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## Two Organizational Roles: Manager's and Leader's

Sampat P Singh

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In this decade/ leadership has been one of the most popular topics with speakers and writers on management. It is by its nature a somewhat enigmatic concept and/ therefore/ not largely amenable to research. Still/ it has been possible to develop better understanding. Leader's personality is not so much in focus now. It has shifted to leadership role and tends to shift further to leadership as a process. Distinction between leadership and managerial roles is becoming clearer. Whether leaders are born or made is no longer a serious controversy. It is asserted that leadership success or failure depends more on learning processes and situational contexts. How to interpret the life around and how to promote meaningful action are some of the vital questions which only better understanding can help in answering. The purpose of this paper by Sampat Singh is to promote efforts in that direction.

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Konosuke Matsushita has been a great name in the organizational world of the twentieth century. Much has been written on his life and work. The latest is John P Kotter's *Matsushita Leadership*, 1997. *Business World*, August 22, 1997 published extracts from this book highlighting three major attributes of the man in action:

- The Second World War convinced Matsushita that the Americans and the Europeans were technologically ahead. If Japanese firms were to flourish, they would have to learn from these superior powers. And the alternative — a xenophobic inward focus — would be dangerous over the long term.
- Above all, Matsushita stressed humility. A humble person will not become reckless or arrogant. Once, at the end of a talk, instead of going to his seat, he stepped off the podium, walked in front of the group, and bowed three times. Hundreds of men in the audience broke into tears.
- The biggest factor that could limit the firm's future, Matsushita said, was not the market. The biggest issue was management. The challenge was to create an increasingly large cadre of people who believed strongly in the firm's core precepts, but who otherwise were receptive and flexible.

The first attribute shows Matsushita playing the leader's role: a man with long-term historical perspective and vision trying to seek answer to the question:

What to do? He was interpreting contemporary and future Japanese life in the global context and choosing meaningful, purposeful, and idealistic goals: "quadrupling sales in five years is a goal set not out of greed for fame or profit, but as a means of fulfilling the duty which I believe we as manufacturers have to society." The second attribute relates the leader to his followers: sharing his dreams, ambitions, and goals with them, not so much to motivate them but to inspire them or to influence their feelings. It is important to note that Matsushita practised humility and succeeded in eliciting positive response. This is because he did not practise humility as a tactic or as a means. He was authentic and practised humility genuinely as a value of life. For him, values were ends in themselves. The third attribute shows Matsushita playing manager's role trying to answer the question: how to

achieve the goals? He is trying to prioritize goals and to choose appropriate strategies. Leader's and manager's are two distinctly separate roles in organizational life. A person may play double role; but the difference does not vanish. Somehow, larger numbers of followers makes leadership elitist and forces politically the comparison between aristocracy and democracy. The distinction goes deeper into the basics of human nature, human relations, and human action.

### The Dichotomy

One all-pervasive dichotomy has always characterized human life: the head and the heart, the intellect and the emotion, the reason and the feeling, the science and the art, realism and romanticism. It is easy to teach people how to write prose, good prose. It is difficult to teach people how to write poetry. For both, the medium of expression is language; and language can be mastered, but prose flows mainly from the head and poetry mainly from the heart. The same is true of arts like painting and dance. The distinction was neatly drawn by Sanjukta Panigrahi in an interview. "People think that we are dancing. I never think I am dancing. I feel it is natural in me. I always feel that when Jagannath is there, I am offering something at the feet of the Lord, and it is by his grace that I am able to move my finger or my feet. Instead of reciting mantras I am doing my puja with my dance. Sometimes we feel that technically we must be very good but I always felt that you should be able to forget your technique. You can learn (dance) technically, like your hand gestures and a certain amount of facial expressions. But then it is up to you to experience and develop (bhava). It matures with age and experience" (*Times of India*, July 26, 1997).

A similar dichotomy underlies the distinction between continuity and change, tradition and modernity, yin and yang. But that does not suggest exclusivity, they are not twos to be separated by "either/ or." They are to be synergized together and joined by "and" as parts of a whole. This idea is captured by Le Corbusier in his definition of "modern." "To be modern is not a fashion, it is a state. It is necessary to understand history, and he who understands history knows how to find continuity between that which was, that which is, and that which will be." In architectural design, Charles Correa's Jawahar Kala Kendra at Jaipur is considered a masterpiece. Talking about it, he says: "Every generation has to re-invent its culture in new material; it is a question of transformation, not just a transfer of images from the past." Of course, some critics say: Correa does not believe in consensus; his architecture is egocentric architecture ... or, "

(Correa) is excellent in conceptualizing ... but not interested enough in the mundane detailing ... he is like a grasshopper, an excellent creature, but it cannot hold steady" (*India Today*, May 15, 1992).

The distinction between such bi-polarities can be seen from another angle. Some years ago, research was done by Bob Altemeyer by testing two groups of students over their four years of university education. One group was selected from College of Fine Arts and the other from College of Engineering. The results showed that four years of education in fine arts had improved imaginative thinking but with a loss in analytic problem-solving skills, while education in engineering had improved proficiency in analytic ability but at the cost of imagination (Unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Carnegie Institute of Technology).

In *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), William James distinguished between two basic personality types and called them "once-born" and "twice-born." The choice of names may not surprise Indians because the author, before writing this famous book, had long discussions with Swami Vivekanand at Harvard. Moreover, the idea of two selves is as old as Upanishads, and quoting them, Rabindranath Tagore had written in *Sadhana* (1912), "At one pole of my being I am one with stocks and stones. There I have to acknowledge the rule of universal law. That is where the foundation of my existence lies, deep down below. Its strength lies in its being held firm in the clasp of the comprehensive world, and in fullness of its community with all things ... But at the other pole of my being I am separate from all. There I have broken through the cordon of equality and stand alone as an individual. I am absolutely unique, I am I, I am incomparable. The whole weight of the universe cannot crush out this individuality of mine. I maintain it in spite of the tremendous gravitation of all things. It is small in appearance but great in reality."

The central idea underlying Indian thought is transcendence from narrower concept of self to broader concept of self, a process of self development best spelt out in M K Gandhi's *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (1927). The western psychologists, particularly psychiatrists, trace a person's psyche to early childhood experiences. Based on their work, they formulate personality types representing different selves. Much later Carl Jung was to call the two types as extroverts and introverts.

According to William James, for a once-born personality, the sense of self, as a guide to conduct and attitude, derives from a feeling of being at home and in harmony with one's environment. For a twice-

born, the sense of self derives from a feeling of profound separateness from the outer world. These personalities have different sets of beliefs and worldviews. It is important to note that the most popular writing of this author has been his essay on "Will to Believe" (1896). For him what was most important about a person was his beliefs.

### **Managers and Leaders**

Primarily/ it is such differences between psychological orientations and two personality types that led Abraham Zaieznik to differentiate between "Managers and Leaders" [*Harvard Business Review*, 1977]. According to him, a sense of belonging or of being separate is important in organizational life. Managers see themselves as conservators and regulators of an existing order of affairs with which they personally identify and from which they gain rewards. William James had this harmony in mind — this sense of self as easily flowing to and from the outer world. If one feels oneself as a member of an organization, contributing to its well-being, then one fulfills a purpose in life, performing a role in life that harmonizes with the ideals of duty and responsibility, enhances his sense of self esteem and personal integrity.

Leaders tend to be twice-born personalities, people who feel separate from their environment. They may work in organizations, but they never belong to them. Their sense of who they are does not depend upon the sense of belonging, role or other social indicators of identity. Thus, there are two types of developments of organization life: one is through socialization which prepares the individual to guide the organization, the other is through personal mastery which impels the individual for psychological and social change. The organizational life faces two conflicting needs: one for managers to maintain the balance of operations and the other for leaders to create new approaches and imagine new areas to explore. Can both manager's and leader's roles coexist or one person be both a manager and a leader? Those writers who answer these questions in affirmative are in minority and the examples they produce in their support are smaller in number. Zaieznik's main argument is that because managers and leaders are basically different personality types, the conditions favourable to the growth of one may be inimical to the growth of the other. He argues that a technologically-oriented and economically-prosperous society tends to depreciate the need for great leaders as such societies hold a deep and abiding faith in rational methods of solving problems. Once these methods are taught as skills, society's

faith in techniques over personal qualities prevails. But there are times when tinkering proves inadequate and major breakthroughs are needed and some amount of chaos and change is preferred against order and continuity.

In his book. *The Managerial Mystique* (1989) Zaieznik writes that American executives fall short as leaders, not as managers. In his view, professionalization of management has undermined the performance of American business, given rise to a form of organization that encourages smartness, manipulation, lack of transparency, and financial quick fixes. Planning horizons have been reduced to quarters and the goals to keep scoreboards moving. "What started out as a rational attempt to organize, motivate and control of actions of large numbers of people in business organizations, has been transformed into a managerial mystique that subordinates the work of organization to the forms in which people relate to each other. These forms, in turn, are dominated by conceptions of authority that discourage assertiveness, individual responsibility and creativity."

In pursuit of management as profession, concepts of talent, exemplar, and mentor and self development have been set aside. Management education also ignores broadening of perspective and honing of talent. Shanta Gokhale, a novelist and a critic in India, says: "When I was conducting a course at a management school in Bangalore, I was told that the students represented the "cream" of the country. That cream, I discovered, is smart and intelligent; it has a high opinion of itself, it can debate and argue but it knows so little about anything outside its own sphere of interest" (*Times of India*, July 27, 1997).

### **Elitism and Egalitarianism**

It appears the existential dichotomies of human life, the two mental orientations, the two personality types, and two roles determining the results of organizational efforts are perennial elements of the reality of life. Looking at them pathologically as conflicts and forcing a choice between the twos to one has not helped. Only new interpretations and new combinations have worked. For example, the modern civilization started with the heightening of conflict between faith and reason. Modern man has neither fully rejected God nor fully accepted Science. Yet a big change has occurred.

Ancient India and ancient Greece produced great works of epic literature *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, and *Iliad*, and *Odyssey*, long poems narrating adventures of romantic characters of heroes and heroines. Even history was written to highlight the roles of the heroes and villains in shaping reality. It was only in

1840 that Lermentov wrote (perhaps) the first anti-hero novel: *A Hero of Our Time*. In 1869, Tolstoy published his novel: a masterpiece of world literature. *War and Peace*. He rejected passions and romanticism and took to realism. To this novel he added in the end two long epilogues in which he rejects the "Great Men" theory of history: heroes have no significant impact on the course of history. He was against war and his target of criticism was Napoleon. These and other similar developments led to a shift away from elitism to egalitarianism. But, the fact remains that Napoleon continues to attract as a hero. He is not compared to the two great victims of narcissism and hubris in the twentieth century: Hitler, a caricature of a leader, and Stalin, a villain as a leader.

Till the time the twentieth century started, the business organizations were still small, competition near perfect, and private enterprise dominated the scene. Capitalism was at its peak. It was this scenario which was fully captured by Joseph Schumpeter, the great economist, in his book. *Theory of Economic Development*, first published in German language in 1911. The centerpiece of his model was the entrepreneur whose role was to take risk, to introduce innovations, i.e., do things differently or to do different things. This is the purest and the nearest definition of business leadership, a hero-like personality, twice-born, full of courage and determination, with a strong will to believe and prepared to stake everything. He had passion for creativity and excellence seen even later in various business leaders from Henry Ford, to Matsushita, to Morita, to Bill Gates. By the time Schumpeter wrote his book, this scenario was already being replaced by giant organizations run by a new class of people, the managers, who were there not to take risks of major breakthroughs. Their role was to reach optimal positions on the given economic curves and not to set up new curves, to do mainly more of more or less the same things, now popularly called tinkering. Their perspectives were narrow and they were driven only by the interests and not by the passions. They had discarded both heroism and charisma. In his later book. *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (1942), Schumpeter wrote how entrepreneurs were being replaced by managers and how innovations were getting routinized.

Earlier, Max Weber, the great sociologist, had criticized the old concepts of authority and charisma and idealized traditional bureaucracy purely as a theoretical concept. But he bemoaned the "disenchantment" of the world in the face of growing bureau-cratization and rationalization, and feared that spirituality will give way to "specialists without spirit and

sensualists without heart" (Max Weber: *Essays in Sociology*, 1946).

The transition from elitism to egalitarianism was most powerfully criticized by the great philosopher Nietzsche. He questioned: Is recognition that can be universalized worth having in the first place? Is not the quality of recognition far more important than its universality? Does not the goal of universalizing recognition inevitably trivialize it? He did not choose Apollonian tendency for clarity and order, instead he chose Dionysian tendency for passionate and irrational drive toward disorder. His hero-like leader is the passionate individual who learns to control his passions and use them in a creative manner. He is courageous, creative, and normative.

Things in the twentieth century have gone the other way. With that, psychologically the loss of individual identity and sociologically living in a state of anomie have created serious problems, resulting in "self-esteem" movement in the United States now towards the end of this century. But this movement is based on the idea of universal recognition and has been criticized from Nietzschean angle by Francis Fukuyama (*The End of History and the Last Man*, 1992). "This movement begins from the correct psychological observation that successful action in life proceeds from a sense of self-worth, and if people are deprived of it, their belief in the worthlessness will become a self-fulfilling prophecy... The problem with the present day self-esteem movement is that its members, living as they do in a democratic and egalitarian society, are seldom willing to make choices concerning what should be esteemed. They want to go out and embrace everybody telling them that no matter how wretched and degraded their lives, they still have self-worth, that they are somebody." But, he adds that self-respect must be related to some degree of accomplishment, no matter how humble. And the more difficult the accomplishment, the greater the sense of self-esteem..." Then there is esteem by others and the question: who esteems?" For, does not the satisfaction that one derives from recognition depend, in large measure, on the quality of the person doing the esteeming? Is it not much more satisfying to be recognized by someone whose judgement you respect, than by many people without understanding? And, do not the highest and, therefore, most satisfying forms of recognition necessarily have to come from ever-smaller groups of the people, since the highest degree of accomplishment can only be judged by people who are similarly accomplished?

Nietzsche believed that true human excellence

was possible only in elitist environment: only out of megalothymia and not out of isothymia, that is the desire to be recognized as better than others. "Even if people were born equal, they will never push themselves to their own limits if they simply wanted to be like everyone else... Nietzsche pointed out that any form of real excellence must initially arise out of discontent, a division of self against itself and ultimately a war against the self with all the suffering that it entails... Good health and self-satisfaction are liabilities. Thymos is the side of man that deliberately seeks out struggle and sacrifice, that tries to prove that the self is something better and higher than a fearful, needy, instinctual, physically-determined animal. Not all men feel this pull, but for those who do, thymos cannot be satisfied by the knowledge that they are merely equal in worth to all other human beings."

The same idea was idealized by Tagore: "Society is an organism of which we as parts have our individual wishes. We want our own pleasure and licence. We want to pay less and gain more than anybody else. This causes scrambling and fights. But there is that other wish in us which does its work in the depths of the social being. It is the wish for the welfare of the society. It transcends the limits of the present and the personal... and, then the work is the outcome of joy" (*op.cit*).

Managers in contemporary society have already become too many. Leaders continue to be too few and qualitatively are still classified as an elitist group. The distinction between the two as two different roles continues to be made. A number of metaphors is used to convey the essence of the leadership role: catalyst, Pied Piper, captain of the team, conductor of an orchestra, exemplar. Wizard of Oz, Saint Simon, and so on. One thing is clear. The two are not used as synonyms and leadership is considered relatively a superior role not only in terms of its status but also in terms of its contributions to organizational life. Even John Gardner who finds the distinction somewhat blurred asserts only this much that when he "encounter(s) utterly first class managers, they turn out to have a lot of leader in them." Yes, many can play double roles successfully. In the history of India's national life, Patel played a manager's role, Nehru a leader's role and Gandhi both the roles together. The distinction is vital. Gardener's main emphasis is on the newly-growing need: "The most-forward-looking thinkers in the corporate world are now pointing out that dispersion of leadership is the only way you can make large scale organized systems work. You need leadership in the executive suite and leadership on

the shop floor" (*Stanford Business School Magazine*, December, 1988).

The new line of thinking is fairly clear. Warren Bennis, for example, emphasizes that a leader must have high degree of self-awareness and self-esteem, capacity to see the changing perspective, to understand what new things are required to be done. In other words, a strongly defined sense of vision and sense of purpose and be able to impart it to the whole organization. He must learn to develop a social architecture that encourages bright people. Too many of today's organizations are over-managed and under-led because the people at the top are better at making policies, setting up systems and procedures than they are at creating a compelling over-arching vision. They are managers, not leaders (*Business Today*, February 7, 1997).

To designate every young manager assistant vice-president may be a good tactic, but one has to be prince of Denmark to be Hamlet. If every manager becomes a leader there will neither be leaders nor followers and organizations will drift because of leaderlessness. Similarly, some chief executives play leadership role, some managerial role, some both and the rest since they occupy the chair at the top can at best be called positional leaders having authority but no influence or impact.

### **Tolstoyan Enigma**

James March has for a long time been doing pioneering work on organizational leadership at Stanford. His speciality has been using texts from literature for teaching courses on leadership and also using them for studies on leadership and decision-making. It wouldn't therefore surprise to find him saying "Leaders are like poets: both interpret life." According to him, an "organization is neither unconditionally rigid nor unconditionally malleable; it is a relatively complicated collection of interests and beliefs in response to conflicting and ambiguous signals received from the environment and from the organization, acting in a manner that often makes sense and usually is intelligent. Organizations evolve, solve problems, learn, bargain, imitate and regenerate." Discussing, for example, clarity versus ambiguity, he raises a question:

Why an intelligent administrator might deliberately choose to have ambiguous goals? And, he answers:

"rationalizing ambiguity is neither difficult nor novel, but it depends on perspectives somewhat more familiar to human understanding as it is found in literature, philosophy, and ordinary experience than as we see it in our theories of administration and choice."

He used for long Tolstoy's *War and Peace* as a text for his courses on Leadership and Decision-making. Perhaps based on that experience, like Tolstoy, he compares two contending theories of organizational leadership: or how things happen in organizations. The first is influenced by stories of great personalities elaborated by the drama of success or failure of individuals, say Saint Joan or Gandhi, portraying action mainly in heroic ways. "Such portrayals lead us to attribute a large share of the variance in organizational outcomes to special properties of specific individual managers. They are comfortably reassuring in the major role they assign to administrative leadership, but they seem to describe a world rather far from experience or research." The second theory seems to describe administrative reality better, but it appears uncomfortably pessimistic about the significance of leaders. According to it, situations, not individuals, determine outcomes. Further, followers also lead leaders.

"Perhaps fortunately, organizational life assures a managerial bias towards belief in managerial importance. Top managers are not random managers; they are successful managers. We know that individuals often find it is easy to believe that successes in their lives are attributable to their talents and choices, while failures are more due to bad luck or malevolence. Promotion to the top on the basis of successes at lower levels results in top-level executives believing in the possibility of substantial intentional control over organizational events. Even though their experiences might have led managers to such beliefs erroneously, managerial experience is likely to be subjectively very persuasive. In effect, the system of managerial mobility is designed to make managers more resistant to false beliefs in impotence than to false beliefs in control." Administrative experience, as well as managerial self-esteem, will usually give managers a greater sense of personal importance and uniqueness.

In fact, there is a third theory, and it is probably closer to the truth. In this third view, managers do affect the ways in which organizations function, but as a result of process by which managers are selected, motivated, and trained. Variations in managers do not reliably produce variations in organizational outcomes. "In such a conception, administrators are vital as a class but not as individuals. Administration is important, and many things that administrators do are essential to keep the organization functioning; but if those vital things are only done when there is some unusually gifted individual at the top, the organization will not thrive." What makes an organization function well is 'the density of administrative competence,' the

kind of selection procedures that make all vice-presidents look alike from the point of view of their probable success, and the motivation that leads managers to push themselves to the limit.

To clarify this idea further, James March uses an analogy. "If the manufacture of light bulbs is so unreliable that only a few actually work, you will not be able to do much reading. On the other hand, if light bulbs are reliable, you can read whenever you want to, but you won't care much which light bulb you use. One problem with the conventional administrative thought is that it encourages us to glorify an organization that finds the unique working light bulb in a large shipment of defective light bulbs rather than an organization that persistently produces a supply of nearly indistinguishable good bulbs. It is the latter organization that functions better." (All quotes from James March are from "Administrative Theory and Administrative Life," in Sergiovanni, Thomas and Corbally, John (eds.) *Leadership and Organizational Cultures*, 1984.)

After about 30 years of serious thinking, it is now possible to clearly distinguish between the two roles:

manager's and administrator's associated largely with order, continuity, and scoreboard; leader's associated largely with vision, change, and breakthroughs. People to play the roles of managers are being developed in adequate numbers to meet the demand, but people to play leadership role are in short supply. The need, however, is not so much to emphasize search for heroic human material; the need is to seek 'dispersion of leadership role,' to develop 'a social architecture that encourages bright people with leadership abilities,' who could go beyond managerial knowledge and skills 'to develop greater breadth and versatility and understanding', with a view to reach higher and higher 'density of administrative competence' and achieve both continuity and change.

For example, it is now being asserted that more successful amongst new generation chief executives do not order, they inspire, they do not control, they liberate; they do not manage, they lead (*Business Today*, March-April, 1996). In order to emphasize difference between managerial and leadership roles, the write up quotes Abraham Zaieznik: "Leadership involves the use of power to influence other people's thoughts and actions. Leaders must think about goals, actively instead of reactively, shaping ideas instead of responding to them. They must project their ideas on to images that excite people, and then develop choices that give those images substance. They must work from high risk positions, and often in isolation." Of course, this

formulation does not exclude, on the one hand, the need for dispersion of leadership, and on the other, the need for some of the followers playing exclusively the managerial roles.

There are many classifications of leadership types. Max Weber distinguished between authoritarian, charismatic, and bureaucratic leadership styles. *Business Today* write up defines the three popular types of leadership now mentioned in the literature on the subject.

Charismatic leadership is based on personality traits such as high passion, ambition, belief in self, sense of adventure and penchant for setting personal example. Such leaders rely more on natural behaviour and less on technique. Playing basically the role of a catalyst of changes, the charismatic leader influences the attitudes and emotions of his followers mainly through mastery over the arts of persuasion and seduction and acting as exemplar and mentor and sometimes even as martyr.

Transactional leadership is based on relating actions to the situations and the maturity of the followers. It is basically result orientation linked to focus on people in a particular situation. The transactional leadership does not focus on inspiration; instead it focuses on budgets, guidelines, systems, procedures, tasks and roles and motivation, all built around concepts of authority and coercion.

Transformational leader acts mainly as a change agent, learns as he coaches and can deal confidently with complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty. He simplifies important issues through the use of symbols and paying personal attention to individual followers. His forte lies in his ability to metamorphose the values, beliefs, and needs of the followers.

However, in practice, it is not easy to classify a particular successful leader neatly under one of these three types. Of these, the second approximates to

managerial and administrative roles and the other two to leadership role.

Dichotomies, distinctions, and contradictions are parts of life. The problem is how to synergize them together. "Self actualizing people are simultaneously selfish and unselfish; Dionysian and Apollonian, individual and social, rational and irrational, fused with others and detached with others, and so on... The more we understand the whole of Being, the more we can tolerate the simultaneous existence and perception of inconsistencies, of oppositions and of flat contradictions. These seem to be products of partial cognition and fade away with cognition of the whole" (Abraham Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, 1962).

It is not possible in this area to lay down clear definitions without simplifying and abstracting in a large measure from realities of life. Therefore, it is necessary to intuitively understand ambiguity and find holistically a basis for best possible action. The concept of management development is now getting gradually broadened. It now goes beyond knowledge and skill inputs towards including more and more of inputs that help the learner to develop broader perspectives and worldviews, and to practice self development with a view to move up towards higher sets of interests, attitudes, ideals, beliefs, and values. To prepare to play leadership role demands enrichment of the inner self of the individual, particularly the emotional side of the human mind because leadership role is different from managerial role. Talent, personality, and charisma are important. But what is perhaps more important is the need to develop one's emotional capabilities so as to play the role successfully in the changing environment. Autobiographies and biographies offer enough material to prove the importance of self development.

Nietzsche lamented: "God is dead." Neither God, nor hero, nor charisma is dead. They continue to survive. Only the images and the concepts have changed.