



## Libertarians, Capitalist Culture & Faith in Public Square

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**Abstract:** *This paper is an attempt to highlight the close proximity between Liberalism, Capitalism and Libertarianism and the manner in which this nexus has adversely effected social institutions and natural order causing emotional and psychological suffocation of varied intensity at different levels. It also dwells into the concept of global market competitiveness, which has its inspiration in the Darwinian thesis of the survival of the fittest, as the lifeblood of corporate giants, investment visionaries and policy- makers the world over. An analysis is also made as to how in a short span of time, , capitalist system engulfed almost every aspect of human life in its fold with a magnetic touch and fast speed. How market economy was culminated into a market society commercializing almost everything in and around the world and how liberalism provided fertile ground for growing capitalist culture in which free choice, commodification, accumulation of limitless wealth and commercialization of social life are the fundamental virtues.*

**Keywords:** *Avarice, Capitalist Culture, Commercialization, Faith, Free Competition, Libertarianism*

### I. Introduction

Capitalism is a peculiar form of class Society. Like the previous class societies it involves a minority section of society grabbing the surplus created by the hard work of the rest of society (Chris Harman, 2004; 1). Market with its invisible hand is at the centre-stage of capitalist economic system. It is always in control, always infallible, and always to be obeyed. Market requires demands, punishes and restructures society's production, distribution and survival across the globe (John McMurtry, 1999; 37).

The vehicle of the Industrial Revolution was steam power which paved the way for the First Machine Age as it allowed mankind to overcome the limitations of muscle power (both human and animal) and generated massive amounts of useful energy at will (Erik Brynjolfsson & Andrew McAfee, 2014; 5) The development of scientific method in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries made possible progressive conquest of nature. The modern Scientific and technological developments have made possible limitless accumulation of wealth and satisfaction of an ever-expanding set of human desires. It also results in an increasing homogenization of all human societies, regardless of their historical origins or cultural inheritances (Francis Fukuyama, 2006; XIV). It is true that the technology turns nature into assets but it is also a fickle friend as it can take away value or add it. For natural assets actually to be valuable in competitive struggle, their ownership must be regulated (Paul Collier, 2010; 4-5).

In fact, humanity's first Machine Age was driven primarily by technological innovation which led to the most profound time of transportation our world has ever seen. Factories, mass production, railways and mass transportation together paved the way for modern life (Erik Brynjolfsson & Andrew McAfee, 2014; 6). The intellectual basis of capitalist culture is that all countries undergoing economic modernization must increasingly resemble one-another. The basic themes of the growing market culture is driving States towards centralization, Urbanization, replacement of traditional social Organizations such as tribe, sect, and family in the name and on the basis of efficiency and rationality and propagation of Universal education for citizens (Francis Fukuyama, 2006;XV). The purpose, indeed, is to link these societies with one another through global markets and provide a smooth path for spreading a Universal consumer culture.

There is no doubt that the market economy has pushed stock markets to new heights, attacks government social spending, and even transforms social order overnight. Modern free markets work very well for some, not for most. In the process, society as a whole gets subjugated to the requirements of those who control market ( Aseem Shrivastava & Ashish Kothari, 2012;3). The hegemonic postures of market economy have become so pervasive that it is considered always right and is no more resistible than the laws of physics, and has created an impression that any deviation from its rule must inevitably end in disaster (John Mc Murtry, 1999; 38). This arrogance of the market economy and market society is opposed to civilization which is a power to renounce

and a control over selfishness, individual and corporate and also aspires for peaceful co-operation ( S.Radhakrishnan, 2006; 67).

## II. The Concept and Historical Context of Liberalism

The process of industrialization has immense transnational effects that no country was in a position to avoid. The effects were so massive and powerful that it even covered culture and expectations, biodiversity, climate, oceans and atmosphere.<sup>1</sup> But has the massive industrialization and unprecedented global affluence been able to reduce discrimination and eradicate life-threatening poverty? Conservative intellectuals argue that free markets and unfettered capitalism reduce discrimination. They also advance the argument that if we permit capitalism to flourish freely we will gradually see racism and discrimination wither away.<sup>2</sup> Milton Friedman vociferously advocated the view that worst cases of prejudice will vanish under capitalism.

It is true that free market had corrosive effect on discrimination. But we cannot lose sight of the fact that as capitalism flourishes, people become more materialistic and money-minded and driven by the urge to maximize profit and accumulate wealth.<sup>3</sup> If women, who are as productive as men, are available in the market at a lower wage than men, an entrepreneur who is solely driven by the desire to maximize profit will prefer to employ women unlike the traditional people who may be willing to incur cost to have a female free labour force. However, the desire for more and more profits may also lead to presence of discrimination under certain situations.<sup>4</sup> There is certainly a reason to believe that free markets which are fully competitive may also lead to discrimination and can flourish despite markets being free and there being no government intervention. The present global system is rooted in the world of business, trade, finance, media and technology. Today, globalization has become a way of life at the base of which is thinly concealed, perpetual quest for control and dominance by the elite of the world.<sup>5</sup>

The rise of modernity paved the way for liberal ideology which in turn developed simultaneously with the formation and growth of capitalism.<sup>6</sup> Capitalist world economy has been in existence for at least 500 years.<sup>7</sup> Capitalist system, therefore, rides smoothly on the wheels of modernity, liberalism and democracy. In fact, liberalism, modernity and capitalism were invented in Europe over the period of three centuries extending from the Renaissance to the French Revolution.<sup>8</sup> Capitalism secured its eventual victory with the end of cold war and drastically reduced nationalist sentiment and ignited the spark of a new transnational capitalist mode of production giving way to a highly liberal new world order.<sup>9</sup>

Modernity, indeed, is a product of a break arising in the history of humanity which first appeared in Europe in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is founded on the demand for emancipation of humanity from the yoke of social discriminations prevalent in the traditional forms of society. The liberal vision of society aspires for de-legitimization of power- in family, in communities and in the State which were based until then in metaphysics of a religious nature.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, modernity implies a break between religion and the state. Liberal democracy, individual freedom and popular sovereignty have received potentially universal validity ever since they first animated the French and American revolutions. The principles of liberty and equality have proven not just durable but resurgent.<sup>11</sup> Liberalism truly announced the end of history<sup>12</sup> and paved the way for market- driven societies.

In market-driven societies, ambitious people are found to pursue their interests forcefully, and the line between self-interest and greed often disappears. It is, indeed, the issue of success and failure that becomes most important and pursued more vigorously.<sup>13</sup> History shows that market, ambition, self-interest and greed lay at the heart of materialism which leads necessarily to the domination of market values penetrating all aspects of social life and subjecting them to their own logic. It is into this fertile ground that science, technology and organization as ideologies find not only refuge but also the most potent position. The tragedy is that this philosophy pushes to the limit of absurdity the separation between humankind and nature resulting in all forms of plunder of our beautiful planet.<sup>14</sup>

The twentieth century has brought a considerable amount of social and professional mobility, and the twenty first century will bring more,<sup>15</sup> this increasing social and professional mobility is fruitful for capitalist ideology to spread and assimilate more and more people and countries in its fold. In the second half of the twentieth century, liberalism opened its door to release its most potent representative known as 'libertarian theory of rights' with the concept of 'minimal state' as its lifeblood. It propagated that a state should maintain peace, enforce contracts and protect private property from theft and any state that does more than this is morally unjustified.<sup>16</sup> On the basis of this philosophical foundation, libertarians vehemently oppose laws to protect people from harming themselves. Seatbelt laws and motorcycle helmet laws are good examples.<sup>17</sup>

They also oppose using coercive force of law to promote notions of virtue or to express moral convictions of the majority. Laws to ban prostitution and homosexuality are two prominent examples of this opposition and protest worldwide. The proponents of libertarian theory also rule out promulgation of any law that requires some people to help others such as taxation for redistribution of wealth. They argue that redistributive taxes are a form or coercion.<sup>18</sup> These self-centered ideological overtones of the trilogy of liberalism, capitalism and libertarianism are vehemently visible in its opposition to a call for distributive justice in the economic zone.

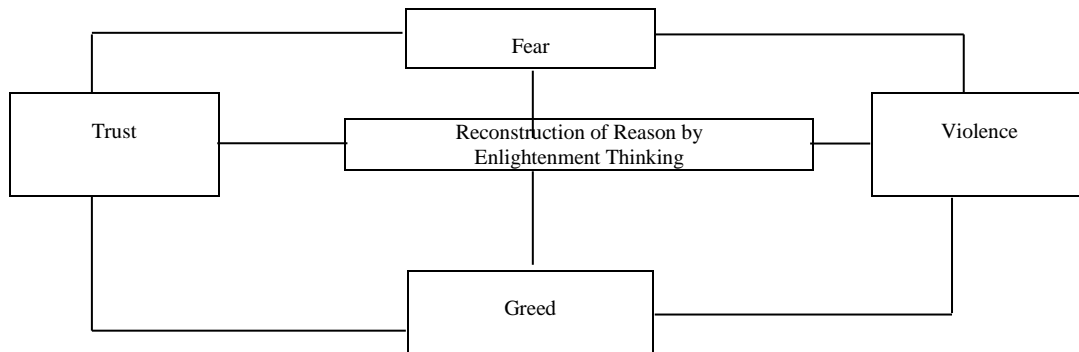
At the heart of libertarian thinking lays materialism in its most potent disregard of moral element in law and policy. A large number of proponents of welfare state hold libertarian views on issues such as gay rights, reproductive rights, freedom of speech and separation of church and state. It is, indeed, ironic to note that libertarians in their quest for total freedom miserably overlook the significance of equally important virtues such as equality, fraternity, economic justice and above all morality which had been prominent signs of major civilizations and modern life.<sup>19</sup>The constant struggle of libertarians for total freedom resulted in complete divorce of equality, fraternity, economic justice and morality in the post-modern period causing emotional and psychological suffocation in different parts of the world in general and in semi-educated /pseudo -educated societies of Asia and Africa in particular over last two decades or so.

### III. The Culture of Capitalism

The medieval world was dominated by metaphysical considerations in intellectual discourse in which religion played a vital role in general and Christianity in particular. But it was the age of Renaissance which threw metaphysics as fundamental consideration of intellectual discourse and brought materialism at the center-stage and thus opened the door for twofold radical transformation which shaped the present world. This new world freed itself from the metaphysical domination and laid the material foundations for the fertile growth of capitalist society and capitalist culture.<sup>20</sup>The effects of industrial society had been so pervasive that it transformed the metaphysical into physical, the inner into outer, the adventures of mind into wonders of technology.<sup>21</sup>

The influences material humanism took on further aspects with the philosophy of the Enlightenment and these philosophers were not only influenced by materialism but fiercely defended it. Materialism, indeed, is a dogmatic philosophy put forward by Greek thinkers as they were strong believers in individualism, competition and pleasure.<sup>22</sup> The Materialistic foundations of Enlightenment philosophy first disassociated ethics from religion by propagating the idea that ethics is independent of God. The ethics of Enlightenment thinking may or may not be of religious inspiration. God is present for those who credit him as the cause for emancipation but He disappears when this inspiration is only seen to be natural.<sup>23</sup>

In fact, the detachment of ethics from religious inspirations by the enlightenment intellectual stalwarts solidified materialism as the foundation of modern thinking and social life. It gradually paved the way for the idea that human beings are not responsible for the consequences of their acts leading to the disappearance of ethics from the human life and their routine affairs.<sup>24</sup>The enlightenment thinking, indeed, reconstructed the ‘reason’ itself in its own fashion which led to ‘reason’ being surrounded by fear, greed and violence in which trust became the ultimate casualty. The graphic presentation of the ‘vicious circle’ in which ‘trust’ got crushed may be placed asunder.



The modern man, most often called rational being found a fundamental logic in the statement that ‘we must compete harder’ in the global market’s money sequences. In fact, the call to societies to prove themselves in the ‘tough new global competition’ relates to a very primitive impulse which imagines itself to have won its individual, group and species placed in the kingdom of life by ‘life or death competition’.<sup>25</sup>This primitive concept of ‘life and death competition’ nurtured by global capitalist system in the most forceful manner is actually a maker of fascisms of all kinds. The philosophy that ‘succeed or perish’ in the brutal global competition is not far off Hitler’s call that ‘Humanity as a whole must flourish. Only the weak and cowardly will perish’.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, this ‘life-death competition’ and ‘more and more money’ sequence paves the way for a vicious cycle of greed, fear, violence and breach of trust plundering this beautiful planet in the worst form and manner.

### IV. Limitless Liberalism: Free Choice, Self-Ownership and Current Debates

In fact, the heart of libertarian thinking is materialism in its most potent form and as such it entirely disregards the moral element in law and policy. Market, ambition, self-interest and greed lie at the heart of materialism which had given way to market-driven societies in different parts of the world gradually creating an intellectual

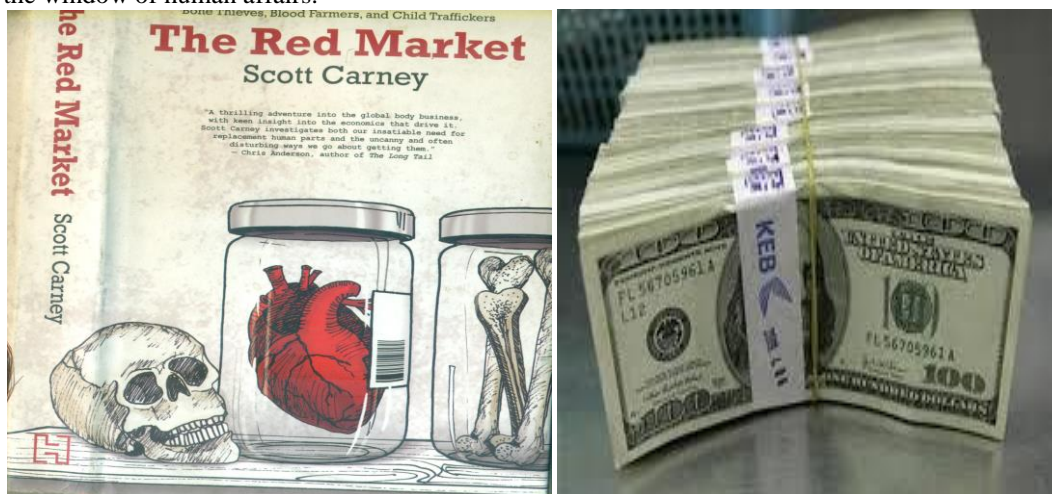
empire of its own.<sup>27</sup>In such market-driven societies, ambitious people are expected to pursue their interests vigorously, and the line between self-interest and greed often blurs.<sup>28</sup>Mahatma Gandhi is reported to have said that 'there is enough on this earth to meet the needs of all, but not the greed of all'.<sup>29</sup>

The philosophy of libertarianism emerged in opposition to welfare state. But there are many proponents of welfare state who hold libertarian views on controversial issues such as gay rights, reproductive rights, freedom of speech, and separation of Church and State.<sup>30</sup>During 1980s, libertarian ideas found vociferous expression in the pro-market, anti-government campaigns of Ronald Reagan in United States and British Iron-lady Margaret Thatcher in U.K.<sup>31</sup> In the intellectual circles, libertarianism has made its foes as friends and at the same time created enemies out of its friends.

Market economy knows no limits and it runs at the touchstone of buying and selling capacity in the market. As such whole of the human being or body parts are also commodified in the modern market. Some things are bought and sold openly while some other secretly. It is, indeed, horrible to know that a lucrative and deeply secretive trade in human bodies and body parts is going on in most of the developing countries from last few decades. Rich nations of the west make demand and poor developing countries make supply. Morality, equality and freedom are crushed between this demand and supply chain of market economy without panic and opposition.

The developed west needs great volumes of materials to supply its top medical schools for developing in its students a solid understanding of human anatomy. We may believe that our bodies are sacred and above the hard logic of the market yet the sale of human parts is booming.<sup>32</sup>Libertarians might justify this hard logic of market in human bodies and body parts on the ground of self-ownership and free choice. When I own my body, I may sell it or sell some of the body parts on my free will when alive and anyone else could sell whole of the body or body parts when I am dead.

Investigative journalist Scott Carney moves on to say in his awesome work '*The Red Market*' that several billion dollars worth of humanity changes hands every year. With more than six billion people in the world the supply is significant. There are just slightly fewer than six billion spare kidneys (or twelve billion if you are merciless) and almost sixty billion liters of blood in the global supply. There are enough corneas to fill a soccer stadium.<sup>33</sup>The only obstacle is right to life and liberty of such poor people and the supplementary support of intellectuals on ethical and religious basis. But worry not; libertarian call is slowly and steadily pushing them all out of the window of human affairs.



\*Source: Scott Carney's book '*The Red Market*' (Hachette India, Gurgaon).

The above pictures are adopted to highlight the growing human lust for more and more money leading to a secretive but easy flow of illicit and immoral business in human body parts. Human beings are exchanged, crushed and sold like chattels and slaves in this most advanced stage of human life. Does present advancement mean de-meaning human body? If so what is the advancement we have achieved?

Many studies show that in Egypt, India, Pakistan and the Philippines, entire villages sell organs, rent wombs, and give away rights to their bodies after death not only under duress, but also in mutually agreeable transactions. Middlemen who deal in human parts- often hospitals and government institutions, but sometimes the most notorious criminals buy the lowest possible price while assuring buyers that the parts come from ethically valid sources. Although procurement is sometimes abhorrent, the final sale is often easy and usually sanctioned by the implicit moral sanction of saving human lives. The gruesome crimes are covered in the veil of altruistic ideals.<sup>34</sup>

## V. Consensual Sex, Prostitution & Criminalizing Sex Business

There is no doubt that libertarian philosophy is a dominant ideology in the present day debates in the market and information driven societies the world over. In Bentham's hedonistic calculus of 'pleasure and pain', lies the intellectual base of libertarian philosophy as it strongly believes in total freedom, ownership of self and moral detachments. They, therefore, vehemently oppose the coercive force of law to promote notions of virtue or moral convictions of majority. They argue that prostitution may be morally objectionable to many people, but that does not justify laws that prevent consenting adults from engaging in it.<sup>35</sup>In a way, they support adults indulging in physical pleasures and prostitution on the basis of consent.

But one cannot deny the fact that in a large number of cases in different parts of the world, women enter in prostitution involuntarily. Germany has turned into a giant brothel and even a destination of European Sex tourism.<sup>36</sup> In Germany about 400,000 prostitutes are catering to 1 million men a day. The libertarians' would justify their involvement in prostitution on the basis of consent. But are they a part of the prostitution business voluntarily? It appears that girls from poor villages in Romania and Bulgaria might have been forced, tricked of, seduced to come to Germany. Once there, they are trapped as *Frischfleisch* (fresh meat), perhaps because they owe money to their traffickers or fear harm to their families at home.<sup>37</sup>



\*Source: *The Economist Newspaper Limited 2013.*

The above picture indicates the easy availability and free movement of girls of easy virtue from neighboring countries in Germany. This is another face of human greed for money in both the sellers as well as those who are sold and the lust for money and physical enjoyment lies at the heart of entire illicit affair. Is it not a pertinent sign of detachment of ethics from human affairs that gives them a reasoning to justify their stand in one form or the other?

Those opposing prostitution in Germany such as Alice Schwarzer conflate modern slavery and sex work arguing that they are "inextricably entangled." They are reduced to the status of sex slave as most cases never become known because the girls are afraid to testify. The link between liberalization of prostitution and human trafficking remains controversial.<sup>38</sup>

If we look towards Sweden which is culturally similar in many ways to that of Germany, it had made it a crime to pay for sex in 1999. It stigmatized not the prostitutes but the men who paid them, even it put them in jail, the Swedes hoped to come close to eliminating prostitution. Undoubtedly prostitution declined in Sweden whereas it flourished in Germany making it almost a destination for European sex tourism.<sup>39</sup> These examples make it crystal clear that keeping important issues such as prostitution away from the domain of law on the basis of consent, as argued by libertarians, would make 'consent' itself a mockery as observed in Germany.

Now let us look towards France has passed a new law that makes paying for sex illegal, while it is still legal for sex workers to sell their bodies. Now that the law is in place, anyone who is proved to have been paying for sex will face a €1,500 (\$1,707) fine, increased to €3,750 (\$4,267) should they get caught out a second time. The profile of sex workers in this country has undergone a drastic change.<sup>40</sup> Twenty years ago, 20 percent were foreigners. Today, 90 percent are trafficked into France from Eastern Europe, Africa, South America and China, mostly by prostitution rings. It is a system that generates \$40 billion a year, benefitting mainly those who are trafficking people and drugs.<sup>41</sup> France has actually imitated the penalizing element in its law from Sweden.

If one looks back in French history, one would find that French were known for their libertine tolerant approach towards prostitution. Under Napoleon Bonaparte, *filles de joice* were operating legally and brothels were inspected for health standards. It was only in 1946 that French started outlawing brothels. The libertarians argue that the State can't interfere with a woman's right to do whatever she wants with her own body. The rule makers also take a similar position but want that there should be some regulations.<sup>42</sup>

When we turn to India, current laws on prostitution are quite ambiguous. It is neither legal nor illegal. It is tolerated when sex workers practice it within 200 yards of a public place.<sup>43</sup> The Survey of the Ministry of Human Resource and Development reveals that prostitution is increasing in India. Of most of the uneducated

rural girls who are forced into this traditional profession, 60 percent belong to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes or Backward classes and two-thirds of prostitute families' live below the poverty line. Even children of Sex workers become victims of sexual abuse.<sup>44</sup>

The flesh trade is booming in India in places, one would not easily imagine such as Puducherry which is said to be a spiritual haven. A recent NDTV report states that it is impossible to find hotel space in Puducherry because of its spell-binding dance bars. At a cost of just Rs.250-300, in small rooms holding up to 300 high-spirited men, women enter wearing shawls around them. On local music called *ganna paatu*<sup>45</sup>, the women dance and once in a while take off the shawl around them. Every night, hotels earn up to Rs. 105 lakhs with about three illegal nude dance shows. The NGO's in the city claim that the women involved are from neighboring states and are held against their will by the highly organized sex trade.<sup>46</sup>

Moreover, except for call girls and escort girls who choose to sell their bodies or live the high life with temporary partners, the majority of sex workers experience the humiliation, harassment and perverse violation. In such a scenario, does the libertarian call for consensual sex hold water? Can a compulsive consent under inescapable circumstances valid? Does mere consent absolve the responsibility of State to protect human rights of prostitutes? The proponents of libertarian philosophy have to answer these queries lest the support for this immoral trade and female slavery will fall flat on the ground of mere consent.

## VI. Moral and Legal Dimensions of Same Sex Unions

The issue of gay and lesbian unions cannot possibly be considered without entering into moral and religious controversies about the purpose of the institution of marriage and the moral status of homosexuality. The libertarians support same sex marriage on liberal grounds that individuals should be free to choose their marital partners.<sup>47</sup> They argue that to allow heterosexual but not homosexual couples to get married wrongly discriminates against gay men and lesbians, denying them equality before law. Consequently, they plead for same sex unions on the basis of free choice and equality before law.<sup>48</sup>

The fundamental question in this debate is that whether gay and lesbian unions are worthy of the honor and recognition which the state sanctioned marriage confers? The underlying moral question in same sex marriage is, therefore, unavoidable. The proponents of gay marriage complain that restricting marriage to heterosexual unions alone is a kind of discrimination. Opponents claim that if the State sanctions gay marriage, it goes beyond tolerating homosexuality to endorsing it and giving it a government stamp of approval.<sup>49</sup>



\*Source: [www.life.time.com/history/gay-rights-photos-from-the-early-gay-liberation-movement-1971](http://www.life.time.com/history/gay-rights-photos-from-the-early-gay-liberation-movement-1971).

This picture is used to show that those who justify unnatural unions on libertarian foundation stand united to demonstrate that their cause is correct and needs mass support the world over. In fact, in the recent past, heated debates and discussions had appeared in Public Square in different parts of the world on the issue of same sex unions. Frequent public protests had been observed in some countries of European Union, Taiwan, Africa and India on the issue of homosexual unions and the attempts to criminalize such acts. European Union Countries are the champions of gay rights but their attempts to glorify such rights has placed them into hot waters in the last one year or so because they are now grappling with asylum claims of people from more than 200 countries who face punishments such as corrective rape (mostly for lesbians), torture, jail and even death.<sup>50</sup>

The anti-gay laws in Africa and elsewhere are said to be the legacy of European colonial rule but people in those countries are now hoping refuge in European Union Countries. Italy automatically gives refuge to anyone from more than 75 countries that formally outlaw homosexuality while Spain makes such entry a lot harder. The Netherlands turned down three men from Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Uganda in a case which has now reached

the E.U's highest Court- the European Court of Justice. The strong support and propagation of same sex unions has created immigration problems for European countries and they now want to limit immigration and this may lead to gays and lesbians rushing towards countries where homosexuality is legal, such as Russia.<sup>51</sup>

A serious observation of Taiwan's affairs would show that it has given the warmest embrace to gays and lesbians more than any other Asian country. Taiwan's President Ma Ying-jeou proudly proclaims that when he was mayor of Taipei, he made it the most gay friendly city in Asia and also devoted a portion of municipal budget to homosexual causes. Taiwan routinely holds Asia's largest gay-pride march and the latest one in October 2013 attracted over 60,000 people. Recently a Bill passed its first reading in its legislature which allows same sex marriage and permits gay couples to adopt children but there is resistance to this move against nature and people are demanding referendum on the issue.<sup>52</sup>

The debate on gay sex got heated in India also after the Supreme Court's verdict in a case called *Suresh Kumar Kaushal v. Naz Foundation*<sup>53</sup> in which the constitutionality of section. 377 of the Indian Penal Code was upheld. The Supreme Court of India in this case delivered its judgment on well-thought reasons upholding the criminality of certain sexual acts performed by same-and Opposite-sex couples that can be classified as 'carnal intercourse against the order of nature.' The Court further observed that the acts which fall within the ambit of the section can only be determined with reference to the act itself and the circumstances in which it is executed.<sup>54</sup>

The Court also made reference to a catena of cases that involved the commission of these criminal acts against the order of nature. These include cases like *R.V. Jacobs (1917)* which deals with the commission of sodomy, and *Khanu V. Emperor (1934)*, which deals with carnal intercourse with a bullock? The Judgement also referred to a series of cases that relate to anal sex being performed on young boys in *Lohana V. State (1968)*, *Fazal Rab Choudhry V. State of Bihar (1982)* and *Kedar Nath V. State of Rajasthan (1985)* and *Calvin Francis V. Orissa (1992)*, which involved forcing a six year old child to perform oral sex.<sup>55</sup>

When the Supreme Court of India delivered its judgment in *Suresh Kumar Kaushal's case*, it simply performed its role as the 'guardian of the Indian Constitution.'<sup>56</sup> The Supreme Court was requested to determine the validity of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 which exists in the Penal Code from last more than 150 years without any protest or opposition from the people of India.<sup>57</sup> Then why has there been a sudden unrest and opposition for a legal provision which has always been there ever since the beginning of codified penal law in India?

The pertinent question, therefore, is who is opposing the judgment in *Kaushal's case* and what is their reasoning? How far, their so called reasoning is 'reasonable and natural? A close scrutiny of the arguments taken by the intellectuals opposing Supreme Court's verdict in *Kaushal's case*, shows that they are the Indian supporters of the 'libertarian theory of rights' which has transcended borders and has now reached the Asian land making its forceful presence.

The Indian libertarian representatives advance the following arguments<sup>58</sup>;

- (i) Does it befit a liberal democracy to criminalize homosexual activity between consenting adults?
- (ii) Does it befit to be hostage to an archaic concept of natural?
- (iii) Is the criminalization not an infringement of every value we hold dear: liberty, equality, privacy, the right to life?

The proponents further argue that in a democracy, citizens can only be deprived of individual rights and freedoms if the exercise of these freedoms harm someone or endanger the national interest or security.<sup>59</sup> What is the social and national interest that necessitates depriving consenting adults of their right to engage in sexual relationships in private? They say that rationally, a relationship between two consenting adults affects nobody but themselves.<sup>60</sup> The libertarian Indian representatives also rely on abolition of anti-sodomy laws in democracies of Europe and Latin America and argue that Britain which exported anti-sodomy law into India in 1860, abolished it in its own land in 1967.<sup>61</sup>

The libertarians in India also seek refuge in history and cite the examples of ancient societies, from Greece and Rome to India, Egypt, China and Japan which accepted same-sex sexuality as one dimension of a wide erotic spectrum.<sup>62</sup> Pre-colonial Indian literature and art depict incidents of sex change and erotic love between gay, lesbian and bisexual. One version of the 14<sup>th</sup> century Krittivasa Ramayana tells the story of two women, Chandra and Mala, who make love in the rainy season, inspired by Kama-deva and one of them becomes pregnant with divine blessing and has a heroic son.<sup>63</sup> Nobody denies that homosexuality does have historical instances but it is also true that homosexuality had never been taken positively by human societies as it has been looked down as irrational and unnatural act. Had it not been so, we would have large groups of such people in different parts of world and their consequent glorification. This takes me to the issue of psychotherapy for homosexuality.

## VII. Psychotherapy for Homosexuality

When human activities, riding on free choice to fulfill carnal desires, flow freely they are bound to bring social and psychological disturbances. Some societies have now started treating homosexuality as an illness and

alternative medicine or even electrotherapy is administered to create an aversion.<sup>64</sup> Shenzhen, a southern Chinese city, is running Chuan-Wei Psychological counseling centre for homosexuals. In 2011, Lin Yan attended the centre and spent \$ 1,700 for three months conversion therapy.<sup>65</sup>

In fact, China declassified homosexuality as a mental disorder in 2011. There are many clinics in China which offer counseling to gay people and services which is often touted as a cure. Elsewhere in the world, therapies that purport to treat gay, lesbian or bisexual people into heterosexuals have been discredited. The American Psychiatric Association says undergoing such treatment risks depression anxiety and self destructive behavior. The United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy calls the practice unethical.<sup>66</sup> The opponents of same sex or bisexual relationships call it not only unethical but have now started treating it as an illness while the proponents not only discard the illness theory but also say that such clinics are offering illegal services. The fact however, remains that whether it is termed illness or not, homosexuality or bisexuality has created problems of its own kind in different societies over last few decades.

It would be necessary to mention here the desperate case of a business tycoon of Hong Kong who offered huge money to anyone who could bring out his daughter from same- sex union. This businessman is Cecil Chao and his lesbian daughter is Gigi Chao, he tried to find a man in 2012 by offering 500 million Hong Kong dollars (\$65 million) to anyone who could successfully win his daughter. The tycoon made the offer after learning that his daughter had eloped with her partner to France, where they had a church blessing. Hong Kong does not legally recognize same-sex marriage.<sup>67</sup> What will happen to the business tycoon or his daughter is a matter of time but the fact remains that such disturbing trends are found in different parts of the world, creating certain amount of confusion and contradictions.

The quest for easy money and the rising human desire in majority of the people for more and more money has created huge space for material and intellectual theft. The culture of piracy is another paradox of modern crony capitalism that needs to be effectively tackled.

### **VIII. Reconciling the Conflicting Zones: Capitalism, Morality and Faith**

There are internal as well as external conflicts in human affairs. The same body can be split between regulating codes within itself.<sup>68</sup> The Capitalist call for global market competition is now leading the countries of the world into progressively deregulated chaos.<sup>69</sup> Capitalist ruling classes are driven by economic competition within and between themselves which leads to not merely economic growth but to compulsive accumulation as well. This compulsive accumulative impulse has enabled capitalist system that two and a half centuries ago controlled only small parts of north Western Europe to engulf the entire world today.<sup>70</sup>

In fact, conflict is inevitable in a world where the greediest 1 per cent uses their wealth and paraphernalia to fight over access to primary resources.<sup>71</sup> There is an old adage that 'as you sow, so shall you reap.' If the mankind sowed 'greed and impulsive lust,' it was bound to reap fear, violence and distrust. The Enlightenment Thinking in its quest to sidetrack religion, first propagated that ethics is independent of God and then gradually pushed 'ethics to disappear' from human affairs by stating that human beings are not responsible for the consequences of their acts.<sup>72</sup>

Unfortunately, classical or revisionist Enlightenment politics is devoid of much interest in political virtue as it did not care what kind of human agent is being nourished and encouraged in public square. Recently there has been a welcome revival on the question as to what kind of human being it might be desirable to nourish in society.<sup>73</sup> Now-a-days, there is not only a revival of interest of intelligentsia in such issues but a heated discussion, argument and even dissent is going on in different societies on a variety of controversial human activities.

The Enlightenment society of either classical or revisionist style, does not pay required attention to the issue of social trust as rationality is not a matter of trust but of clear demonstrability. Trust and invitations to trust were associated with irrational and oppressive systems in pre-modern period. Religious faith sustains the possibility of talking intelligently about what some had called 'the solidarities we did not choose'. Religious discourse, indeed, is neither pro-nor anti-Enlightenment in the usual sense.<sup>74</sup>

However the Enlightenment's call for detachment of human actions from their consequences created a very congenial atmosphere for 'compulsive accumulation of wealth' and 'persistent physical enjoyment' to reduce stress developed during the course of compulsive accumulation. The continuous efforts for persistent mental and physical enjoyment gave way to a large number of dance bars, high society call girls, brothels and live- in-relationships to reduce physical and mental stress and get ready for accumulation of wealth day and night, mostly in and around the major cities of the world. The days were utilized by majority of people to accumulate wealth while nights were used by others to extract easy money from them through the channels of physical pleasure and enjoyment.

In the quest for accumulation and enjoyment, human society forgot the warnings of intellectuals and religious leaders which were bound to cause trouble. In 1924, Rabindra Nath Tagore published an essay entitled 'Robbery of the Soil' which is highly relevant to the modern materialistic & consumerist society riding on the wheels of greed and plunder. Tagore warned humanity in the following words:



*Civilization has turned into a vast catering establishment. It maintains constant feast for a whole population of gluttons. The intemperance which could have been tolerated in a few has spread to the multitude. The resulting universal greed is the cause of meanness, cruelty and lies in politics and commerce that vitiate the whole human atmosphere. A civilization with an unnatural appetite must feed on numberless victims, and these are being sought in the parts of the world where human flesh is cheap. The happiness of entire peoples in Asia and Africa is being sacrificed to provide fastidious fashion with an endless train of respectable rubbish.*<sup>75</sup>

When ethics is detached from human life, animal instincts such as self-centeredness & physical lust come at the forefront of human dealings. It is, indeed, in the animal kingdom that ethics has no place and it is in this kingdom that animals are not responsible for the consequences of their acts. Did not the Enlightenment Thinking pave the way for animal kingdom like atmosphere by giving the call that human beings are not responsible<sup>76</sup> for the consequences of their acts? Did not the propagation of the view that ‘nothing is good or bad but thinking makes it so’<sup>77</sup> pushed goodness or badness itself away from human affairs? These are serious and fundamental questions that need to be answered in view of the current paradoxes of modern life.

Neo-Darwinians and proponents of materialistic philosophy associate religions with tribalism and backwardness and perhaps aspire to create a religion less or faithless world. They argue that the evidence that lies in great abundance points to organized religion as an expression of tribalism.<sup>78</sup> In times of change and danger, their personal faith promises stability and peace. When faced with a threat and competition from outside groups, the myths assure the believers that they are paramount in the sight of God. Religious faith offers the psychological security that uniquely comes from belonging to a group, and divinely blessed at that.<sup>79</sup> It is ironic to note that these proponents of materialism and believers of view that humanity is a mere biological species, tend to forget that the religious groups have a great unifying force and unique psychological security capable of bringing and maintaining peace, order and social security in the world.

The 20<sup>th</sup> Century’s one of the most important Sociologist, Robert Nisbet while explaining modern totalitarianism’s dark face, raised in his 1953 work ‘*Quest for Community*’ a very pertinent point that it was precisely the emancipation of the individual in modernity from clan, church and guild- that had enabled the rise of fascism and communism.<sup>80</sup> He further argued that in the increasing absence of local, personal forms of fellowship and solidarity, people were naturally drawn to mass movements, cults of personality and nationalistic fantasies. The advancement of individualism thus eventually produced its own antithesis - conformism, submission and control.<sup>81</sup>

The libertarians feel elated by the fact that in the future there will be only one “ism” – Individualism- and its rule will never end. Religion will decline, marriages shall be postponed, ideologies shall be rejected, patriotism shall be abandoned and strangers shall be distrusted.<sup>82</sup> In a sense, it will be a world of libertarians where ethical, religious and ideological limitations will completely wither away and material and physical enjoyment will be pursued more freely and vigorously. Unfortunately, libertarians around the world, in their quest for absolute individualism forget to answer the most fundamental question that whether the world of absolute individualism would really be peaceful, happy and free from psychological suffocation? Recent trends and events in different parts of the world negate the libertarian optimism.

Libertarians, indeed, need to remember the valuable words of Voltaire that “to be good only to yourself is to be good for nothing”.<sup>83</sup> It is rightly said that true liberty does not lie in the individual’s independence of social control. It consists in a rational regulation of social forces for the positive developments of individuals who constitute society.<sup>84</sup> It is a hard fact that capitalism is a world system and its victims can effectively face its challenges only if they also stand organized at the global level.<sup>85</sup> Human societies may reap the benefits of capitalism only when this economic system is put to reasonable limits and it withdraws itself from social life and religious affairs ( does not aspire to make this world Godless). It must also stop challenging and re-defining the fundamental values such as ethics, liberty, egalitarian values and human happiness as these are timeless virtues.

## IX. Conclusions

The struggle for power has always been the hallmark of human affairs. In a globalized world, it takes the shape of a convergence between State power and corporate expansionism which is proving very destructive. It is, indeed, the expansion of power rather than socio-economic justice is at the center-stage of State policies as a widely shared materialistic ideology rules the modern mind.

It would not be fair to dub capitalist system a demon which most of the left wing intellectuals actually do but it would also be too far to accept capitalism as the mark of development, prosperity and happiness as a lot of unhappiness and emotional suffocation is the outcome of crony capitalism in action. Mechanistic life, free choice and absolute individualism have created a non-congenial atmosphere for human peace and happiness. Economic and technological advancement detached from ethical values is bound to create social instability. It is now evident that mechanistic modern life ignores vital issues of eroding cultures, degraded environment and distorted languages.

In fact, an institutionalized hazardous corporate totalitarianism has developed in many parts of the world over last few decades and has now initiated war with the people and the earth.

The increasing encroachment of consumerism and commercialization of social life is a serious matter of concern for the whole humanity as it is disturbing important social and public institutions such as family, marriage, education and health in different part of the world in general and developing countries in particular. Mankind has to accept the harsh reality that economic growth and development has little meaning when it is concentrated in few hands while millions die due to poverty, ill health and emotional suffocation as an offshoot of economic affluence.

A careful analysis of history of civilizations would show that a large number of prominent intellectuals from Enlightenment Thinking to the post-modern thought might have been struggling to make this world a Godless place but they cannot overlook the positive and unifying influence of faith on social and public institutions in different parts of the world. They cannot deny the fact that if there had been conflicts in the name of faith; faith had also been able to prevent social instability and social unrest to a large extent as the faithful followers of religion keep themselves involved in the routine religious activities, rituals and charitable work focusing on the life hereafter. Had they been absent or had it been a Godless world as they wish it to be, the strife would have multiplied and the world would have become a difficult place to live.

It would perhaps not be too far to say that the hardcore supporters of capitalist order should be grateful to the people of faith for keeping a very large number of humanity away from critical evaluation of the capitalist order else it would have been difficult for them to pursue and propagate capitalist ideology as vigorously as they are doing at present. To be holistic, pragmatic and rational, the powerful supporters of capitalist order must learn to differentiate absolute liberty from constitutional liberty, accumulation of wealth from economic prosperity, plunder from development and pleasure from human happiness so as to bring the necessary equilibrium in the social life of the global capitalist community and this alone could prevent social instability and social unrest and increasing emotional suffocation in different parts of the world.

The liberals should understand and accept the importance of empowerment of labour and the value of faith in human life. The socialists must understand and accept the importance of competition and the people of faith must understand the dangers of violence and consequent defamation in the name of faith. The mutual understanding of the positive aspects of each group may lead to a better world in times to come.

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