Chapter - III

Guru Nanak's Concept of Economy

According to the Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary, 'Economy' means "the administration of the material resources of an individual, community, or country: an organised system."¹ In the light of these meanings of the word 'Economy', the Economy of a State can be defined as an organised system of administration of the material resources of the State. Some universities of the world have termed the discipline of studies in Economics as 'Political Economy' which, according to the Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary, is "the science of the production, distribution and consumption of wealth."² And 'wealth' implies "Prosperity, well-being."³

In the words of A.J. Brown, "An Economy is a system by which people get their living and satisfy their wants."⁴ According to Richard and Giovanna Stone, "An economic system is one in which

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1. Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary, p. 410
2. Ibid., p. 1036
3. Ibid., p. 1542
goods and services are produced with the ultimate object of satisfying human wants."¹

The Ancient Indian Philosophy has attached due importance to Artha and has regarded it as one of the four goals of human life - Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Moksha. These four ends of human life are commonly known as Purushartha, that is, 'objects worthy of effort by men'. The very term dharma in Hinduism is defined as "the whole duty of man in relation to the fourfold purposes of life (dharma, artha, kāma and moksha)..."² It implies that a man is required to lead a moral and ethical life, to earn money to meet personal and social needs, to enjoy sensual pleasures, and lastly to attain freedom from the continuous cycle of births and deaths. The word Artha literally means 'money'. But, in fact, it comprises the whole range of the tangible (rather material in the wider sense) objects that may be acquired and enjoyed during one's worldly life. In the Arthashastra of Kautilya, the term artha is defined as 'the sustenance of mankind'.³ The word artha thus connotes the attainment

1. Richard and Giovanna Stone, National Income and Expenditure, p. 31
of riches and worldly prosperity, advantage, profit, wealth..."¹ In other words, it indicates the most important material base upon which the whole super-structure of human society stands. Thus it bundles together the following meanings: (i) 'the object of human pursuit'; (ii) 'the means of this pursuit'; and (iii) 'the needs and desires suggesting this pursuit'.²

Kautilya's Arthasastra stresses the values of artha and regards it as the sole determinant of the values of dharma and kāma. This signifies that the material life is the basis of temporal as well as spiritual enjoyment.³ The Mahabharata, too, declares that wealth greatly influences dharma and all religious and charitable activities, and a person who has no wealth loses his merit here and hereafter.⁴ It also condemns poverty and calls it a 'sin'.⁵

¹ Heinrich Zimmer, Philosophies of India, Edited by Joseph Campbell, (New York: Bollingen Foundation Inc. 1951), Bollingen Series XXVI - Pantheon Books, p. 41
² Ibid.
³ Pandurang Vaman Kane, History of Dhammadśstra, (Poona, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1941), Vol.II, Part-I, p. 8
⁴ John M. Koller, op.cit., p. 42
⁵ Ibid., p. 42
Dr. Radhakrishnan sees the perfection of human life in the co-existence of both material and spiritual progress and remarks "We must work for better conditions for the material and spiritual development of human beings, for civilization is material and spiritual progress for both the individual and society. The aim is lok-samgraha, in the words of the Bhagvad-Gita".  

Sir Auorbindo advocates a rational synthesis between the objective or 'existential' values and spiritual or 'axiological' values which, according to him, can be attained through philosophical thinking.  

Early Hindu Philosophy considers the household pursuits to be a big impediment in the pursuit of the release of the 'spirit' (soul) from the bondage of births and deaths. So it strongly advises the abandonment of these pursuits. Commenting on the reason behind this negation of interest in worldliness, Dr. Radhakrishnan writes,

"It is said that for the Hindu all true existence is non-material, unchangeable and eternal and, therefore, the material, changeable, temporal existence is false. So it is said that the good of the man consists not in transforming the world which is a vale of woe but in transcending it. It is not his aim to change the world but turn away from it."¹

According to Sir Charles Eliot, "Hindu religions are unpractical only in so far that they decline to subordinate themselves to human life. It is assumed that the religious man who is striving towards a goal beyond this world is ready to sacrifice the world without regret and in India the assumption is justified unsurprisingly often."²

In the words of Kapur Singh, "Such religions, as the Buddhism, Jainism, monastic Christianity and higher forms of Hinduism, not to mention the mystic Islam of Sufism, have neither any desire nor any hope for the improvement of this phenomenal world. A man of this way of life, therefore, does not try to change the society and the world,

¹. S. Radhakrishnan, *The Brahma Sutra*, op.cit., p. 156
and social change and politics are, therefore, irrelevant to him. He is alike indifferent to culture and civilization as such, which both are the products of social intercourse and political organization."

A religion which does not take into account the social and economic problems of human beings and encourages persons to shut their eyes to the hard realities of life shall definitely lose its hold on the masses and meet with failure. Man is considered to be social by nature and he is mainly concerned with worldly life which largely consists of social and economic problems and their solution. In the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, those persons have been treated as "less than human who remain isolated from society, since they neither prove useful to society, nor do they benefit from the social experience of others." According to C.E.M. Joad, "Full human stature... can only be reached

2. C.E.M. Joad, Philosophy For Our Times, pp. 308-9.
in a society where intercourse with his fellows develops a man's social and moral self."¹

Hence it becomes imperative on the part of religion to take into account the worldly problems of mankind and to find out their solution. In the words of John B. Chethimattam, "If religion is for man, it has to embrace the whole man and cannot ignore his material needs. Religion has its obligations not upon the clouds but in the midst of everyday life. A truly religious man has to live in the midst of the common people ministering to their needs and facing their problems."²

"Sikh thought takes a keen interest in life, which vitally affects the spiritual and moral life of man. Man has much to do with his present life and the problems in hand, and he cannot be easily persuaded to bargain his worldly life for the anticipated life in heaven."³

1. C.E.M. Joad, Philosophy For Our Times, p. 309
Guru Nanak's faith discards the negative attitude of the ancient faiths which kept themselves aloof and unconcerned about the phenomenal realities, and had the least interest in the betterment of society. He has reinterpreted and reshaped the old Hindu concept of Maya, which had given surge to a negative approach amongst the people towards temporal values, in accordance with the hard realities of human life. According to Dr. Niharranjan Ray, "Guru Nanak's genius lay in the fact that he tore himself away from this atmosphere of negation and declared himself positively in favour of worldly life of acceptance of the duties and obligations of the human individual to the temporal and the material, and, at the same time, of equal acceptance of the duties and obligations of religious discipline and spiritual quest for the ultimate. After long centuries, he gave back to the people of India the idea and ideal of Balanced Life."¹

According to Dr. Trilochan Singh, "...While Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism lament the misery of the body, and which St. Francis calls brother

donkey, the Sikh Gurus sing the nobility of the body. The Jain monk in particular feels ashamed that his soul has been housed in this repulsive physical structure of flesh, blood and bones, of nine spertures, each of which ceaselessly secretes filthy substances.¹ But unlike the Jain monk, Guru Nanak eulogises human body. He regards it as the temple of the Lord. To quote him:

The body is the mansion, temple and home of the Lord, within which has He enshrined,

Infinite Light.²

Needless to stress the significance of food and other material requisities for keeping the body and soul together. So much so that the existence of human life is inconceivable in the absence of the material provisions. While God Himself is conscious of the needs of all living organisms and is the Provider of the all how can the material needs of human being be considered dispensable? Guru Nanak says:

Creating the beings, He Himself provides them sustenance....³

1. Dr. Trilochan Singh, Theological Concepts of Sikhism, the article published in Sikhism - Guru Nanak Quincentenary Celebration Series, 1969, p. 59
2. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 1256
3. Ibid., p. 1042
Guru Nanak not only clearly admits the significance of food and other basic requirements of life viz. clothing and shelter, but goes to the extent of sharply criticising those human beings (ascetics) who detest food and abjure other basic needs and treat these as impediments in the path of spiritual development and resort to various ways for their forced abandonment. To quote Guru Nanak:-

By abjuring food, only his own pleasure he forfeits,

... By abjuring clothing, day and night is he full of wrath.¹

By restraints of hatha does the body decline,
By fasts and austerities is the mind left hardened.²

Guru Nanak does not negate the proper care and maintenance of human body and fulfilment of bodily needs which is clear from his condemnation

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 467
2. Ibid., p. 905
of giving up of food and clothes by the ascetics of his times.

According to Paul Brunton "... the body ought to be in healthy condition if the mind is to receive the illumination correctly and without hindrance."¹

Guru Nanak stresses the need not only of food but of sufficient quantity of food of superior quality. He is not for consuming rough food of inferior quality. He makes a scathing attack on those who take coarse food:

By consuming filthy substances, on himself he brings ignominy -
Purblind stupid fool, his respect has he forfeited.²

Guru Nanak not only affirms the fundamental and necessary value of material pursuits and fulfilment of material needs, but regards them as pure or pious. He says:

Food and drink that the Lord to creation has granted, is all pure.³

2. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 467
3. Ibid., p. 472
Food, water, fire, salt and the fifth, ghee -
All are considered holy beings.¹

Prof. Puran Singh highlighting the intrinsic significance of the material values says :-

"Wealth, material prosperity, or symbolically in one word Bread, is thus a reality not only to be reckoned with but to be respected and honoured...."²

The modern science of Nutrition condemns 'mal-nutritive' as well as insufficient under-nutritive food and underlines the importance of 'balanced-diet'-taking into account its quantitative and qualitative aspects.³

Man should eat to live and not live to eat. The risk of an exclusive involvement in material betterment has to be guarded against. In the opinion

of Guru Nanak:

Cursed is the life that is led
only to eat and swell the belly.¹

Guru Nanak goes to the extent of
forbidding such eating and wearing as lead
to discomfort and anguish in the end. There
is no restriction on food, drinks or dresses
of any kind. The only criterion of ascertaining
their suitability is that eating, drinking and
dressing should not torment the body and pollute
the mind. Guru Nanak says:

Friend! to taste of other than these is to ruin bliss —
Such gormandizing as produces torment to the body,
And fills with foul thinking the mind.²

Friend! all other wear ruins bliss —
The wear that to the limbs is torment,
And with foul thinking fills the mind.³

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2. Ibid., p. 16
3. Ibid.
Guru Nanak has stressed the need of the material prosperity and happiness of the people of the State. Conceiving God as the Supreme King, he puts forward his vision of the Ideal State in these words:—

Thou art the Creator and the Cause:
The Self-dependent king, whose subjects are ever in Bliss.¹

At another place, Guru Nanak comments:—

These dogs that despoiled the jewels and wasted them,
Now in their death none shall remember them.²

Herein the word 'jewels', 'the precious things' is indicative of the resources of India which are the fountain-head of the material and economic prosperity of its people.

Material prosperity has been regarded as an essential object of human life. The development of a sound spiritual character can have firm footing only in a sound material society. A materially wretched society may not be able to stand both on the phenomenal and spiritual ground. In other words, materially starved persons are

¹ Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 1190
² Ibid., p. 360
liable to fall victims to the selfish ends of rich people and have to sacrifice noble principles and ideals in order to satisfy their material needs. The history of the Mughal period bears testimony to the above fact as to how economically and politically strong Mughal rulers often used the tool of 'economic benefit' in order to convert the poor amongst the Hindus to the faith of Islam. Therefore, it is binding on the State to ensure and look after the material well-being of its people properly and not to let them come down to a state of poverty where they can be forced to live at the mercy of the wealthy persons. Poverty becomes a curse upon humanity when it causes starvation, diseases and even deaths. So it becomes the duty of the State to establish and maintain a sound economic order to avoid such a sorry state of affairs. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, "economic insecurity and individual freedom do not go together."²

Economy is a pillar of the structure of the State. A sound Economy performs the function

2. S. Radhakrishnan, Eastern Religions and Western Thought (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 353
of the back-bone in the body State. It is on the type of Economy that the prosperity of the people of a State depends. Without a sound Economy the structure of the State would crumble down to the earth; it would no longer be able to maintain its sovereignty and would be liable to be at the mercy of some alien force for sustenance. Therefore, economic security is an essential pre-condition of the State. A constant economic advancement is imperative in a State that ensures provision of material comforts and imparting of necessary skills. All serious and thoughtful leaders of men have acknowledged the importance of economic gratification of man as a necessary condition for progress in other domains of life. But the objective of economic security and material prosperity of the people can be realised only if the state has a sound economy.

The Economy as conceived by Guru Nanak is a Service-Economy. Guru Nanak's basic concept of Service has already been discussed in the chapter No. II, entitled Guru Nanak's Concept of State. Service is the be-all and end-all of this economy. No doubt, development takes place in this economy but with the objective of meeting the essential
needs of all the people. Within the frame-work of this economy, every individual serves himself as well as his fellow-beings by engaging in some productive work to fulfil his essential needs and save some quantity/amount of the fruit of his productive work for sharing it with others. In it, every individual is a producer as well as a consumer at the same time. It aims at not only satisfying minimum levels of material needs of the people such as consumption of food, provision of clothing and shelter but also making their lives comfortable. Keeping the comfort of the people in view, in modern times, their access can be extended to such essential public utility services such as pure drinking water, sanitation, public transport and communication, health and education etc. Consequently the index of progress in this economy has to be in terms of production of goods and services of this kind.

This economy has a 'Service-cum-Everybody's Accessibility to Everything Available' approach. This approach has the objective of ensuring parity in the purchasing power of all the people so that everyone irrespective of his/her status or any other
consideration, may be in a position to purchase whatever is available in the State. At the same time, this approach emphasises a pattern of development that encompasses the objectives such as composition of national products tilted in favour of essential needs of life; a labour-intensive process of production in the sphere of consumer goods employing local resources and turning out goods and services demanded by the people and thus giving rise to the self-sufficient small local units in the State. This approach also implies a redistribution that is directed to the eradication of poverty, a public expenditure that offers services to the people with the sole purpose of serving them. In brief, this approach is meant to achieve the objective of rendering service to the people through which poverty, unemployment and economic disparities that not only mar the economic growth of society but cause economic injustice in society, will automatically vanish.

The following words of Guru Nanak are the kernel of his concept of economy;-

Ghaal Khaai kichh hathon dei
Nanak rah pachhaneh sei. ¹

¹. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 1245
These words translated in English are as under:

He alone, O Nanak, Knows the Way,
Who earns with the sweat of his brow and then
shares with the others.

The word Ghaal covers the production aspect,
Khaai, the consumption aspect, and Kichh Hathon Dei,
the distribution aspect of the economy. The consumption
aspect has already been discussed on the fore-going
pages of this chapter. Now, the remaining aspects
of the Economy will be discussed. For proper under-
standing of the same, the modern economic terms
will be employed in the study of the Production
and Distribution aspects of the Economy.

**Production** :- In order to cater to the
requirements of consumption it is necessary that
production of goods and services in sufficient
quantity should take place. In economic terms,
"Production means creation of utility",¹ says Prof.
Ely. In the words of Adam Smith, "Creation or addition
of economic utility or value is known as production."²

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¹ Prof. Ely, quoted by Gopal Singh, Joginder Singh
in *Fundamentals of Economics And Statistics*, p.93
² Adam Smith, quoted in *Fundamentals of Economics
And Statistics*, op.cit., p. 93
The word Ghaal employed by Guru Nanak in his fundamental economic doctrine means to engage oneself in a productive work. Here, it is necessary to know what a 'productive work' is. Early economists regarded only work in the extractive industries e.g. agriculture, fishing and mining etc. as productive. "In his 'Wealth of Nations' in 1776 Adam Smith added manufacturing but he was specific in excluding workers who merely rendered services."¹

But this is not logical. A productive work is, in fact, a work, manual or mental, that is done with the objective of satisfying human wants. Therefore, the persons who render services are also productive. "The soldier, actor and footballer are all satisfying wants. Similarly, in a factory, the clerk who calculates the wages is just as productive as the man who makes the nuts and bolts. All are helping to produce, the final product, a good satisfying wants."²

Besides, wants "can take different forms. Most people like a newspaper to read at the breakfast time; thus the boy who makes it from the

1. J. Harvey, E.S. Srinivasin, C. Selvaraj, Mastering Economics (Indian adaptation), p. 55
2. Ibid.
shop to the customer's house is productive. Most people, too, prefer to buy their vegetables weekly: thus the farmer or merchant who stores them through the winter is satisfying the wants of consumers and is similarly productive. Utility is created by changing not only the form of our scarce resources but also their place and time.\textsuperscript{1}

The infrastructure of the Economy of Guru Nanak's vision is founded on the productive work (manual or mental) of each and every individual, understandably who is adult and physically and mentally sound, living in the State. In it, every individual - a man or a woman, a rich or a pauper, a master or a servant, a ruler or a ruled - has been enjoined upon to earn his/her livelihood with the sweat of his/her brow. Everyone is supposed to make his/her due contribution to the production of the State. None is exempted from productive work. No body is permitted to depend upon the earnings of others for his livelihood or sustenance. If a person depends upon the earnings of others for his livelihood or sustenance, he gives nothing to the society but takes everything from it required to cater to his needs, and this practice leads to the

\textsuperscript{1} J. Harvey, E.S. Srinivasin, C. Selvaraj, op.cit., p. 55
operational imbalance or unevenness in the proportion of production and consumption in the economic order of the State. Therefore, the input of one's productive work is the essential pre-requisite of the output of one's sustenance or livelihood.

In this way, the word Ghaal which is generally called Kirat, is the anti-thesis of the unproductive, uncreative, useless or worthless practices and activities like renunciation of the active worldly life, habitual begging, stealing, bribe-taking, undue profiteering, black-marketing and adulteration etc. There is no place for idlers in Guru Nanak's economic order of the State. The idlers become parasites on the output of the State. They consume the produces of the State without contributing to its production. They in stead of giving a fillip and impetus to the growth and development of the economy give a set-back to it due to their non-productivity accompanied by consumption of the produces of others. That is why Guru Nanak's concept of economy has no room for the practice of renunciation of active worldly life and asceticism which imply the life of passivity, and is based on the life of a householder
which implies the life of activity, engaged in productive work.

Guru Nanak attaches no piety to such Yogis as indulge in begging. They lack spiritual knowledge and are not fit for becoming guru. They wear glass-rings in their ears only to fill their bellies. They are like a poor mullah who accepts offerings at his own home as if it were a mosque in itself. Guru Nanak makes it crystal clear that the so-called guru going out for begging deserves no reverence. He says:

- If one sings the Lord's Praise, bereft of Wisdom,
- Or converts his homestead into a mosque to satisfy his hunger,
- Or being workless, gets his ears torn (to pass for a Yogi),
- Or becomes a mendicant and loses caste with the world,
- And though proclaimed as a guru, begs from door to door,

Never, O men, should one fall at the feet of such a one. 1

1, Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 1245
And:-

The world for the beggar shows contempt—no respect to beggars is shown.  

Yogi! settle in poise; thus shall malady of dualism flee:

Begging from door to door don't you feel shame.  

Similarly, the life of a person who indulges in an unproductive activity like stealing is of no avail:

Whatever by foul means (stealing) I have got, has pleased me greatly.

In this world have I got no renown:

in the next no prop—

This life gone waste. 

Factors of Production:

According to the economic classification of factors of production, these are four in kind—


1. Land:

Land refers to the resources provided by

2. Ibid., p. 903
3. Ibid., p. 155
nature e.g. space, sunshine, rain and minerals etc. which are fixed in their supply. Guru Nanak says:

The earth, the vessel full of resources has been endowed by God but once, it depends on the efforts of man how much he takes out it.

Ricardo, a classical economist of the early nineteenth century, referred to land in the economists sense - as the resources provided by nature - and as such its total supply was fixed.

It is, therefore, obligatory for human beings to make an optimum use of land for production.

2. Labour:

Labour refers to the effort, physical and mental, made by human beings in production. It is this human element which distinguishes it from other factors, for it gives rise to under-employment and mobility of labour.

1. J. Harvey, E.S. Srinivasin, C. Selvaraj, op.cit., p. 84
2. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 1190
3. J. Harvey, E.S. Srinivasin, C. Selvaraj, op.cit., p. 144
4. Ibid., p. 84
The main features of Guru Nanak's concept of economy with regard to labour are as under:

(a) Dignity of Labour
(b) Freedom of Choice of Work
(c) Fixation of Minimum Wages
(d) Strict Prohibition of Exploitation

(a) Dignity of Labour:

In the economy of Guru Nanak's vision, labour is looked upon as dignified productive activity. A person engaged in whatever occupation, vocation or profession he may be, is not 'high' or 'low':-

Saith Nanak: None is high or low.¹

The dignity attached to labour in this system will automatically ascertain the sufficient supply of labour. However, the demand for skilled and specialised labour can be fulfilled by making proper arrangements for free training to the labour at the government level.

(b) Freedom of Choice of Work:

In this economy, every individual has full freedom of choice of work. In the ancient Hinduism,

all types of occupations, vocations and professions to earn livelihood were not open to all; they were adopted strictly on the basis of Varna-system or caste-system which forced persons to choose jobs according to their castes and not according to their ability.

"As caste determines occupations not only at birth but throughout the life of the individual, it is impossible for a person to give up his traditional occupation and move on to new occupation. The caste system, therefore, hindered the mobility of labour between occupations and at one time even between places."\(^1\)

"The caste system was evolved to protect the Hindu society from decay but with the passage of time, the system became hereditary in stead of remaining functional and thus inhibited social and economic growth. It became extremely rigid resulting in the rise of vested interests. Lack of flexibility and quality was responsible for most of the defects of the system."\(^2\)

2. Ibid.
With rapid increase in the size of population, one class could not meet the demands of the rest of the classes resulting in deterioration of the economic condition of the whole society. This major economic problem was to be got rid of by opening all the avenues of work to all the individuals of the State.

In Guru Nanak's economic system, there is no demarcation and specific assigning of work for anybody. Anyone (man or woman) can take to any occupation, vocation or profession according to his/her aptitude and ability. No occupation, vocation or profession has been kept reserved or restricted for any particular individual or section of the society. This freedom of choice of work in the economy of Guru Nanak's vision will automatically solve the problem of mobility of labour from one occupation to another and from one place to another.

According to Guru Nanak's thought, nobody is to be restrained from engaging in any occupation because of his caste. Besides, no occupation determines one's caste; rather it is one's deeds that determine his caste. Guru Nanak says :-
For, as are one's deeds, so is one's caste.¹

(c) **Fixation of Minimum Wages** :-

Minimum wages of the workers are to be fixed by the Government in commensuration with their requirement for a good standard of living. Moreover, the standard of living in terms of essential needs will be the same for each and everybody irrespective of one's occupation or any other consideration. Equal wages for equal work irrespective of one's sex will also be ensured.

(d) **Strict Prohibition of Exploitation** :-

Underpayment or non-payment of wages in time or the absence of good working conditions is sheer exploitation of the workers by the firm or the employer, the possibility of which is often there in the private sector. Guru Nanak using the image of a labourer for a man comments that he is robbed by the same agent viz. **Maya** for whom he works :-

> Man to make gain in the world has arrived;
> But turned labourer to **Maya**, is robbed.²

2. Ibid., p. 931
The economy of Guru Nanak's vision outrightly restrains the employer from exploiting his employees. Exploitation has been considered a blood-sucking action on the part of the exploiter which corrupts his mind. To quote Guru Nanak:

Should cloth be reckoned impure if blood-stained,
How may mind of such be deemed pure as blood of mankind suck?\(^1\)

Thus the economy of Guru Nanak's vision is an exploitation-free economy.

3. **Capital** :-

Capital, as a factor of production, consists of producer goods and stocks of consumer goods not yet in the hands of the consumer. While consumer goods directly satisfy consumer's wants, e.g. loaves, bicycles, T.V. sets, producer goods are only wanted for making consumer goods, e.g. buildings, machines, raw materials.\(^2\)

In the economy of Guru Nanak's vision, the producer is entitled to keep and employ capital but only in accordance with the requirement

2. J. Harvey, E.S. Srinivasin, C. Salvaraj, *op.cit.*, p. 84
of his establishment. It recognises the indispensability of capital for carrying out any productive activity which is suggested by the references to the capital of various occupations found in Guru Nanak's compositions e.g. furance bellows, anvil, tools etc. for smithy; plough (indirectly referred to through reference to the ploughman) and levelling - plank for farming; shop, stock of commodities and storehouse for trade, scissors (made of iron), needle and thread for tailoring; fishing-net and bait for fishing.

As far as stock of consumer goods is concerned, to keep it for distribution among the consumers on demand and at due profit only is admissible, but holding it for the purpose of black-marketing or undue profiteering is dispensed with.

Indispensability of capital for economic activity is also evident from the following composition of Guru Nanak:

A merchant without capital only looks vacantly in all directions.

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p.8
2. Ibid., p. 595
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 955
5. Ibid., p. 23
6. Ibid., p. 56
4. **Enterprise** :-

Enterprise is the acceptance of the risks of uncertainty in production - risks which cannot be insured against. They arise because the firm spends in advance on raw materials, labour and machines, and the extent to which such costs are covered depends on the demand for the product when it is sold. Tastes may have changed or a rival may be marketing the good at a lower price than anticipated.¹

The reward for uncertainty-bearing is profit unless it is negative, loss. Whoever accepts such a risk is a true entrepreneur - the farmer working on his own account, the person who buys ordinary shares in a company, or the citizen of a state who ultimately has to bear any losses made by a national industry.²

Due profit for enterprise is also upheld in the economy of Guru Nanak's vision provided that he shares his profit with his fellow-beings after satisfying his basic needs. The following composition

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1. J. Harvey, E.S. Srinivasin, C. Selvaraj, op. cit., p. 84
2. Ibid., pp. 84-85
of Guru Nanak refers to due profit:

And thus the profitable bargain enjoy.¹

The economy of Guru Nanak's vision attaches due importance to all the types of industry. But before discussing it in detail it is necessary, here, to know the meaning of industry.

**Industry** :- Production takes place only when industry functions. Industry denotes a systematic economic activity. Economic activity implies "the category of human activities which is related to the production and exchange of wealth. In economics, we call these economic activities. All of them involve working to earn a livelihood and are usually called occupations."²

Industry is "a group of productive enterprises or organisations that produce or supply goods, services, or sources of income. In economics industries are customarily classified as primary, secondary and tertiary ..."³

Primary Industry :-

"This sector of a nation's economy includes agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying and the extraction of minerals. It may be divided into two categories : genetic industry, including the production of raw materials that may be increased by human intervention in the production process; and extractive industry, including the production of exhaustible raw materials that cannot be augmented through cultivation."¹

In the economy of Guru Nanak's vision, agriculture pre-dominates the section of primary industry. Keeping in view the objective of the economy, the agricultural entrepreneurs viz. farmers are supposed to produce plenty of foodgrains, oil-seeds, sugarcane, cotton and fodder etc. to meet the people's essential needs.

The quantity and quality of crop and harvest yields depend on the quality of seeds. To quote Guru Nanak :-

As you sow; so shall you reap.²

1. The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, op.cit., p. 306
2. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 730
In order to increase the harvest yields in the agricultural sector, the government has the obligation of fulfilling the farmers' requirements like quality seeds, fertilizers, irrigation facilities, machinery and the like facilities at reasonable rates so that every farmer may afford to purchase or benefit the same and contribute to the increase of the agricultural production of the State.

Since the area of cultivable land is limited and the population goes on multiplying, to put in the words of Malthus, 'in a geometric progression', therefore, it is necessary to take measures for soil conservation to meet the essential needs of the increasing population. Preservation of forests and afforestation, contour bunding, regulation of land use etc. are to be adopted as preventive measures against soil erosion. Crop-rotation is also to be implemented to maintain the fertility of the soil. Besides, reclamation of water-logged, saline and alkline lands and of ravine lands is another soil conservation measure which if taken will add some area to the cultivable land. The reclaimed land may be distributed among

1. Malthus, quoted by J. Harvey, E.S.
   Srinivasin, C. Selvaraj, op.cit., p. 15
the landless agricultural labour.

In the economy of Guru Nanak's vision, agriculture is to be made a service-oriented industry and not a profit-earning one. To quote Guru Nanak:—

Make the mind the ploughman, thy exalted actions cultivator's vocation.

Sow the seed of devotion, make contentment the levelling-plank,

And humility the fence.¹

Though, in the above composition, Guru Nanak is imparting ethical instruction to the human beings in the terminology of farming, but it can also be inferred from this composition that the vocation of farming and exalted actions have been co-related herein, which implies that farming is to be made the index of exalted actions of the farmer. The essence of exalted actions, according to Guru Nanak, is service. To quote him:—

None ever obtains fruit without service,

Service is the most exalted action.²

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¹. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 595
². Ibid., p. 992
In this economy, the farmer is contented to engage in the occupation of agriculture for rendering service to mankind.

Since service to humankind is the objective of agriculture, therefore, the farmers are to produce only such commodities as are useful in sustaining the people's lives and not such ones as harm them. They are not to produce crops like tobacco, opium-poppy and hemp (narcotic) etc. which are hazardous to human health and even life. It is a dear deal - as is being done at present, especially in India - to attain a high standard of living for a few people at the cost of human health and life in any corner of the world by growing the above-mentioned crops and marketing these for earning profit or foreign exchange. However, in order to avert the consequences of stopping production of such crops, a mass-scale arrangement for treatment of the drug-addicts to deaddict them is the obligation of the government. Besides, such crops as have medicinal utility may be produced by the government under strict supervision and only in as much quantity as is required for the life-saving purpose.
The other primary industries can also be adopted according to the need of the people of the state.

**Secondary Industry** :- "This is also called manufacturing industry, in economics, referring to the sector of a nation's economy that includes the processing of raw-materials supplied by primary industries into consumer goods, or production goods that other secondary industries transform into products, components of products, or capital goods used to manufacture consumer and non-consumer goods. Secondary industry also includes such industries as hydroelectric, geothermal, solar, wind and other electrical power generation that require generators or other specialized equipment to convert raw energy into electricity; and it also includes the construction industry."¹

In the economy of Guru Nanak's vision, the secondary industry also occupies an important place which is indicated by the references Guru Nanak makes to such industry e.g. smithy, tailoring,

pottery etc. in his compositions. To quote him:—

Should brass, gold or iron be broken,
The smith in fire fuses it together.¹

Then cut by the scissors, by the tailor torn,
With needle and thread is it stitched.²

Guru Nanak goes to the extent of conceiving even God Himself as a Manufacturer viz. Artisan or Potter who fashions all the vessels viz. beings. It means that manufacturing plays a very significant role in the whole scheme of the Universe. This opinion of Guru Nanak determines the significance attached to the manufacturing industry in the economy of his vision. To quote Guru Nanak:—

The One (Potter) has fashioned all the vessels.³

Keeping in view the objective of the economy of Guru Nanak's vision, the production in the sector of manufacturing industry is to be directed to make human life comfortable. Priority is to be given to the manufacturing of such goods as are useful for agriculture e.g. tractors, pumping

1. Guru Nanak, _Adi Granth_, p. 143
2. Ibid., p. 955
3. Ibid., p. 62
sets, harvesters, thrashers etc. These things not only help in increasing the agricultural production but also make the agricultural work easier. Stress is also to be laid on the manufacturing of the goods like kitchen appliances, textile machinery, sewing machines etc. which make the conversion of agricultural produce into final products i.e. consumer goods more convenient, quicker and more neat.

The manufacturing techniques adopted by this sector of industry must always be such as do not generate unemployment, poverty or give rise to corruption or exploitation of any sort. These techniques must not be such as, in any way, degenerate the cultural values of the people.

The manufacturing industry is to be service-oriented. The goods are to be manufactured at a reasonably low cost so that the people may easily afford to purchase them. Its objective is not to be money-chasing or profit-maximising but service to humankind. If the objective of 'service to humankind' is ever kept in view, profits will automatically follow. However, the economy of Guru Nanak's vision upholds earning of 'due profit' only
which is essential and sufficient for the entrepreneur's own sustenance and the subsistence of his enterprise. It is suggested by the following words of Guru Nanak:

In dealing in false commodities is incurred loss.

Whoever by the Master's teachings makes commerce to the Lord is pleasing:

His capital, and commodity safe, Yama's noose is removed from him.¹

This view of Guru Nanak has been supported by many thinkers and great businessmen of the world. Urwick says, "Earning of profits cannot be the objective of a business any more than eating is the objective of living."²

Similarly Henry Ford declared in his autobiography that "mere money-chasing is not business."³ "He built his business on the basis of service and set out to manufacture cars which

1. Guru Nanak, _Adi Granth_, p. 1032
2. Urwick, quoted by Y.K. Bhushan in _Fundamentals of Business Organisation Management_, Part One, p. 15
3. Henry Ford, quoted by Y.K. Bhushan, op.cit., p. 15
would be within the means even of low-income groups and which, therefore, would serve the general mass of people. He declared that business consists in manufacturing those goods which the community wants, at a price which the community can pay. The same kind of missionary zeal marked the efforts of the Indian pioneer in industry, Jamsetji Nausherwanji Tata. Thus, a truly great business can be built up only if the objective of service to the community is constantly kept in view. If this is done, profits will come automatically..."\(^1\) However, it cannot be denied that it is absolutely necessary for the business enterprise to earn at least the profit sufficient to cover the risks of economic activity - "the profit required to enable it to stay in business and to maintain intact the wealth-producing capacity of its resources,"\(^2\) as Peter F. Drucker puts it.

**Tertiary Industry** :- "This is also called service industry and includes the sector of a nation's economy embracing industries that provide services or intangible gains or generate

1. Y.K. Bhushan, op.cit., p. 15
2. Peter F. Drucker, quoted by Y.K. Bhushan, op.cit., p. 15
wealth but that produce no tangible goods. In free market and mixed economies this sector generally has a mix of private and government enterprise."¹

As far as the tertiary industry is concerned, it also finds place in the economy of Guru Nanak's vision. The references made by him to trade, trader, salesman, employee and soldier etc. in his compositions, though in spiritual sense, indicate the necessity of this sector of industry in the economy. "Trade refers to the sale, transfer or exchange of goods."² Guru Nanak, regarding the body as a city, puts forth the concept of trade as under:

In the body city there are shops fortresses and a cabin wherein is the merchandise of the True Name to trade in.³

And:

Within the fortress are balconies and bazars.⁴

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1. The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, op.cit., p. 306
2. Y.K. Bhushan, op.cit., p. 10
3. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 57
4. Ibid., p. 1033
It can be inferred from the above-quoted compositions that bazaars, shops and commodities of good quality etc. are the pre-requisites of trade.

In this economy, Banking facility is to be provided by the State to facilitate trade. The banks will conduct commercial and financial transactions. But the institution of interest will be dispensed with. The practice of making money only with the help of money has no place in this economy. The banking facility which is essential for trade, has been referred to, though in its old form viz. Shahukara, in the following words:

They are the bankers and the true traders, whom the True Guru has imparted understanding.¹

Trade as conceived by Guru Nanak, is based on the concept of 'business morality'. It is to be carried on by the trader considering himself a servant of the people. His function is to remove the hindrances of place and time between the goods/services and the consumer. Though due

¹. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 1021
profit as reward of the efforts put in by him in trade is not to be dispensed with as it is essential for his existence in the market; but he is not to run after maximisation of his profit. To quote Guru Nanak :-

Trade with the traders (in true merchandise) and take profit with pleasure.¹

The trade is to be based on the principles of truth and virtue. The trader is to do the trade not only for profit-making but for the welfare of the people. It can be inferred from the following composition of Guru Nanak :-

In this body shop, this mind is a merchant, who through poise deals in truth.²

The trader is also to be fair in his dealings with all the concerned. Unfairness in dealings has no place in the economy of Guru Nanak's vision. To quote him :-

By unfair dealings the mind and body are rendered corrupt.³

The trader, in the economy of Guru Nanak's vision, weighs the commodity with standard weights.

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2. Ibid., p. 942
3. Ibid., p. 23
He never underweighs it by giving a fillip to the handle of the balance. Guru Nanak conceiving God as a Merchant, puts forth the concept of fair trade:-

Within the body fortress are the cities and shops and the business is transacted there.

The Merchant, My God, weighs His wares with the sterling weights.¹

In this economy, the persons engaged in professional services serve the community by discharging their duties with dedication. To quote Guru Nanak:-

With devoted heart render service:
make faith in the holy vocation.²

The persons engaged in defence services of the state render best services to the state and are never defeated in the battlefield while defending their people. However, they are entitled to the pay for their services so that they may be able to fulfil their essential needs, but they shed their selfish motives and greed.

². Ibid., p. 596
Their real award lies in their selfless service to the people. Guru Nanak, conceiving human souls as God's soldiers, says: -

The Lord's soldiers take care of their homes,
Their pay is fixed before their very advent into this world.
They perform the service of their Supreme Lord and obtain the profit.
From their mind they forsake and forget covetousness, avarice and evil.
In their body fortress they proclaim the victory of their Monarch and return not vanquished ever.¹

In the economy of Guru Nanak's vision, the inter-dependence of all the three types of industry is well-recognised. That is why a proper and amicable co-ordination is established among them. In it, the farmer is contented to produce the life-sustaining commodities; the industrialist produces the goods at reasonable cost for the convenience of the people in purchasing them; the trader deals fairly; the officials serve the community with dedication.

¹ Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 936
The functions of all of them are directed to the service of the people and their due returns automatically follow. They always adhere to the ideal of Kirat-Kamaai.

**Distribution** :- The Distribution aspect of this Economy covers the system of ownership and contribution. The 'ownership', here, means the ownership of Natural Resources and that of the Units of Production. The 'Contribution' stands mainly for the contribution to the Public Fund which, from the economic point of view, stands for the collection of the Public Fund.

**Ownership of Natural Resources** :-

As far as ownership of the whole wealth of natural resources is concerned, Guru Nanak holds that the real owner of it is God Himself who distributes it among His beings as He pleases.

To quote Guru Nanak :-

This world is Thine. Thou art the Lord of Universe, In a moment Thou establishest and dis-establishest. Thou distributest wealth as Thou pleastest.\(^1\)

\(^1\) Guru Nanak, *Adi Granth*, p. 417
Guru Nanak, in these words, puts forth a paradigm on which a system of ownership can be evolved in which the Sangat—the representative of God on the earth—is the custodian of the whole wealth of natural resources of the state. It is the Sangat\^{1} who will be authorised to distribute the natural resources among the individuals for the purpose of production or any other use. For example, land, which is the major factor of production will be distributed by the Sangat, through its representative body consisting of members selected through consensus, among the local units of the Sangat, however, keeping with it the area of land required for the public utility services and other public sector projects. Each local unit of the Sangat will distribute the land at its disposal among the individuals—the private sector entrepreneurs—for farming, running a factory or any other use. The distribution will be free of cost, rent or revenue etc. However, the receiver of a piece of land will not be the owner of it but only a user of it. It will remain

1. The Sangat as a whole i.e. the Congregation of all the people, later on, came to be known as Sarbat Khalsa.
with the entrepreneur only till he uses it for the purpose for which he has got it. As soon as he or all his children switch over to some other occupation, he will have to return it to the local unit of the Sangat who will give it to some other person opting for the same occupation for which the land is earmarked. Since the entrepreneur puts in his productive labour and employs his capital for the production work, and he, being the entrepreneur, takes the risk of uncertainty, therefore, he will be legitimately entitled to use the produce for the satisfaction of his essential needs. However, he must spare a considerable quantity of the produce for contributing it to the State Exchequer voluntarily.

In the sector of secondary and tertiary industry, whenever the entrepreneur is to dispose of his establishment, he will have to do the same through the local unit of the Sangat who is to take care that he (the seller) does not charge any price from the buyer for the piece of land which
the establishment is established because he (the seller) himself received the land free of cost.

This system will be applicable to the other natural resources also.

While fixing the price of the produce of the primary, secondary or tertiary industry the cost of land or other natural resources as a factor of production will not be taken into consideration as these are used by the respective entrepreneurs free of cost. However, the cost of the other three factors of production viz. labour, capital and enterprise will count in fixation of price of the produce.

If this system is to be implemented properly, the private owners (possessors) of land and other natural resources, if any, have to give up their possession and hand these over to the Sangat who will re-distribute these among the individuals keeping their need in view.

The Sangat will manage the re-distribution of land and other natural resources. It will not only distribute it but also ensure that the piece of land or the share of natural resources reaches
the proper hands and that the same is not intercepted by anybody else. For the purpose of making the system successfully workable the distribution may be renewed periodically, so to say, every year by the local units of the Sangat and a proper record thereof may be maintained by them.

Ownership of Units of Production :-

Ownership :- Now the question arises as to who should own the units of production. But before looking into the ownership of plants or establishments in the economy of Guru Nanak's vision, it is imperative to understand what a plant or establishment is and what a firm means.

Plant or Establishment :- "Any place where goods are produced or distributed or service provided is a Plant or an Establishment. It includes the machinery and equipment as well as the workers employed for the production of goods and the supply of services. The establishment may be a shop, a warehouse, a farm or a factory, a transport depot or an office and so on. Sometimes one establishment carries out all processes of manufacture or distribution - as, for example, the woollen mill which turns out raw wool into finished cloth ready
for the tailor, or the department store which buys direct from the manufacturer and sells to the customer. Thus, in the ordinary usage a plant means a factory, a mill, a shop, an establishment."

Firm :- "Establishments are controlled and directed by firms. A firm is essentially a unit of ownership and of control and administration. The firm usually owns land on which the plant or establishment is situated, the building, the capital equipment which it employs, and the raw materials it uses. In simple words, a firm is a unit which owns, controls and manages the plant or plants. Sometimes a firm may own only one plant so that the plant and firm are identical. A firm may, on the other hand, own several plants. If the one or more establishments engaged in different processes in the chain of production are owned by one firm, production is said to be organised vertically. If they are owned by different firms, any one of which may have a number of establishments, all concerned with the same stage of production, then production is said to be organised horizontally."  

1. M.C. Shukla, Business Organisation And Management, p. 95  
2. M.C. Shukla, op.cit., p. 95
Under the political system as envisaged by Guru Nanak, every individual is sovereign, as God, the real Sovereign, pervades each and every being. Moreover, everyone has been engaged in some occupation by the Creator. To quote Guru Nanak:

He who has created the universe has to everyone assigned certain occupation.  

It indicates that an individual is entitled to own a plant to carry on his occupation according to his capacity and capability — his real personal property — entrusted by God in him. It is suggestive of the pre-dominance of the private sector in the economic system structured on the paradigm put forth by Guru Nanak though public sector is not to be altogether dispensed with.

However, in the private sector, an entrepreneur will be permitted to own only one plant so that the problem of the glaring gulf between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' has no scope for sprouting in this system, and economic levelling of the society is ensured. However, more

1. Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 1022
than one persons can also own one enterprise. The owner of a private plant may employ as many persons as required for its proper functioning, but he will also be obliged to put in his own share of productive work i.e. labour (manual or mental) and not allowed to invest money in his plant and then sit idle and consume the produces or earnings to satisfy his needs. He would act as a trustee of God's wealth in the form of the owner of the private plant. The relationship between the employer and his employees will be that of equal brethren in stead of that of a master and servants. The owner will ensure good working conditions for the employees. The employees will also work with dedication and conscientiousness. They will also actively participate in the organisation of the plant to make its working better and more efficient, and useful for the society. The owner may also expand and develop his plant to any extent provided that he voluntarily contributes his surplus earning or profit to the State Exchequer.

Public Sector :- In this economy, the plants catering to public utilities and services like health, education, defence, transportation and communication etc. come within the purview of public sector. As far as manufacturing or extractive plants are concerned,
the public sector is to extend its control only in those areas where there is the apprehension of monopoly which often exploits the consumers by having too much power over the happiness and destinies of fellowmen; or the large-scale industry which requires huge capital and in which no private entrepreneur is ready to initiate even with the financial assistance from the government.

The public sector enterprises will be, as is evident, owned by the Sangat, in other words, the State as a trustee of the wealth of God. The government of the State will finance the public sector enterprises out of the State Exchequer. Each public sector enterprise will run under the stewardship of a trust comprising unanimously selected representatives, preferably knowledgeable persons having the necessary talent, of the people. The efficiency and effectiveness of the concern depends to a considerable extent upon the quality of the trustees - the policy-makers and directors - in terms of their skill, calibre, outlook, initiative and autonomy. They are to lay down the broad policy for the guidance of the management of the public sector undertakings and entrust the day-to-day administration to a qualified manager who will be accountable to the trustees.
The trust will monitor the functioning of the public sector enterprise and ensure the proper and optimum utilisation of the finance invested by the State so as to avert its defalcation or misappropriation of any sort by anybody. The public sector enterprises will operate with the objective of service to the people in stead of profit-earning. It will also employ such techniques as generate adequate opportunities of employment by opening more and more avenues of work for the people.

**State Exchequer or Public Finance :-**

In this economic system, the cardinal principle of 'Kichh Hathon Dei' i.e. 'voluntarily share the earnings with the fellow-beings' underlies the ways of collection of Public Finance. 'Daswandh' and public donations in stead of direct and indirect taxes are the sources of the State Exchequer.

**Daswandh :-** 'Daswandh' literally means one-tenth part of one's income contributed voluntarily for charitable purposes. The word 'Tithe' in English also means to pay one-tenth part of something as voluntary contribution. Referring
to the word 'Tithe', the Encyclopaedia Biblica says, "the oldest use of the word seems to have been secular designating a tax or tribute of vassal people, or from his own countrymen." \(^1\)

The Encyclopaedia further adds, "The 'tenth' doubtless, originally roughly expressed the proportion exacted... but frequently the notion of tax 'tithe' might be used in cases where the rate was different..." \(^2\)

But among the Sikhs 'Daswandh' is the voluntary offering of one-tenth of one's income for public welfare. It is the ordained duty of every earning Sikh to regularly spare one-tenth of his income and utilise it for the general public at large, particularly the needy ones. By practising this precept both the giver and the receiver benefit. It is the conviction of the Sikhs that a Sikh who sets aside one-tenth of his income regularly for the purpose of service to humankind, is blessed by the Guru and endowed with prosperity and contentment. Since the State in the political system as conceived by Guru Nanak is the Service-State, therefore, the

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1. Encyclopaedia Biblica, vol.IV, p. 5102  
2. Ibid., pp. 5102-3.
Daswandh is to be voluntarily contributed to the State Exchequer.

Besides, Guru Nanak's principle 'Kichh Hathon Dei' does not limit the amount of voluntary contribution or donation only to the one-tenth of one's income, but it requires the whole of surplus income to be donated for charitable purposes. Every earning hand is enjoined upon to consume his produces or income only upto the 'sufficiency limit' i.e. sufficient for satisfaction of his essential needs and he must spare a considerable amount of his earnings/income. The income spared by him viz. the income in excess of the sufficiency limit is his surplus income. This surplus income is not to be accumulated as it spoils one's mind and that is why it may be termed as the 'spoiling limit' of income. To quote Guru Nanak :-

In hoarding wealth comes evil-thinking.
And pleasure and pain at our doorstep keep standing.¹

¹ Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 222
Moreover, wealth does not accompany anyone; rather it belongs to none. To quote Guru Nanak:

Friend: worldly wealth accompanies us not.¹

And:

The man amasses and hoards riches and gives to none.
The fool thinks that all is his own.
Golden Ceylon and gold palaces remained not with Ravana.
The riches belong to none.²

This surplus or spoiling limit of income is to be donated by everyone with the sense of service to humankind. It is to be contributed to the State Exchequer and Langar. Every donor is to feel contented by bearing it in mind that whatever he has given, belongs to God. Guru Nanak says:—

The charity-giver when giving away charity should feel content.³

2. Ibid., p. 155
3. Ibid., p. 466
In the hereafter is received reward for what man from his own earnings offers.¹

The economic system envisaged by Guru Nanak will guarantee security against crises of all sorts, and in such a system everyone will joyfully assume the responsibility of sparing a considerable portion of his earnings for contributing the same to the State Exchequer and Langar voluntarily. In this system, there will be no need of levies or forcible exaction from the people for raising public finance.

Utilisation of the State Exchequer:

In the light of the objective of the economy of Guru Nanak's vision, the State Exchequer is to be utilised by the government for meeting the expenditure on the following items:

1. Provision of free education and health facilities to all the people irrespective of their race, colour, creed, sex or status etc.

2. Provision of Internal and External Security, and the Public Utility Services like

¹ Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 472
Transport and Communication to the people as the times need.

3. Financing the Public Sector Industry and advancing interest-free loans to the Private Sector Entrepreneurs and to the individuals for their personal needs.

4. Provision of Security against all kinds of crises like disabledness, disease, old age infirmity, unemployment etc. to each and everyone.

5. Any other provision of Public Service according to the need of the people.

The institution of Langar, too, has the object of 'material well-being' of the people in its purview as it provides free food to the needy and the poor. Some scholars hold that the tradition of Langar was founded during the period of the third Guru Amar Das. But this opinion is not correct since various instances are available in the Sikh history which show that the system of Langar had been started by Guru Nanak at Sultanpur (though on a smaller scale) and was developed into
a large institution during the last days at Kartarpur. He took keen interest in the service of humanity and adopted farming as a direct help to the 'community kitchen', that is Langar. Throughout the period of his agricultural occupation, he used to supply his entire produce of foodgrains to the Langar.\(^1\) He aimed at making food freely available to all without any distinction as he could not see anybody starve. Prof. Puran Singh aptly calls Guru Nanak's institution of Langar as the 'Temple of Bread'. To quote him, "The very first Temple made by Guru Nanak, therefore, was the Temple of Bread or Guru's Langar. In one common Temple of Bread, the Bread of God was made free to the children of man. Let none be hungry where the spirit of God prevails."\(^2\)

The institution of Langar which assumed the form of Pangat during the third Guru - Guru Amar Dass, serves a bi-fold purpose. Whereas it provides free food to the poor, the disabled and the destitute out of the voluntary contributions made


\(^2\) Puran Singh, op.cit., p. 127
by the people from their earnings for the service of the needy, it also serves as an effective equaliser of all the people of society. All persons irrespective of their caste, colour, creed, sex or status have to sit on the ground in a row called Pangat and share the food of the same type in this system. It also tends towards establishment of parity among all the people in their accessibility to the provisions of food which is the very first basic need of life. In the system of Pangat, all the people are treated alike. It is an illustrious and pragmatic paradigm of Equality and Fraternity of all human beings without any discrimination. In this system, everybody has the right to contribute to, to cook, to serve and to eat the food and to cleanse the utensils used by the Sangat to take meals. Commenting on this institution Dr. G.S. Mansukhani writes, "The free kitchen serves a number of purposes. On the one hand, it is an example of equality of men to because all the people have sit on one and the same platform, eat the same type of meal..."\footnote{G.S. Mansukhani, The Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak, the article published in Gurdwara Gazette, April, 1970 quoted by Dr. G.S. Deol in Social And Political Philosophy of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh, p. 60.} Moreover,
the institution of Langar is run voluntarily by the Sangat. Therefore, it infuses the individuals with the sense of responsibility making voluntary contribution to the social and economic welfare of the people. In this system, the individuals perform the acts of service i.e. cooking and serving of the food and washing of utensils etc. with their own hands; and this practice promotes the dignity of labour.

According to Dr. A.C. Banerjee "The system (Langar) represented two important points in Guru Nanak's teachings; the denunciation of asceticism and the importance of dān, the charitable sharing of money or goods.... Apart from the religious aspect, both these points strengthened the trends towards the development of a new social structure, what we call the dignity of labour was promoted and the individual's responsibility for contributing to social welfare was emphasised."¹

Planning :— While planning for the State, the government will always keep the primary objective of 'service to the people' in mind. Development

¹ Anil Chandra Banerjee, op.cit., p. 210
will be emphasised not for the sake of development but for the sake of fulfilment of the essential needs of the people. The planning will be a service-oriented one and growth of income will not be its aim; however, the growth of income will automatically take place as a by-product of the economic activity directed at the realisation of the objective of 'service to the people'.

In the state of Guru Nanak's vision, material prosperity is, no doubt, essential for the general well-being of the society; but it is not the determinant of happy life for man - and hence of the society. Ethical and spiritual considerations are more important than materialistic enrichment. Guru Nanak says:

Man may eat, wear and enjoy life
But without love and devotion to the Lord,
he wastes his life and dies in ignominy. 1

Thus, Guru Nanak, while supporting the need of material prosperity, attaches primary importance to spirituality in human life as it imbues one with ethical values. Moreover, unlike Kautilya, he does not regard material prosperity

1: Guru Nanak, Adi Granth, p. 1027
as the determinant of the values of dharma. Rather, in his opinion, it is the ethical principles of religion that influence material life. Material advancement finds its justification when it furthers the economic, social and political interests of society. In other words, it is to be directed to the establishment of a healthy social system based on economic, social and political justice to all the people. Commenting on this point, Major Earnes says, "The pursuit of a maximum aggregate wealth should be subordinated to the pursuit of a healthy social system. In other words, general well-being is more dependent on a healthy social system than a great aggregate riches."¹

Economic justice is the fundamental principle on which the economic order in the state of Guru Nanak's vision rests. According to Guru Nanak, the moral dictates of religion are indispensable for the maintenance of this economic order. He suggests that it is through arousing the sense of truth, contentment and voluntary sharing of one's surplus income with others that

¹ Major Earnes, Guide to the Philosophy of Morals and Politics, p. 623
the economic equilibrium is maintained in the society and the ideal of exploitation-free society can be realised. Dr. Radhakrishnan does not advocate the solution of mankind's problems by strengthening the material values; rather, he lays stress on raising the ethical and moral standards of humility, which is brought about only through religion. 1 "Woodrow Wilson has also rightly remarked, "Our civilization cannot survive materially unless it be redeemed spiritually." 2

The foregoing discussion categorically reveals that Guru Nanak envisages a type of Economy based on viable economic values coupled with ethical values. It upholds productive work as involving dignity and disallows all sorts of unproductive activities like begging and stealing etc. under all circumstances. It indicates that even poverty should be overcome through reliance on God, the Supreme Provider, and productive work.

1. S. Radhakrishnan, Eastern Religion and Western Thought, p. 80
There is no place for unearned or ill-earned money in it. Such an economic approach infuses the entrepreneur with dynamism, that is why the Sikhs have proved themselves very good entrepreneurs. In it every individual is required to engage in some productive work not only for the material well-being of himself or herself and his or her family but also for the material welfare of his or her fellow-beings or, in other words, the society and humankind as a whole. The principle of 'Kichh Hathhon Dei' or sharing of one's honestly earned income with others allows one to make only a judicious use of one's earnings and restrains one from lavishly spending one's earnings for one's own self. It also averts concentration of wealth in a few hands which is the root-cause of all economic ills.