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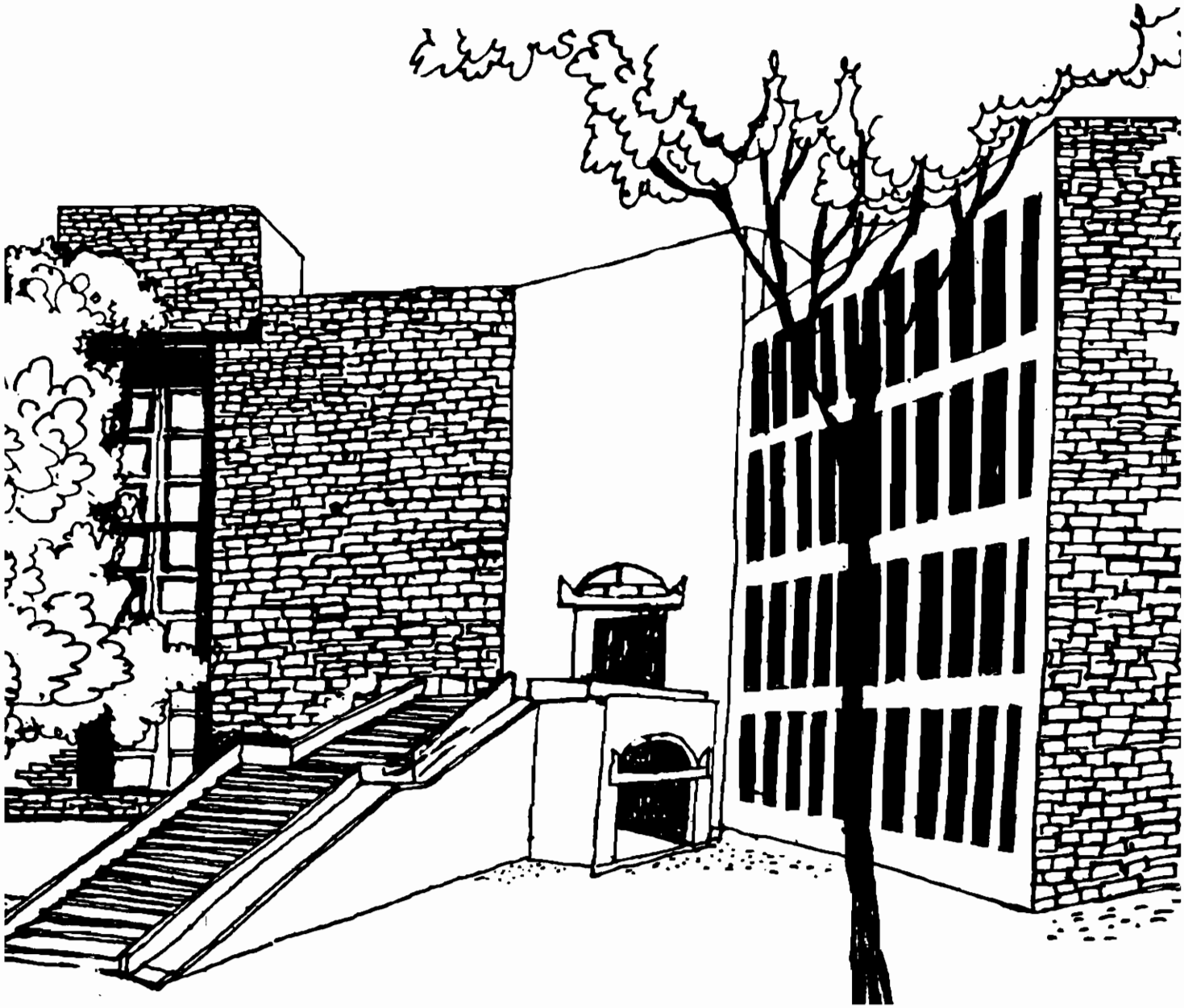

Leaders in Action: Some Illustrations and Inferences

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Leaders in Action: Some Illustrations and Inferences

S. Ramnarayan and Ram Mohan Rao

R.K. Talwar[1], the doyen among Indian bankers, was Chairman of the State Bank of India for seven years from 1969 to 1976. As a banker and leader of exceptional calibre, he led the State Bank of India during a truly turbulent period of transition -- from the bank being a conservative bastion of elitism to dynamic republican institution, to spur economic development of a modernizing nation, with ever-widening coverage of diverse segments and sectors of society. Talwar, as chief executive, galvanized the staid and steady organization into a great institution -- imbued with a vision and a sharply focused mission. During his tenure, the State Bank expanded at a rapid pace, reorganized its structures and systems and emerged as one of the largest banking institutions of its kind anywhere in the world. Talwar as a mentor groomed up scores of potential leaders of exceptional calibre and talent.

Vikram Sarabhai[2] was closely associated with the setting up of the Ahmedabad Textile Industry's Research Association (ATIRA), ever since its incorporation in 1947. He was the honourary and part-time Director of ATIRA till 1956. Vikram Sarabhai -- a physicist by training and a scion of one of the leading industrialist families of Gujarat -- set up and built over a score of institutions in the fields of science, business and social development in the governmental, private and voluntary sectors. So even during the years of his active association with ATIRA, Sarabhai was also simultaneously involved in establishing, nurturing and managing various other institutions. Inspite of his multiple responsibilities, he was instrumental in building ATIRA as an organization that successfully practised certain values and approaches, such as: creating space for fresh young scientists to make significant contributions to the industry; building a culture of horizontal control and a work environment where organizational members planned their own work and worked out their own budgets; caring people management systems and processes that provided an assuring ambience; and close networking among the policy making board, scientists and managing agents of the textile mills, which made ATIRA a vibrant technology institution.

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1 See Sampath P. Singh, "R.K. Talwar: Life of a Banker." In S. Ramnarayan and Ram Mohan Rao (Eds.) *Cases in Organizational Behaviour* (New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill, Forthcoming).

2 See S.R. Ganesh and Padmanabh Joshi, "Institution Building: Lessons from Vikram Sarabhai's Leadership", *Vikalpa*, 10(4), 1985, pp. 399-413.

Rai Bahadur Mohan Singh Oberoi[3] epitomises the best and the brightest in Indian hospitality industry. He started as a clerk in a hotel in Simla, and against great odds built up and nurtured the Oberoi hotel chain which presently is spread all over India, and also straddles the four continents of Asia, Australia, Africa and Europe. Over a period of half a century while he was at the helm, Rai Bahadur Oberoi displayed, time and again, entrepreneurial ingenuity, tenacity of purpose, concern for people and the eye for fine details as he went about adding hotels to his chain, either through acquisition or by building them brick by brick. His five-star deluxe hotel, half-built, stood in its concrete shell for six years at Delhi due to lack of funds testing the courage and determination of Oberoi. His plans to build the high-rise Oberoi Towers at Bombay was also hamstrung by the paucity of funds, and problems of obtaining governmental clearance necessitating the display of qualities of courage and steadfastness to face bigger and bigger challenges. As a leader in hospitality industry which hitherto hardly had any significant presence in India, Oberoi went about creating organizations of international quality with standards, procedures and practices similar to the ones being adhered to by the very best hotels anywhere in the world. The quest for perfection impelled Oberoi to set up a school of hotel management to train personnel to the exacting international standards. Yet, amidst the welter of 18-hour work days, Oberoi continued to retain the human touch by remembering the names of hundreds of employees and even details about their children.

Ralegon Shindi[4] was a backward village in the arid Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra. Anna Hazare, a native of the village, returned home after 15 years in the army, to see the place as also begin a life of resettlement for himself. But the situation he had seen in the village was depressing: poverty, drunkness and purposelessness. He began the transformation process with missionary zeal. He motivated, cajoled, persuaded, and at times coerced villagers to his way of thinking. Over a decade, multiple changes, for the better, took place in the village through the devices of increasing involvement and participation of people; the building of institutions and networks. The landscape was transformed from flat dry aridness to lush green verdure, and the lives of people got reasonably liberated from dire want and poverty to a glimmer of hope and fulfilment. Ralegaon was metamorphosed from Shindi (which refers to a tree from which local liquor was extracted) to Siddhi, a place of fulfilment, peace, bliss and realization.

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3 See Bachi J. Karkaria, "Management Style of a Great Hotelier". In S. Ramnarayan and Ram Mohan Rao (Eds.) *Cases in Organizational Behaviour* (New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill, Forthcoming).

4 See S. Ramnarayan, Ganesh Pangare and Vasudha Pangare, "From Shindi to Siddhi." In S. Ramnarayan and Ram Mohan Rao (Eds.) *Cases in Organizational Behaviour* (New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill, Forthcoming).

After successfully setting up cooperatives for sugar, drip irrigation and lift irrigation, Vinayak Rao Patil[5], a politician, turned his attention to the utilization of waste land. He obtained knowhow on eucalyptus plantation and organized an eucalyptus cooperative in his native district in 1983. He also planned to facilitate the process of setting up similar societies in other districts of Maharashtra and then establish a paper mill with eucalyptus as a raw material. Though he gathered background data and did considerable homework to make his project successful, he was faced with enormous hurdles set by the various governmental agencies. Every single step right from registering the eucalyptus plantation society, to getting the seedlings, to obtaining loans challenged his ingenuity and patience. He was required to use all the approaches in his political armour to stay in the obstacle race, which seemed especially designed to test the alacrity of cooperative leaders. Perhaps, most important, during the entire process, he had to retain his optimism and motivate his members to not give up their collective dream.

Though it came into being in 1961, the Indian Institute of Management, (IIMA) till 1965 did not have a full-time Director[6]. In that year Ravi Matthai took over as the first full-time Director of IIMA. During his stewardship, the Institute had come to symbolise various innovative practices in the management of organizations of higher learning in India. He placed considerable stress on maintaining the autonomy of the Institute, developing the culture of professional and non-hierarchical relationships, with an emphasis on matrix type of organization in which people performed various roles and their significance depended on the roles they performed in the institute, rather than hierarchical status. He made a deliberate attempt to build a culture of self-reliant and competent creativity in diverse roles. Several innovative practices were introduced in the Institute which were rare in the general Indian structure of higher education. These innovations had helped IIMA to acquire considerable internal strength. The principal architect of this system was Matthai, who during the eight years (1965-72) of his directorship created and nurtured the peer group and professional culture and sustained the self-renewing processes in the Institute.

Leaders and their Contexts

The six individuals, referred to above, have operated in widely differing contexts. While one individual operated in a rural setting, the other set up a chain of luxury hotels. Even as one person

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5 See P.M. Shinghi and S.P. Seetharaman, "Satan's Eucalytus: A Case Study of Vinayak Rao Patil" (Mimeographed).

6 See Udai Pareek, "Self-Regulation: The Key to Institution Building." In S. Ramnarayan and Ram Mohan Rao (Eds.), *Cases in Organizational Behaviour* (New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill, Forthcoming).

mobilized a group of farmers for development of wasteland, another spearheaded the spread of a bank to the different corners of the country. One person was concerned with creation of excellence in management education, and another with excellence in the application of science and technology for industrial development. Is there anything common among these uncommon individuals?

We would like to argue that each of these individuals has been a leader in the arena that he had chosen to operate. Each one of these individuals created worthwhile chage by mobilizing and energizing people to accomplish an agenda. They conceptualized a direction for the near and farthest future of the system in terms of a vision and the ways and means of realizing it. They were able to draw out people and create teams and coalitions by seeking to satisfy the very basic, but unfulfilled, needs of members. And they operated on the emotional and spiritual resources of the organization, such as values, commitment and aspirations.

It is of course, quite obvious that a cooperative leader faces a different set of challenges as compared to a leader of a scientific or academic institution. Similarly the challenges faced by a leader of a service organization like a hotel chain, or a bank are distinct. In the same vein, each organization, even within a given sector (such as banking or cooperatives), faces a unique confluence of factors and situations which frame the challenges for the head of the organization. But we would like to propose that some of the key factors underlying leadership dynamics are similar, and accounts of outstanding leaders can provide us interesting insights into the leadership process.

This paper has been built on the basis six detailed cases, which present numerous episodes of how the leaders planned and implemented their work. We have also tried to link these accounts with some interesting and intriguing concepts of leadership in the literature.

Leaders as "Souls of Fire"

a) *Getting in Touch with Own Purpose*

Ake Philips[7], a Swedish organization researcher, after studying nine organizations as part of a research assignment came out within the observation that in each case he encountered a limited number of deeply involved individuals who have had a decisive impact on the enterprises they led. Philips refers to these persons as the "souls of fire." The leaders bring intensity of purpose to their actions. In that respect they are markedly different from managers. As John Kotter points out, while managership is about coping with complexity, leadership is about coping with change. In the cases we have given above, all the six leaders were concerned with ushering in significant change in their

7 See Ake Philips, *Eld Sjalar*, Stokholm: EFI Ekonomiska Forskingsintitutel, 1988

organizations rather than make do with some rational solutions to problems. They had time and again displayed rare competencies in steering their organizations toward extraordinary achievement. They have displayed steadfast commitment to the goals they had set for themselves and their organizations, as is borne out by the following illustrations from the domain of their work-a-day world, particularly during the early days of their leadership saga. These examples underpin the qualities of courage, the desire to carry the colleagues along, the burning zeal to learn and share the learning with others and in the process ignite a passion for excellence, befitting the "souls of fire."

Ravi Matthai strove to build a culture of flexibility and openness, unencumbered by the rigid enforcement of targets to foster and nurture the flowering of "academic entrepreneurship" among the faculty members. This was an act of courage and taking a leap into the unknown in the world of Indian academia which was characterized by rigidly laid down rules and procedures. Moreover, any suggestions and advice to colleagues were not an outcome of a bureaucratic leader's penchant for prescribing norms of behaviour for others, but born out of a continuing intellectual work-out one has been going through for defining the organizational purpose for oneself. For, in his own words, Matthai states: Dhobhi Book planning was the sort of planning I did in a little book covering periods of 5 to 20 years in terms of how I saw the institution developing. I did not discuss the plans either inside the institute with the faculty or with the Board members or with the Government. I just kept these plans to myself, the way I kept my Dhobhi Book. This I did deliberately because I did not want people to be made self-conscious by planned targets. Nor did I wish to be constrained by other people's expections of targets I set for myself. My view was that at an early stage of institutional development, laying down planned targets forces people to achieve an artificial number of targets without giving them time to develop their capacity to undertake responsibility as a way of expressing themselves creatively."

R.K. Talwar took over the chairmanship of the State Bank of India just as the government ushered in the era of social control of banking, during the early 1970s. He took up the challenge and worked hard with a burning zeal to translate national policies of better serving the growing and changing needs of Indian society. During this period, Talwar was often seen as the person championing the cause of small-scale industry and the agricultural sector. Progressive policies attracted him and he did these things out of conviction rather than a bureaucratic proclivity to implement governmental policies, whatever they might be.

When Anna Hazare returned for good to his native village Ralegaon Shindi, after 15 years of army service he found around him an atmosphere of hoplessness and a sense of futility. He went into action and started rebuilding the temple which was in a derelict state. The villagers were surprised

that he was putting all of his provident fund, amounting to twenty thousand rupees, for the temple restoration. And when he started the temple work, only a few people living just around the temple showed interest. But that was only the beginning. Later on, the temple became the focal point for gram sabhas or village meetings. These meetings made it possible to discuss village issues and to plan collective action. Moreover, they also made it possible for Hazare to repetitively share with others his dream of a prosperous and strife-free Ralegaon at a not-so-distant future date.

As happens generally to be the lot of the builder of a new organization, Vikram Sarabhai had to grope in the dark about the kind of organization ATIRA needed to become to best serve the needs of the textile industry. The institutional structure devised by Sarabhai was the following. Three interacting clusters played a significant role in the growth of ATIRA. The Council of Advisors (COA), consisting of prominent industrialists (like Kasturbhai Lalbhai and Vikram Sarabhai) and eminent scientists (like Bhatnagar and Krishnan), was the first cluster concerned with shaping and evolving policies. The second cluster was at the research level, and consisted of physical and social scientists. The third cluster consisted of owner-managers of mills, then known as managing agents. Incidentially, Sarabhai was an elected member of the COA, a young scientist and a young managing agent at Calico Mills. He, thus, represented all the three clusters and linked them into a workable network. All the networking moves of Sarabhai were animated by an overriding purpose of serving the needs of the textile industry which hitherto was left to fend for itself. Consequently, ATIRA evolved itself into a distinctive and unique organization, rather than a replication of any existing institution.

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b) *Intensity and Involvement in Action*

However wonderful a purpose one might have, until and unless it is translated into action, no change ever comes about. The six leaders had displayed intensity of involvement in translating hazy dreams into workable realities. Along the way they had to display qualities of courage, tenacity, steadfastness and sometimes even a thick hide to face upto the opposition and resistance to their plans. This is borne out by the following illustrations.

Talwar never shied away from personal courage in confronting even the tallest of governmental leaders. For example, once the Finance Minister, Y.B. Chavan, was presiding over a meeting of chief executives of banks, and financial institutions, at which the Reserve Bank Governor, Deputy Governors and Secretary, Banking, were also present. The Minister requested Talwar to express his opinion on a specific issue and as the latter was speaking the Minister was busy whispering to Secretary, Banking, sitting by his side. Talwar raised his voice and said: "Chavan Saheb, will you

please first listen to me?" The Minister was also a man of grace to face a man of courage: "Talwar Saheb, I am sorry, please go on."

Even Rai Saheb Oberoi's example of how he faced an adverse situation through tenacity and steadfastness illustrates anew how leaders go about facing crises and overcoming them. The construction of the newest hotel in New Delhi began in right earnest; the structure rose to six of its eight floors and then, one day, everything just stopped, because the money had run out. the empty shell stood mockingly as an eyesore in the centre of India's capital, causing as much embarrassment to M.S. Oberoi as it was to the government. The Minister for Housing and Works, Mehr Chand Khanna, was about to requisition the eyesore when Oberoi, with dogged determination went into action. When he found out that a common friend was visiting the minister at Mussoorie, he suffered freezing cold at the minister's house, sleeping curled up on the floor of the drawing room, to besiege Mr. Khanna to grant his company a chance to complete India's first five star deluxe hotel. The Minister was impressed by Oberoi's persistence and spiked the confiscation order. The problem of money remained. Ambassador B.K. Nehru helped Oberoi gain access to the PL 480 funds, through a collaborative agreement with Intercontinental Hotels, under the auspices of the Chairman John Gates. So after six years of lull, the concrete mixtures churned again and the hotel was completed, at last, in 1965. And so was ready India's first five star deluxe hotelry. The hotel made enough profits to pay back every paisa of borrowed money in four years.

In a similar vein, Anna Hazare faced stiff resistance when he was chalking out an action plan to eradicate alcholism from the face of the village. When Anna emphasized at one of the meetings that there could be no progress and happiness in the village without the removal of alcholism, some individuals expressed concern that liquor units were being run out of economic necessity. It was then decided that the liquor units whould be closed, but other occupations should be initiated by seeking bank loans for the purpose. And the quest for alternative vocations virtually triggered off the economic revolution the village underwent subsequently.

Similarly, Patil too had to face stiff resistance from various quarters since he was pushing through a new concept. Eucalyptus cooperative for a paper mill was a new concept. All that the people, till then, heard of was about an eucalyptus tree or a bottle of eucalyptus oil. But what Patil had conceived of about farm forestry did not just stop at growing eucalyptus trees on farms; it rather extended to the use of the produce as raw material for paper making. Consequently, the organization floated by Patil, the Nashik Zilla Eucalyptus Producers Cooperative, had to initiate a multi-pronged drive to convince the farmers, the Chief Minister and the state political establishment, the governmental agencies at state and centre, the banks and financial agencies, as well as the research

organizations and agricultural universities. This endeavour, indeed, was a massive energy-sapping, enthusiasm-breaking exercise demanding perseverance, patience, tenacity and optimism on the part of Mr. Patil.

As the above examples amplify, the leaders Oberoi, Sarabai, Talwar, Matthai, Patil and Hazare kept sharing their dreams as they went along. They were constantly in dialogue with their inner purpose but they also shared their intense concerns with others. They involved their colleagues in their endeavours. They kept learning as they went along and also shared their learning with their colleagues and associates. That is how they kept the fire of purposive endeavour alive. And that is how they became the "souls of fire" of their organizations.

Leaders as "Brokers of Dreams"[8]

All the leaders had personal visions, which existed in their own minds as simmering dreams. Hazare's vision of a prosperous Ralegaon Siddhi, Talwar's of a socially-responsive banking institution, Oberoi's of a chain of world class hotels, Matthai's of a great management school, Sarabhai's of a research organization in tune with industry needs, and Patil's of creation of wealth out of waste land through the eucalyptus -- all had that exciting vision and illuminating futures for their organizations. But they went beyond a personal dream. To be implemented a leadership dream has to be scripted. Scripting leads to brokerage activity: the leader's need for hope gets projected as a need for hope by his constituents and it gets integrated into their consciousness. Eventually, successful brokerage of dreams by leaders results in the adoption of the very same dreams by the followers, by the entire organizations, or even a constellation of organizations. The leaders used the devices of networking, collective decision-making, non-intrusive encouragement to colleagues to tackle tricky issues, and myriad others to push through the dreams. The following examples provide some instances of how the leaders went about devising the appropriate scripting strategies to transform their dreams into widely-accepted organizational endeavours.

When Ravi Matthai took over the directorship of IIMA, it was slated to grow as one of those conventional business schools of North America, thanks to the collaboration with the Harvard Business School. But the needs of India, which had just launched its developmental plans in a massive way, were different. There was the crying need for training programmes of various kinds to provide managerial resources to sectors transcending business enterprises such as agriculture, education, health, technology, public sector, cooperatives as well as the conventional economic enterprises. Matthai not only worked out for himself a dream, a perspective, spanning a time horizon of a couple of decades,

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8 See Sooklal, "The Leader as a Broker of Dreams." *Human Relations*, 44(8), 1989, pp. 833-856.

but he also enthused his colleagues, his Board members and other critical stakeholders to share this vision and join him in its actualization over a period of time. The scripting devices used were the committees and collegial endeavour. Matthai made use of faculty meetings effectively to broker his dreams. The committees of faculty members were entrusted with vital decision making and managerial roles. The leader was non-intrusive so long as things were going on ahead according to the script, which was most often. The control systems devised were based on trust rather than watchdog monitoring. Their successful operation was possible because of the high degree of integrity practiced by Matthai and transmitted to his colleagues. That was how a unique management school to specifically fulfill the evolving and changing needs of a developing nation was built up, brick by brick.

Similarly, Talwar had set his goals carefully. His highest priority was to make the State Bank of India a vibrant organization so that it could become the undisputed leader of change in Indian banking to match with the evolving clamour for such banking services in the Indian society. His extraordinary enthusiasm for innovative banking during the early seventies was to be seen to be believed. No one could match him in this regard, not even the policy makers. And what was more important was that it proved to be infectious. Barring a minority of doubting Thomases, the majority in the bank, particularly in the middle management cadres, was deeply in love with the Pied Piper. He could persuade his followers and get his plans successfully implemented. Frequent meetings with colleagues, continuous communication of thoughts, ideas and plans of the chief executive through out the organization and the transmission of the vision and dreams of the top boss to every member of the organization were the devices effectively used by Talwar to galvanize the State Bank of India.

Vinayak Rao Patil welded together, through cooperative networking, the eucalytus growers across the state of Maharashtra. Following his initiative, twentytwo district level eucalyptus growers societies have been registered in Maharashtra. The Registrar of Cooperatives at one time had hesistation in registering these societies as eucalyptus societies, and had even suggested to have their mandate broad-based by calling them the "tree-growers" societies. Patil felt it was a good suggestion, because in future they might consider teak or sandalwood as better trees and could go for cultivation, since farmers were wedded to farming and not necessarily to any particular tree. But even the idea of eucalyptus cultivation on plantation scale had encountered numerous hurdles on its way to being a feasible proposition -- from the bureaucracy, the political establishment, the banking and financial sector and the farmers-at-large. Patil single-handedly brokered the dream of wealth creation from wasteland, and did not give up his resolve when hurdles cropped up. He felt an immense sense of personal satisfaction that his personal dream of eucalyptus cultivation in a short span of a few years had fired the imagination of thousands of farmers in many districts across the state; and the movement also was constantly spreading to newer areas.

In an analogous fashion, Anna Hazare brought together the villagers of Ralegaon who, hitherto, were operating at cross purposes. Just as some renovation work was completed, Anna brought bhajan singers and religious story tellers to Ralegaon to get the villagers to visit the temple. During these village gatherings held in the temple hall, Anna also spoke about the teachings of Swami Vivekananda and the need for the betterment of the village. The Gram Sabha or village meeting, evolved out of these informal sessions. The village meetings were useful in getting people to know each other better and develop a shared understanding of the village level issues and the dreams and hopes Anna had about the future of Ralegaon as individuals and as a collectivity.

The Oberoi chain of deluxe hotels started growing at a frenetic pace during the seventies. The foreign tourists were pouring into India. There was a continuously accelerating demand for additional hotel rooms, and other first-rate tourist facilities. To realize his dream of building a chain of world-class hotels in India, Oberoi networked with tourist agencies in the government and outside. Similarly, the group went in for collaborative linkages with top-class chains from other parts of the world. At the same time, Oberoi set up hotels abroad from Egypt to Australia. Most importantly, Oberoi also established a School of Hotel Management to train world-class professionals to manage the burgeoning chain. All through the training the critical role of caring, personal involvement and personal attention to details were repetitively emphasised as constituting the best of professionalism in hospitality industry. The reputation the school built up was such that the trainees would join one of the Oberoi hotels abroad just to be able to avail of the intensive training provided at that institution. So through these devices, the personal dream of M.S. Oberoi was translated at a fast pace, into an ever-expanding chain of top-class hotels straddling the subcontinent of India and the four continents, manned and managed by managers and staff animated by the vision and dreams of the patriarch.

In a similar vein, Vikram Sarabhai, son of a textile mill owner, had a dream of building up an applied research institute to exclusively cater to the specific needs of the textile industry in Ahmedabad and its environs. ATIRA was not going to be one of those ivory tower research organizations far removed from the humdrum realities of the local industry. There was no ready model to fall back upon. To actualize the dream, Sarabhai enthused the local industrialists, eminent scientists from outside as well as young scientists from within the nascent organization. As a result, Sarabhai managed to network the researchers and end users into a cohesive interest group, animated by the same vision, breathing the very same hopes and aspirations. As we had observed in an earlier section, Sarabhai lent purposiveness to the organization through the clustering device.

As could be seen from the illustrations given in this section, the leaders were quite active, during the initial years, as "brokers of dreams." They successfully created a phalanx of followers and

managed to infect them with their visions, dreams, hopes and ambitions they had nurtured for their organizations. But they went beyond merely exciting the imagination of the followers. They networked various stakeholder groups into a cohesive organization. And to continue to derive benefits from networking, these leaders also consciously built up the necessary suport systems. They also, through precept and practice, displayed qualities of courage, compassion and empathy in tackling tricky situations, and in handling human relations. They, indeed, set out the norms of model behaviour for organization members. They chalked out strategies and programmes for enriching the human resources and the unleashing of the human potential. They, above every thing else, through their behaviour, demonstrated the values of probity, integrity, ethics in all the organizational transactions. Thus, the leader and followers were able to work toward the commonly-shared goal of building up exciting future for their organizations.

Leaders as Creators of Not Just Passion, but also Harmony

There is considerable discussion in literature about creating passion for achieving goals in organizations. Passion is reflected in strength and will, expansive dreams and high personal ambitions. Usually, charismatic leaders bring about such passion resulting in a strong urge to have impact on the world. All the six leaders were able to use this strategem very well.

But it is not often realized that passion needs to be checked and challelled to create great achievements and contributions. The channeling is achieved by forces of attunement. Attunement connotes harmony between the parts of the system and between parts and the whole. The forces of harmony ensure that the high energy, excitement and drive arising from passion do not get control of the persons and push them to achieve their ends, no matter what the cost or consequences for the larger system. Unless harmony acts as a balancing force, passion may result in a situation where individuals remain more concerned with what they can get and achieve for themselves and their subunits, than what may be needed to maintain organizations and social institutions. In other words, passion without harmony results in a situation in which individuals may be more concerned with the freedom to do their own thing; this is likely to increase differences, conflicts, litigation, and stresses in the larger system, and weaken the fragile webs of relationship which bind any organization or society together.

For passion the leaders wield their will and power. But for harmony, the leaders use the emotional devices such as empathy, understanding, caring and nurturance. It manifests in more concrete forms through: (i) mentor/protege relationship, (ii) comradeship, (iii) high ideals, (iv) loyalties transcending personal advantage, and (v) dedication to excellence.

For example, Talwar as a mentor groomed scores of young managers; so did Sarabhai, Matthai and Oberoi. Similarly all the six leaders emphasised time and again the need for identifying with a cause larger than personal advantage. At the same time they personally strove for excellence and relentlessly drove their followers to excel in everything they did. This they were able to do by evoking trust in organization members. They also built up a high degree of credibility about themselves and their actions. As a result, they were able to obtain acceptance for decisions which people were not initially enthusiastic about, such as Ravi Matthai entrusting the essential management of academic programmes to his colleagues, or Hazare deliberately absenting himself from the village to force his lieutenants to manage the show.

The six case studies present numerous examples of how these leaders used the device of attunement to draw the followers towards a commitment to high ideals. For example, Anna Hazare initiated the temple renovation by spending the money he got from his provident fund. He also organized the meetings of villagers in the temple premises to evoke higher ideals. Sarabhai kept open the doors of his office to all employees so that they can share with him their problems and concerns. Oberoi, like a head of a big family, took continuous interest in the welfare of his numerous employees, not only about their office work but also about their personal problems. In a similar vein, Matthai relinquished the directorship of IIMA to establish a principle that managerial positions in academic organizations need to be rotational rather than fixed to an incumbent.

These leaders not only valued the need for creating an atmosphere of freedom and autonomy for their organizations and for each of the organization members, but went all out to make it an on-going part of the institutions they led. For example, Sarabhai was part-time director in ATIRA and the routine administrative work was left to the research workers. Since every one was new to the textile industry, all of them, including Sarabhai, jointly explored the new world in order to learn. They jointly identified relevant areas of inquiry. Researches planned their own work, implemented their plans, and worked out their own budgets. Thus horizontal controls were more in operation. The early circumstances and Sarabhai's aversion to control helped in creating an atmosphere in which there was no control from above.

Rai Bahadur advised his managers never to say an outright no to an employee however certain they were that they could not possibly accede to his request. "Always allow twenty-four hours to pass. You might well change your mind. Even if you don't, the person will have satisfaction of knowing that you have given the matter due consideration. That helps him or her take the negative answer in a better spirit."

The basic philosophy of service Anna Hazare derived from the teachings of Swami Vivekananda and states: "The best way to obtain happiness is through service to the others. I continued to read Swami Vivekananda's books. These books dramatically changed my attitudes to my own life and towards society." Hazare, when he was playing the mentor role subsequently, taught to his many associates and followers the same philosophy of service to larger entities other than oneself.

In a similar vien, Ravi Matthai exercised, through his leadership role, certain preferences and philosophical choices which he terms "motherhood" type of normatives or biases. To put it in his own words: "I thought that creativity and innovation were "good"; this required "freedom of views and expression"; this required self-discipline which again required self-esteem and mutual self-respect between colleagues and so on. But I had no preconception as and how all this could be achieved. All I had were biases in favour of self-reliance of individuals, groups and the institute. So when I accepted the invitation to come here, we had to generate our own and the institute community's ideas of what an institution should be, of what an educational institution should be, and what the management of education institution should be. We also had to generate thinking not merely about "what" but also about "how" to develop and sustain the "strengths" without an over-dependence on leadership, external patronage or regulation." Thus Matthai, through personal example and inspiration, strove to inculcate in his colleagues the pivotal role self-confidence, self-esteem and self-regulation played in an autonomous organizaiton which had to perform at high levels without the external controls and commands. Such a system could come alive only through attunement we talked about earlier.

Similarly, Talwar's commitment to professionalism was actualized through the devise of mentoring junior colleagues in the values of excellence, the setting of ever-higher goals and the acquisition and practice of modern management knowledge germane to the needs of banking industry. His speeches as chairman of SBI and his actions amply show this. Moreover, he proved to be a man of high integrity and honesty. There was hardly any gap between his beliefs, words and deeds.

Yet another significant leadership competency is the management of the self, the ability to acknowledge one's mistakes, learn from them and forge ahead. All the six leaders, time and again, displayed candour and frankness in pinpointing their own strengths and weaknesses. They built up cultures of openness to enable organizations and members to learn from their experiences.

Leaders as Institution Builders

Organizations seek continuity, beyond the lifetime of the leader. Many a great leader fail to ensure that all the best contributions of theirs would continue in organizations beyond their own tenure. An organization has to learn and adapt to change, it has to persist with practices which enhance its ability to cope with changes in the environment. It has to have a culture of participation, and empower its members. Leaders ensure continuity through the device of institutionalisation. The ability to institutionalize the vision through participative culture has been the noteworthy achievement of all the six leaders. Ravi Matthai's IIMA and Sarabhai's ATIRA continue to exude a collegial peer-group-driven participative culture decades after they relinquished the directorship of these organizations. The State Bank of India did not revert back to the staid old culture of conservatism after Talwar stepped down. The Oberoi group continues to be driven by the innovative entrepreneurial spirit even after the patriarch M.S. Oberoi passed on the mantle of leadership to the next generation. Similarly, Anna Hazare is optimistic that even when he is absent from the scene, the second line of management will successfully step into his shoes. Through the caring for people and effective mentoring, these leaders successfully built up the next generation of leaders -- a mirror to the effective discharging of the leadership role by Sarabhai, Matthai, Hazare, Patil, Talwar and Oberoi. For they have been able, as leaders and institution builders, to create enduring cultures and institutions.

Discovering One's Sense of Efficacy and Power

In the earlier sections, we have seen leaders as not only souls of fire, but also as creators of harmony, not just as brokers of dreams but also as institution builders. What is the source of their power? How do they carry on when others seem to feel powerless?

It is often assumed that power and powerlessness are opposite sides of the same coin. But careful thinking would show that this is an inaccurate view.

Powerlessness is caused by a host of systemic factors. When Patil tried to obtain sanction for his eucalytus scheme, or when Oberoi sought clearance for the nation's first ever five star deluxe hotel, they were confronted with rules, regulations, procedures or precedents (or lack of them), which had the capacity to induce powerlessness. Similarly Hazare faced a system of norms, values, beliefs and power structures in Ralegaon, which resisted change for the better.

Removal of such systemic causes can eliminate reasons for powerlessness. For example, when there are no bureaucratic hurdles, individuals would not be required to experience frustrating delays. But a sense of power does not flow from the absence of systemic irritants. Not all individuals can be

expected to take initiative and act in such a scenario. The creation of favourable policy environment is essential but that by itself will not usher in an era of miracles.

Power flows from "personal" factors. It is the "souls of fire" who are likely to act. And interestingly they act even when the systemic factors systematically induce powerlessness. There is enough evidence to indicate that sense of power is rooted in one's feelings of self efficacy or one's feeling of being an 'origin' rather than a 'pawn'. According to Richard de Charms[9], pawns are individuals who feel that some others are in control of their fate. 'Pawns', therefore, do not consider carefully their goals in life or about what they can themselves do to further their cause. They hope for Lady Luck to smile on them. But 'origins' are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and are willing to take charge of their lives.

The essence of leadership, therefore, lies in personal growth -- in developing the willingness to search for one's purpose in life, in the ability to learn through one's actions, and in the commitment to discover the 'origin' in oneself and the others for achieving worthwhile change.

Conclusion

The six leaders, through the select spectrum of illustrations and instances given in earlier sections, provide pointers to the pattern of effective functioning in widely differing contexts -- from hoteliering to social forestry to rural upliftment to applied research to innovative academic administration. Though their contexts differed, they all had an abiding commitment to building model organizations. They chose non-conventional sectors for their path-braking endeavours.

These leaders very seldom were bogged down by systemic difficulties. Bureaucracies impose a cornucopia of rules, regulations, procedures and methods to hamstring the leaders. But these leaders continuously fought valiantly that enervating sense of powerlessness felt by organizations by becoming the "souls of fire" and, in the process, considerably empowering the institutions entrusted to their charge. This process of energising and empowering the leaders accomplished through the brokering of dreams, through attunement and through institution building.

A developing nation, and a transforming society, badly needs a plethora of organizations to actualize the agenda of change and growth it has set before itself. But no worthwhile and enduring organizations ever come into being save through the pioneering endeavours of leaders. No exciting futures get actualized for an organization save through the galvanizing role of visionary leaders with

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9 See Richard de Charms *Personal Causation*, New York: Academic Press, 1968.

the attendant competence to broker the dreams to organizaional members. No glory of achievement, no passion to excel and no excitement to endure lasts the lifetime of a leader except through institution building. It is interesting to observe that in this entire chain of organizational efflorescence, leadership plays a very critical role. As we had witnessed earlier, it is the "leaders in action" who, indeed, have been the instrumentalities in transforming staid and dull organizations, trudging along the beaten tracks, into exciting institutions that made the difference to the way the larger societal futures got shaped up. These leaders and their organizations, thus, became not only the harbingers of change but also the means to transform great dreams into realisable actualities. And even when the dream-merchants leave the scene, the dreams do not fade away; they continue to throb as excellent contributions through the organizations the leaders created, nurtured, empowered and bequethed as legacy to successive generations of organizational members.

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