

“WHEEL of FORTUNE”

The end of WWII marked the beginning of Japan’s economic upsurge, a trend that would go on to make them the 2nd largest economy in the world by 1960. The rise of Japan, also known as the ‘economic miracle’ by many, was due to the cooperation between the Government, the Manufacturers, the Distributors, the Customers, and the Financial Institutions who worked in closely knit groups called ‘*keiretsu*’. The then Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Hayato Ikeda, rigged the wheel in their favour through smart and stringent economic policies. Japan demanded their population to focus on implementing best-in-the-class processes and practices. Japan manufactured literally everything from low-tech ‘Nuts & Bolts’ to hi-tech ‘TV Sets’ and became the production powerhouse of the world in 50s and 60s of the last century. This led to a sharp increase in the income levels of Japanese people triggering domestic consumer demand and better living standards resulting in high cost of living.

The wheel began moving towards an alternative to an expensive Japan and keeping in line with the global business trends. The eastern neighbour, South Korea, welcomed it with open arms. Seoul’s industrialists, back by the Government, introduced modern technologies and built advanced facilities at a rapid pace. The country emerged from being one of the poorest in the world with USD 79/capita, an income lower than some of the sub-Saharan countries at that time. South Korea enjoyed the upswing for couple of decades in 70s and 80s as the leading production hub from low-end commodity goods to hi-end consumer electronics. Unfortunately, the costs started going up and the history seemed to repeat with the global customers began to look outside South Korea.

The international business community took a brief halt in Taiwan, a tiny island southeast of South Korea before the wheel moved further eastwards towards China in 90s. The single party show in Beijing didn’t leave any stone unturned to push every citizen of the country to produce almost anything and everything that the world demanded. The philosophy of ‘Customer First’ and an attitude of ‘Whatever it Takes’ got embedded across the masses. The staunch support of the Government and sheer hard work of the Chinese brought them out of extreme poverty and made them a superpower in less than two decades. Today, China is an undisputed manufacturer and the largest exporter of consumer goods in the world. But, the macro-economic indicators are signalling that the tide is ready to turn. The increased inflation, the oversized debt, and the political conflicts added with the Covid19 scenario means the wheel will roll shortly.

Is Incredible India ready? This could be an opportunity of the lifetime for India and the Indians. The Government with streamlined polices and the businesses with best practices will have to hold each other tightly. They will have to digest faster and act sooner on *COST, QUALITY, and DELIVERY* without any compromises, period!