Non-Traditional Forms of Education

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There is widespread rethinking on strategies of education throughout the Third World today. Most of the new thinking occurs within the framework of decolonisation of our cultural structures of which education is one. In this article based on an address to a recent international conference on non traditional education in the Third World, Dr. Premadasa Udagama examines the context within which education occurs in our region. Dr. Udagama is Secretary to the Ministry of Education.

If we take our traditions prior to the Vasco da Gama period of Asian history then our educational traditions are perhaps the oldest and had been emulated by the then undeveloped world. This tradition, though half forgotten, was able to build the Great Wall of China and the Tajmahal in India and also the great Buddhist structures in Anuradhapura and later the Anghkor Vat in Cambodia. So are also the impressive artefacts of most of our hydraulic societies. Education then existed in some form in all our ancient Asian traditional cultures. But these were eroded away gradually by the impact of the Colonial powers in Asia.

Vasco da Gama's advent in Asia had an immediate influence on our traditional education. The imperial superiority in warfare and trade was also connected with the silent admiration, perhaps, of their educational traditions. Missionary activity and its pervading influence on education have left their indelible marks on our education systems. It is perhaps more relevant to refer to this second tradition, as more germane to our discussion.

This tradition or the unanalysed opinion or belief or custom in education had a number of basic features. The traditional school was oligarchic and had its own clientele. The western classical tradition provided the "standard" school for the dominant classes, intellectuals, rulers, law givers and conquerors. This kind of 'superior school' provided the *standard education* in all colonial countries. The other schools which started about the 18th century in Europe were for the masses. These were mostly vocational schools catering to the lower classes; in Asia it was the vernacular school of the missionary. The European education tradition, which came to us therefore, had two kinds of education for two kinds of people, the leaders and the led, the superior and inferior, the elite and others.

The education given in this type of school was of a literary kind, with a cognitive model of knowledge and relied on memory. The teacher, book and the black-board symbolised the methodology of instruction. It was exclusive in the selection of the personnel and the content of its curriculum. Basically, this kind of school was generally organized to exclude the masses and acted as a single track sieve to identify the elect.

This education device also resembled the modern production line of industry. The examination, diploma and employment mechanism in the Colonial model gave it an unwarranted prestige. Education had a monetary value of a high order. A permanent administrative professional career was assured to those who successfully left its portals. All these characteristics of the school were given a mystique by various rituals, dress styles and traditions.

This class-biased educational tradition also developed a psychology to support its philosophy. The objectives, the curricula, the organization and prestige of this implanted system continue to impress us and are with us even today. Most of the Universities in Asia continue to uphold this tradition as centres of elitism, of high culture and aloofness from the masses and the people.

Dr. Majid Rahnema, the Iranian member of the Commission which produced *Learning to be* has subsequently written an epitaph rather optimistically of this school.

"This is a sample of 'scola occidentalia', a drug that first grew in the European towns of the late middle ages. Thereafter, Western man experimented with it for expanding his consciousness and his learning and technical capacities. In the 20th century although the drug could not be found in its old natural setting and its price had increased incredibly, the whole world was addicted to it. The drug had lost most of its original qualities, especially after it was produced and processed *en masse* for export to so-called developing countries. Addicts were no longer *happy* using it. For it had caused strange disorders in their personality such as alienation, a compulsive urge for competitive achievement, success and status and a disease called 'diploma-mania' resulting in loss of appetite for genuine creative and experiental learning. The drug produced such dysfunctionality and tensions at the individual and social levels that massive action was felt necessary against it. It cost the peoples of the world much time, money, frustration and indeed wisdom and political determination before the advent of the learning society put an end to the indiscriminate use and abuse of the drug. Some elder traditional communities still use it for disciplinary and regimentation purposes."

UNESCO and other world agencies, in the last two decades, have realised that this traditional education given as a gift of the West to the Third World is of no value or consequence in the modern context:

Countries in Asia even after the inauguration of the Karachi Plan in 1960 have realised with concern that this educational process is not geared to solve any of our national problems.

Non-traditional education, in my mind, probably refers to a new education that we have to evolve away from the traditional Western-oriented education systems that were implanted on our societies. In a sense this non-traditional education is now taking the form of looking back towards ancient education traditions.

When many authorities define non-traditional education in another educational terminology as formal, non-formal and informal, it appears that the formal refers, in our context, to the education system imposed or borrowed from the West. The non-formal and informal education traditions have continued for thousands of years to serve the masses of our countries. It is only now that these ancient systems of education have become respectable as western scholars are beginning to realise their relevance in the solution of our problems.

This western traditional education in the Third World has basically given aspirations and expectations of urban living in our society. It is basically anti-work oriented. With its middle class orientation this education system could not explore our national problems with understanding and feeling. The food shortage, unemployment, poverty and shelter were not posed as problems in education. It is only after independence in some of our societies that we were bullied into action by the masses.

The formal education system in our societies was therefore not an instrument of education but acted as a sieve for selection for social mobility to join the upper classes. Most of our education systems served less than half the children. We have abandoned the true meaning of education for the purpose of selection for the well paid professions. Its selective function served well the elitist system of education. It was fostered by popular appeals to "standards" in education. These traditions have become sacrosanct, holy and unquestionable. Education mythology of the elite continue to guide us in the development and planning of education at all levels in all our countries. Examinations have become a major weakness in educational innovation. The implicit faith that examinations measure what they ought to measure is one such myth. That they are scientific, fair and just is one of the biggest myths that intellectuals continue to impose on our masses.

The elite school system provided an extended tutelage for the upper middle class young men or women for about 15 to 18 years. It is however against nature and against the growth of young men and women. That this long tutelage provides them with adequate knowledge, skills and abilities for the rest of their lives is the other myth that confounds us today.

The Achievements of Traditional Education

May we, for a moment, digress to survey the Asian scene and see the "achievements" of the traditional education?

A UNESCO document maintains, 'Asia has the largest illiterate population in the world. The total number of illiterates is around 243 million. The rate of illiteracy, however, varied from country to country from 70% to 10%. Except in Japan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and the Philippines the literacy rate of the total population is woefully low.

The percentage of youth in the total population is high in Asia. About 30 to 35 per cent of the population in Asia is in the age group 15 to 19. About 40 per cent of the population in Korea, Philippines, Thailand and Sri Lanka are below the age of 15. We do know that a large percentage of these children are not in school.

Equally disturbing is the high rate of drop-outs or 'push-out' of children and youth in our systems. In my own country nearly 50% of children in 1968 left school before completing the first level of education. The situation has improved substantially after our education reforms were implemented in 1972. In the whole continent only about 10-15 per cent have completed primary education and only 4-6 per cent have completed secondary education. The ILO estimated that about 23 per cent of the age group 10-14 in Sri Lanka and the Philippines is in the labour force in agriculture and domestic service. In India the estimate is as high as 40 per cent.

The statistical picture is quite dismal. The content of education is equally so. An UNESCO report observed 'an education which today does not provide a good background of scientific and technological knowledge and skill is sadly unbalanced and defective. Only a bold and imaginative overhaul of the curricula in general education can make a significant change in the desired direction.' Many Asian countries have organized or are in the process of getting curriculum development centres to overhaul their curricula at the first and second levels of education as we have done in Sri Lanka from 1972. A similar effort is, needless to say, wanting in the third level as well.

Regional differences in the provision of educational facilities cause heavy imbalance in our system. Many areas in dry regions, mountainous tracts, forested areas and regions with a scanty population are educationally deprived. So are the working classes even in urban centres. The poor masses in rural areas are the worst affected and the most deprived groups in Asia.

Where do we go from here? Literacy by itself is of no consequence unless geared to production. The sophisticated curriculum of the elite school will never solve the educational problems of the masses. Our people will forever be relegated to a 'Language of silence', even in the modern society. Even in societies like mine, which had made great strides in education, the problem of the education of the masses is not solved.

We have here the generation gap in education. We have the earlier generation with 4 to 5 years of schooling and the second generation with 8 to 10 years of schooling and a substantial percentage of youth doing higher education. The yawning education gap between the generation of their fathers and sons, mothers and daughters remains as wide as ever. This gap could only be filled by what is called non-traditional education.

I would certainly agree to call this non-formal education rather than non-traditional. The traditional or the formal education means "an age-based

knowledge specific education in formal institutions" from which the masses are excluded. The poor have rejected its curriculum as it makes no sense to them. That explains to some extent, the high drop-outs and also the non-attendance of children in our societies. This traditional or the formal system is not a way to build a national learning system because congnitive knowledge is not all that a culture requires for its survival and development.

Those of us involved in the process of education share that responsibility for those who leave school: children, youth, adult men and women. All Universities and other third level educational institutions are no exception. Universities, as they exist today, are a luxury for all our nations. It is structured for a specific youth group, in the traditional learning so that they become teachers, administrators, lawyers, doctors and engineers. The society itself which supports its very existence is excluded by its formidable appearance and its social exclusiveness. It is alien to our people. These have become islands of western sophistication rather than light houses for the dissemination and creation of knowledge to understand our people.

Universities, with all their agglomeration of buildings and mechanical workshops and laboratories remain closed for nearly half the year and for the rest of the year they work only for one third the time of the day. The storehouses of knowledge are locked. Its learned people are aloof and unapproachable and its roots are not in our soil but in the international intellectual world, of the western countries. In fact even the Asian intellectual groups are not in close contact. They have no collective conscience. It is a harsh statement to make and it is certainly not applicable to all Asian intellectuals. I share these views as one of you in a sense of self-criticism.

With my experience with the regional office of UNESCO and the Asian Programme for Education Innovation and Development (APIED), I am happy to note that all school systems in Asia are making vast efforts to break away from the traditional education and are making meaningful changes to serve their respective societies. Unfortunately, this cannot be said of the Universities in Asia. I hope greater efforts will be made by our Academicians to correct this conservatism and move forward towards the provision of a meaningful University education for their people. The World University Service is performing a worthy function convening all these academics to re-think on the role of Universities in non-traditional education.

It is high time that the major Universities form part of the mass education movement in Asia and serve the purpose of the development of its own people and societies. Our Universities should be more open to all the people and should no longer remain the preserve of the elite nor contain elite preserves. Its storehouse of knowledge should be made available to all as it is the most important capital of the third world countries. Our own Universities, as many others, I am happy to note are moving in this direction by the organisation of Workers' Education, extra-mural classes and by their active participation in the nation's economic and social development. The concept of the 'Open University' initiated in UK is making a heavy impact on all our societies and it augurs well for the future.

I am informed that this workshop is mainly concerned with three aspects of non-traditional forms of education of the Third World. The Workers' Continuing Education, Family Life Education and Development Education. One could however, think of more areas which the Universities may help develop in the future.

Our University education pre-supposes intellectuals immersed in a world of books and ideas of modern knowledge. How can all these resources be made available to our workers? Our workers remain semi-literate or illiterate, poor hardworking and unaware of their rights and privileges and their obligations. The peasants who have become urban workers and workers in the industrial centres need greater guidance in their work habits, living conditions and attitudes in their work places, in their own homes and in the sharing of national responsibilities. These peoples need the benefits of our humanistic traditions, understanding and co-operation rather than a formalistic patronising regard by the intellectual elite.

I am sure, the experience from all Universities in Asia will help us move forward to organize such relevant non-traditional forms of education that will help all our societies.

Before we continue in this vein, let us be clear about this non-traditional or non-formal education. It is defined as "any organised educational activity outside the established formal system, whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity that is intended to serve identifiable learning clientele and learning objectives." Our societies have provided this kind of non-formal education for ages. Adult education in various forms, extension services, on-the-job training, in-plant training, apprenticeship youth organisation, religious and craft organizations are well known to us. But we have not been able to co-ordinate the formal and non-formal systems of education in our societies.

The infra-structure already exists in our mass media (printing press, the newspapers, cinema, radio, T.V., folk theatre, and drama) in our public service agencies in private industry, and in our rural education agencies (in our temples, churches, mosques, in the home, farm and smithy and workshop). A meaningful co-ordination of these agencies and that of our educational institutions await the leadership of the highest agencies of education — the University and the Higher Educational Institutions. Basic research in this area is needed to make new inroads by the Universities in this sphere. Life is organised in our societies as education and no work —and work and no education. This artificial separation of work and learning must disappear. Work and study, so familiar to our academics as teaching research must pervade all areas of work and study in our societies. The methodology of instruction in non-formal education needs much

basic research to foster change and innovation. In the continuing education process we need courses which are short and intensive in nature. The variations within systems as well as from country to country are to be encouraged. However, a catalogue of possibilities may be expressed in order to draw the attention of the Workshop. "Correspondence courses, television courses, sandwich type of courses, self-study, in-service training courses, using staff from institutions and industry, evening courses, day or block release courses, and staff exchanges between institutions and industry are all possible methods of continuing education."

Public debates, seminars, workshops, tutorials are the conservative methods of the elite system which still may be made relevant for continuing education.

In order to focus the attention on the main themes of the Workshop, I am reluctantly compelled to place before you some proposals for the content of education in the three areas — continuing worker education, family life education and development education.

Continuing Workers' Education Programme

The anti-establishment literature on education is pervasive enough to note that continuing education is a necessity for all grades of society. The very nature of the education establishment has kept the peasant, worker and the poor away from any education even in the developed world The Asian situation is even more frustrating for these classes as we have not yet seriously examined the psychology, sociology and the culture of the poor even to think of a potential curriculum for their schooling.

Our traditional University education, excepting in a few rare instances, was a permanent information service geared to the pre-educated youth. This specialised knowledge is no longer relevant or useful for the lower classes. The working class has yet to find a worker education movement in Asia.

If we examine briefly the state of education in Sri Lanka of the employed our record cannot be a happy one in spite of our efforts to equalize educational opportunity. In 1969-70 there were 17% illiterate, 43% had less than five years of schooling and only 11% had ten or more years of schooling.

These figures refer to the total employed population and to the group we refer to as the working class. The urban situation in Colombo appeared to be even worse. Of the slum and shanty dwellers in Colombo one fourth had not attended school at all. 47% have dropped out at the primary stage. Only 3% had ten years of schooling. The educational level of the shanty dwellers in the primate cities of Asia are even lower. In most Asian primate cities they constitute a larger percentage of the population than in Colombo.

The Worker Excluded

The old education system has excluded the worker. True poverty has alienated him from even the informal education that is so rich in the village. The condition of the peasant is far worse in most Asian societies unlike in Sri Lanka where a school is found within a range of 2 miles in every village. The peasantry has also been neglected as a traditional education in many Asian societies is an urban phenomenon.

What kind of education can we organise for this class? The content and method of education and the sensitivity of the teacher are important in organising continuing worker education at any level and more so at the University. We, in Sri Lanka, on an initiative taken by the Minister of Education have nearly 4 years of limited experience in organising a Worker Education Programme. It is now organised under a separate institute of Worker Education in the University of Sri Lanka. Our experience is very limited. Some of our neighbours have organised similar experimental ventures. It is an area in which we can pool our experiences for future development.

Construction of curricula for this kind of continuing education will certainly be a major problem for University Academics anywhere. Many Western institutions have set up research centres for this type of continuing education. West Germany is a case in point. We need to have in-depth studies in sociology of the working class as a first step in course development.

Challenge to Established Educational Institutions

It will not, I hope, be considered impertinent if a few ideas are placed before you for your study in the workshop. Any Worker Education Programme should devote itself to the development of language. In all societies it is well established that the entry of the working class to the educational establishment is hindered by poor language learning at home and in their sub-culture. To them the world of ideas, of concepts and ways of thought are a closed book. Yet the world must speak to the worker and he to the world. Then only will the worker be able to work towards his liberation and play an active role in his community and society.

In the developing world Science and Technology are necessary for development. The world of work and of labour have to come to terms with modern science and technology. It should be the Asian Universities' role to foster what Kurt Meissener calls 'Public Science'. It will be a challenging task for scientists and their institutions, as science is developing in our society in a hot-house atmosphere. Only 5% of the living scientists are in the developing countries and in the whole world only 15 to 30 countries are involved in furthering scientific research.

If technology is the application of science and the means to improve economic production, the new technology has to be placed before the working classes as a form of their self improvement and that of the economic development of their societies. How one could achieve this aim will be a challenge for a long time to our established educational institutions.

The working classes in the Asian context is a new human group in our societies. The workers coming from the rural environment, whether engaged in Agriculture or Handicrafts, had a different life pattern compared to what modern industry required. Its adjustment from one milieu to another calls for the adaptation of the total personality in work at home and at leisure. How this transition is to be brought about smoothly for greater social betterment will be a great challenge for the teacher and the social worker in our society. As education and social work, as practised now, are basically of western origin, how these areas could be helpful for the working classes has to be reassessed in the context of our development problems.

In rural society, work, leisure and social obligations were truly combined in a harmonious fashion. But the worker thrown into an urban slum area has to face many odds and prolems in the correct use of leisure. The autocratic promotion of all leisure time activities as laid out by Henry Ford (according to Antonic Gramasci) when he started new industrial managment techniques is a pointer to the needs for the organisation of leisure time activities of the working class in a capitalist productive system. A healthy worker needs creative leisure time activities for his own good and that of his workplace. In the continuing education, cultivating the senses of the worker, i.e. his sight, hearing and feeling ought to take a prominent place in the new curriculum.

Our traditional education was organised for a conformist society. This education is not going to help the masses face the challenges of their time and their society. Our effort ought to be to make our world more intelligible and more manageable for the worker. Then only will anguish be overcome and peace, culture and humanity prevail in the whole society.

Family Life Education

There was a time when ideas of teaching family life in schools were ridiculed. Now this idea is accepted by even the elitist education systems. Family life in our transitional societies are undergoing many traumatic changes both in the rural and urban sectors.

In the rural sector the traditional cultural pattern of the family was its group cohesiveness, responsibility of members of the family to the group and to one another. The family functioned as a work, religious and social unit.

In the urban sector, specially in the primate cities the migration of large rural masses in search of work is creating problems. They come without an adequate education, housing and motivation for new types of work which requires discipline. The slum and shanty dwellers are creating problems of their own. Males predominate. The migration pattern in Colombo shows a similarity to many Asian cities. Of the migrants 69% were males and the remaining 31% were females.

Low income increase in the occupancy rate of urban dwellings, limited public utilities and other socio-economic characteristics make family living a problem in many ways. In *New Paths to Learning*, Coombes Prasad and Ahmad have proposed a curriculum in family living. 'Functional knowledge and skills for raising a family and operating a household, including the essential elements of protecting family health, family planning where appropriate, good child care, nutrition and sanitation; cultural activities and recreation, care of the injured and sick, intelligent shopping and use of money; making clothes and other consumption goods, house repairs and environmental improvements; growing and preserving food for family consumption.'

This is a fairly comprehensive list of topics. In the urban sector it is necessary to think of interpersonal relationships, kind of Government or welfare services obtainable, adjustments to living in high-rise flats in many cities (which seriously affect children's growth) protecting common public facilities may be further items in developing curricula. The nexus of the rural and the urban cultural norms should be retained. Otherwise the transition from the rural to the urban milieu may leave a wide gap causing great personal strain. The urban ruling classes should not impose an undue restraint on rural style of living.

Development Education

Education is development, but not all education is development-oriented. Traditional education certainly was not organised to foster development in our society. The question arises how do we organise development education for our masses so that they become fully effective human beings in their own societies.

We have seen in the past two to three decades the mushroom growth of development institutions in many countries. We have also been true followers of the leadership provided by these institutes. Can we appraise the theories and developing programmes based upon their research as valid for our societies.?

The idea of development itself is changing fast from that of a quantitative increase, in the national product to that of a better distribution of the resources for healthier societies in Asia. As traditional education was not work-oriented, our purpose ought to be to link the world of education with the world of labour. Education must be geared for economic production and our totality of the education process, whether it is formal, traditional or modern, must be work-oriented, but this statement is contradictory to all the processes of education in our traditional education systems. In other words we have to re-value or re-deploy and change our five thousand-year education tradition to meet the development needs of our society. The earliest scholar of our society whether it is a Brahmin, Monk or Bhikku had all the extenal forms of an intellectual who would not engage in manual labour. To break this tradition needs a great commitment on the part of the Asian intellectual to combine education with practical work. It also requires a change of heart and of mind in the traditional modes of thought and action, and this change is indispensable for a social transformation. It is time to think that 35% of the world's rural population live in Asia.

Education in a traditional sense was selective, book centred and urban oriented. The western traditional

education of the colonial past emphasised the elitist function of education and generally the community was consciously kept out of the eduation process. Development oriented educators must take this realistic situation and see that education is used for the integration with the community and the community with the school. For example, our proposed project work in the senior secondary school curricula programme is organised with this purpose in view. The school and the community must come close together and the knowledge and skills of the schools must be used for community development. Community knowledge must also be used by the school for its own understanding and to carry out its obligation to society.

We have tried, over the last three years a kind of non formal education of out of school youth, who come for technical-vocational training after school hours on two or three days of the week. No diplomas are given and over 600 schools have participated in this programme this year. This programme is gaining ground and will be organised in all schools in the future.

What idea of development should we foster in our new education programmes! Is it more roads, more buildings, more shops that we need or is it more schools, better housing, better medical care, better working conditions that we have to 'plan' in the development process! If development education means a trust and faith in the masses for their own improvement, then we must be able to build self confidence in our masses to meet their own challenges. The dignity of being human, the dignity of labour, the ability of collective work must all be stressed so that we will be self reliant in economic development.

If we are thinking in terms of a new man in our society organised for development, then we must seriously consider what this man should be. In his knowledge and background, his work habits, social life and his political activities are we prepared to think anew what this man's needs are and his aspirations ought to be.

My point here is to state categorically that no one group or institute has so far solved for us what development education ought to be. It is incumbent on all of us here, especially from the Universities to examine realistically, what kind of education is useful for the development of our societies.

The traditional school has failed. Non-formal aspects of education are necessary to improve the closed education systems of our societies. What this non-formal or non-traditional form of education ought to be would be the subject of much debate for some time. We must not rush into copying systems developed elsewhere. They have been found wanting in their application to their own societies.

What we are now engaged in is not development of an esoteric science or art of education but an education that will be open to the masses and at the same time not restricted by age, by class, by place, or by any other social determinant. If for example, the lecture, seminar, tutorial-methodology is not going to deliver the goods, we must keep an open mind about the other methods of education-discussion or debate or mass media or informal education.

Our curriculum development work in the schools has taken a new turn, as for example as we have done in Sri Lanka. We are generally aware of the processes, purpose and the content of new curricula. Are we aware that specialist education fostered in the University is not suitable for a mass education? Are we aware that the old methods of instruction are already hackneyed in the mass education movement towards the provision of a meaningful, dynamic education in the Universities?

I have posed some of the problems for your deliberations. I am confident that the Asian intellectuals are able to face up to this challenge with an intellect of feeling and commitment rather than an intellect of dispassionate aloofness from the masses. The humanistic tradition in the Asian societies could guide us in looking at this future world that you and I are going to create in our respective societies through education.

CRISIS SITUATION IN U.K.'s ECONOMY

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Minus the nicety of fiscal technicalities and politics, Britain is to-day behaving more like a businessman who is in a tight corner by landing his company in a crisis of his own making because of bad management. He has borrowed so much that his bank has little choice but to still lend him more to ensure that he does not go bankrupt. At best, the bank can guide him, set-up new ground rules to keep him floating and hope that he will improve his ways. This, in a nut-shell, is what the British Chancellor of the Exchequer Mr. Healey is doing by applying for a massive £2,300 millions loan from the International Monetary Fund to tide things over for a few months.

Mr. Healey is being compared to an alcoholic reaching for the bottle to shut out the realities for a little longer. But the reality is that Britain has come to the limit of its credit. This could be Britain's last breathing space before the British Government loses effective control over its economic destiny.

Senior IMF officials are expected to arrive in London in October to discuss future British economic policies and strategy with the Labour Government. To put it crudely, they will be going through the account books, and tell the Labour Government to get on with the job of reorganising the country's economy without ideological and egoistic hangups.

The heart of the matter is that the British are living beyond their means and they must accept the reality of a substantial fall in their living standards if their production methods and export performance do not improve.

All these years Britain has been steadily borrowing and sterling balances held by non-residents, have been piling up. At the end of July, they totalled £6,335 millions. Of this, half are held by foreign central banks and another £3,224 millions—just over half—was in non-official foreign hands. Britain is not in a position to liquidate these foreign balances or debts. Paying off over £6,000 millions, even if stretched over a decade or more, would be a heavy burden on the balance of payments which can only improve if the country exports more than it imports and creates a healthy gap to pay off the debts. But in the present climate of the British economy such prospects look remote because of the growing structural weakness of British political life. The IMF loan will certainly come. But it is not earned money but a means to earn more wealth.

But if Britain fritters away the new IMF overdraft or loan because of indecision, inefficiency and a desire to live beyond its means, then there will be little left of its financial credibility. Both Britain and sterling could become bad risk. Many observers one talks to here suspect this could well happen unless there is a fundamental change in the British political system.