truth which is the highest point of human excellence.

## Conclusion

Having understood that there is no option other than to live, let us live with joy and peace. And having understood that nothing is permanent in this world, let us not compromise our joy and peace for those impermanent things. Understanding this reality, let us be in action.

Let us march towards achieving our personal, professional, social and spiritual goals, adopting the five fundamental principles of living namely, purity of mind, perfection in duties, unconditional love, selfless service and sacrifice. Let us also understand that purity, duty, love, service and sacrifice are all one and the same. This is the way of living a complete life. Let us enjoy our life with joy and peace. **Let us love our life. Let us love the living. Let every moment of our life be joyful and peaceful.**

Note : Reprinted from the book 'Art of Complete Living' by Dr. M.Settu.

**Continued in the next issue.....**