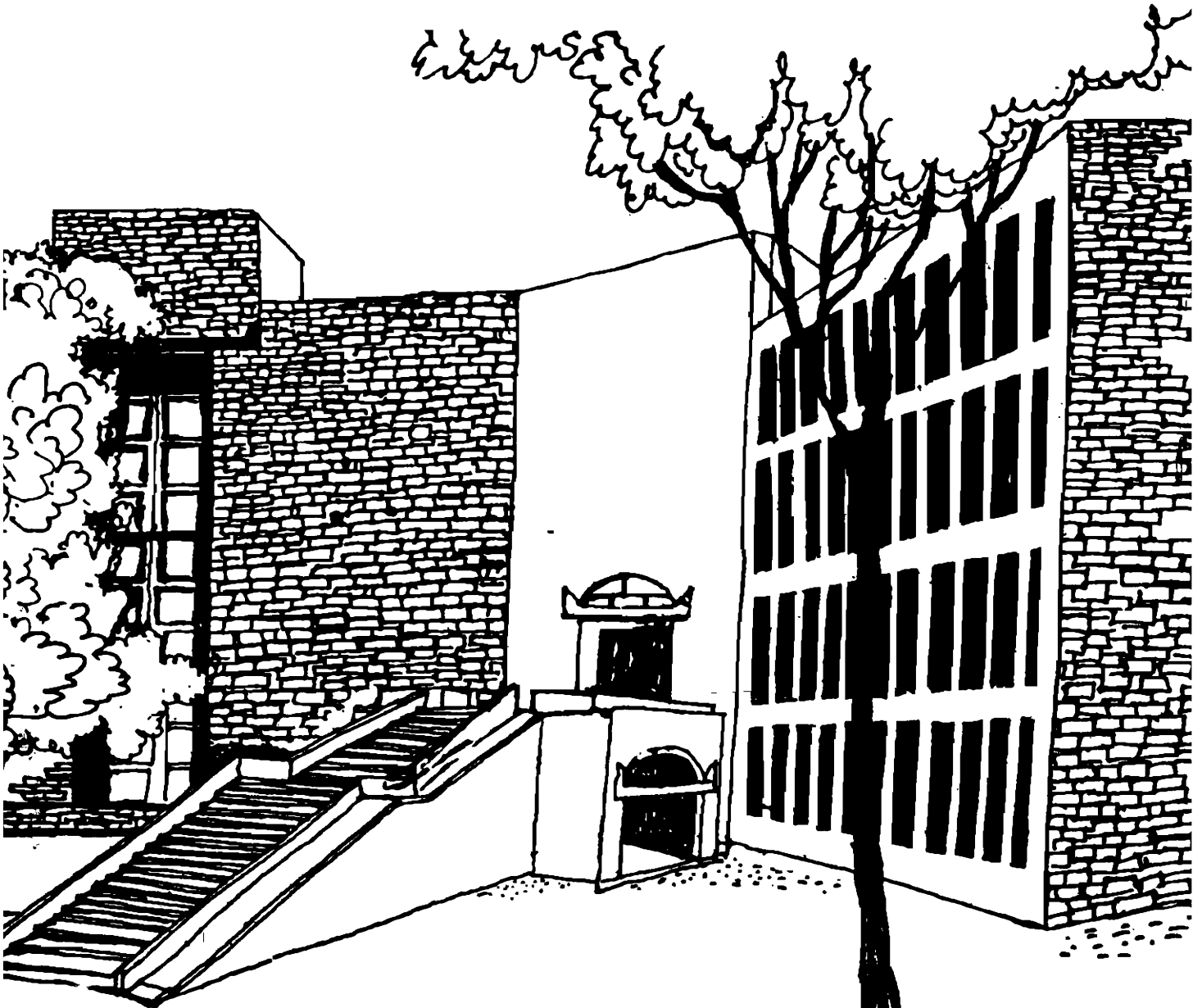




Working Paper



PARADIGMS OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP
SELF ORGANIZED CRITICALITY:
THE AVALANCHE EFFECT

By

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PARADIGMS OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP SELF ORGANIZED CRITICALITY: THE AVALANCHE EFFECT

Abstract

This paper proposes to state some new paradigms of Organizational Leadership which will facilitate the leaders as well as collective leadership of senior managers to respond to the flux and dramatic shifts occurring within the internal dynamics of the organization. An internal study of a part of the system or the total system reflects Self Organized Criticality (SOC). SOC is that state in the organization which is a sudden transformation in the state of the system through its own internal dynamics. This process of transformation generates a critical state within the system such that the change begins to occur.

The internal dynamics is the change initiated at the top, going down the line and through all the levels of the organization. The concept of SOC is that for the change to occur in the organization the leadership will initiate those processes of change which will not trickle down but the transformation processes will have an avalanche effect at each stage or level of the system. The state of the internal system becomes critical so that the change begins to occur.. and there is a release of the momentum and energy of an avalanche.

This paper then explores the process of transformation at the unit and level of organization. This study attempts to discover, identify and initiate those organisational processes which would release energy like an avalanche and mobilise the organisation to perform.

Individuals, groups, structure and culture of organisation interface with the tasks, functions, organisation and the institution to create internal organisational dynamics which move the organisation in many directions. A comprehensive focus at this stage leads to an experience of self similar processes leading eventually to the avalanche effect.

This paper identifies the critical issues that the CEO needs to address and then appraise the internal dynamics vested in the human resources and potentials.

PARADIGMS OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP SELF ORGANIZED CRITICALITY: THE AVALANCHE EFFECT

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The role of a leader, a CEO, a head of an organization and or an entrepreneur has acquired immense criticality in the survival, and sustainability of an organization as well as acquiring a competitive edge vis a vis the other organisations. The leaders role, his acumen, his interface with the external business environment and the organization's internal dynamics of people is that cutting edge which will make the organization grow and excel or remain in the mode of routine performance and just about survive and maintain itself. This is more so in the current context of globalisation, liberalisation of economic policies and opening up of the economy in India.

This paper proposes to state some new paradigms of organizational leadership which will facilitate the individual leaders as well as collective leadership of senior managers to respond to the flux and dramatic shifts occurring within the internal dynamics of the organization. The internal dynamics of the organization is constituted by its people who have been with the organization for a long period and those who have entered recently. The people who work with the existing or new technology, engage with tasks of production, finance, marketing, information technology, interface across jobs, tasks, functions and roles and perform so that the organization is effective and healthy in its profits and human resources.

The leadership role models of Indian organizations for a long time have been anchored in the hierarchical and authority models and processes of its socio-cultural context which then are carried to the organization. The agrarian models of Indian society reflect seniority by age, a patriarch with benevolent or autocratic disposition, possibly a feudalistic approach (give some references here) where all other role holders or members are proxies and are at the beck and call of the patriarch or the progenitors.

Studies of leaders and their styles in the western literature have historically categorised leadership styles into bureaucratic, democratic, paternalistic, feudalistic and autocratic and similar other styles. (give references here). Recently there are studies on transformational leadership styles reflecting shifts in the leaders role given the changes and transformations occurring in the national and international business environment.

Given the transformations occurring in the business environment, the emerging global scenario and the increasing complexity and competitiveness the earlier role models of Indian leadership and the existing leadership styles require new paradigms so that the leaders can provide dynamic leadership to the organization so that the organizations acquire a competitive edge both nationally and globally. This paper proposes a new concept of "Self Organized Criticality: The Avalanche Effect" as the alternative paradigms of organizational leadership relevant for the times.

SELF ORGANIZED CRITICALITY: THE AVALANCHE EFFECT

An internal study of a part of the system or the total system reflects Self Organized Criticality henceforth referred to as SOC. SOC is that state in the organization which is a sudden transformation in the state of the system through its own internal dynamics and not through external forces or from the environment. This process generates a critical state within the system such that the change begins to occur. The organization does not wait for the external factors to emerge and initiate change but makes it happen internally.

The internal dynamics is the change initiated at the top, going down the line and through all the levels of the organization. The concept of SOC is that in order for the change to occur in the organization the leadership will initiate those processes of change which will not trickle down but the transformation processes will have an avalanche effect at each stage or level of the system. The state of the internal system becomes critical so that the change begins to occur.. and there is release of momentum and energy of an avalanche.

This energy of an avalanche has two directions. Either it can become destructive or it can give new life to the organization. The role of the individual and collective

leadership is to ensure that at each level of the organization the transformation processes or the dynamics lead to that critical state and to channelise it so that the release of the energy is directed. Thus, at each level of the organization the leadership has to identify that critical state which can be activated, enlivened and energised.

Necessary actions have to be initiated at the top in such a way as to acquire a momentum to surpass that critical level for the organization to move. In the absence of momentum at the critical level the transformation processes will get bogged down at each level and employees will wait for the energy and momentum to emerge so that movements may occur in the system.

SOC does not exclusively require one charismatic leader. The organization may have a collectivity of senior managers or corporate leadership who need to understand the processes at each level of the organization and identify that critical level beyond which people and systems will be mobilised.

As such, an organization leadership or collectivity of senior managers needs to generate those processes whereby the collectivity continuously brings energy to the human resources so that the transformation process is a self-sustained chain reaction.

The attempt of this study is to discover, identify and initiate those organization processes of individual leadership, collective leadership and collectivity which would release energy like an avalanche and mobilise the organization to address the issues confronting it in the present turbulent and changing environment. The attempt of this study is also to identify those paradigms of leadership which will facilitate that internal criticality to emerge so that the masses of employees in the organization get mobilised for performance.

This paradigm is presented in a figure visualising the processes initiated at different levels to create the avalanche effect so that the whole organization gets transformed by its self-generated and sustained energy.

Figure 1

**New Paradigms of Leadership
Self Organized Criticality
The Avalanche Effect**

Process of Transformation initiated by CEO/Leader



In order that the organization processes get initiated at each level and acquire that internal criticality to arrive at an avalanche effect, it is important that the leader identify the level of the organization where new processes are to be initiated so that there is release of energy at each level and new activities and initiatives start to emerge. Figure 1 identifies the organization as the unit and the various levels of management

and processes which can facilitate the gathering and release of the energy so that the movement begins to occur in the organization.

Table 1
Transformation Focus At The Unit And Level Of Organization

	Unit And Level Of Analysis			
	Individual	Dyads And Groups	Structure	Culture
Task				
Function				
Organization				
Institution				

For energy to start gathering and acquire that critical mass it is important that all levels of the organization are involved. The leader can individually initiate or the group of senior managers initiate the processes with the individual employee. The individual managers or any other employee's role is to engage with the job and tasks of the organization. The individual has a functional role, a membership of the organization and a belonging with the institution. Table-2 below identifies where the individual needs to be focused in his interface with his task, function, the whole of the organization and the institution.

Table 2
Individual Interface with Task, Function, Organization and Institution

Individual - Task	The focus is on how the individual is performing his task and on quality, productivity and ownership of the emergent problems and solutions.
Individual - Function	The organization to create functional space for initiative and innovativeness and interfaces
Individual - Organization	Clarity of boundaries and acceptance of systemic authority
Individual - Institution	The organization to foster co-holding and a role of representative of the institution.

Individuals enter the organization and have a task to perform. Tasks by their nature are inter-linked with and inter-dependent on each other. This interdependency is across roles and as such there are linkages across two, three or more roles. The inter-

linked roles interface with each other and generate their own interface dynamics. These dynamics pull and push the role player, functions and the organization in many directions. In the absence of functional space for interfaces the energy does not gather momentum and there is a lag in performance and as such in the system. As such the energy in the form of efficiency needs to be gathered so that dysfunctional dissipation does not occur. The gathering of the energy is based on the focus on task, performance, creation of functional space for initiatives and innovativeness, working with systemic discipline and authority and the role performer accepting his coholder of organizational space and his institutional membership of the organization. In such a framework, the energy of the role holders gets accumulated and channelised into gathering intensity to acquire that self organized criticality to that movement begins to occur.

Just as this gathering of the energy is at the individual's role in his task performance, the organization has groups of individuals in the functional space. The functional space has its own coordinates of role-interface and task performance within the function and has an internal boundary. The function also has links with other functions for the fulfilment of organizational tasks and goals. Table 3 present the various interfaces of the group with different subsets of the organization.

Table 3
Group Interface with Task Functions, Organizations and Institution

Group - Task	Here the participation is across tasks for smooth flow and functioning is important
Group - Functions	Here the quality and processes of interface across jobs, tasks, roles, and functions is important.
Group - Organization	Here the inter-functional linkages for decision making are important
Group - Institution	Here the organization fosters commitment and involvement of various groups is important.

Just as individuals and groups interface with each other and add to the existing organization culture and processes, the culture creates its own dynamics and pulls and pushes within the constituencies of the organization. The meanings given to the tasks and functions and the experience of working within the organizational and institutional

frameworks creates its own internal and interactional role dynamics. These dynamics contribute to the quality of interface across individual roles and groups. The individual and groups with their internal boundaries have in-between spaces. The ownership of these in-between spaces is not taken by any individual or group or functions. The culture of the organization may be of wait and watch, fear and anxiety of treading on each others spaces fear of ridicule or rejection and/or historical baggage of past interfaces with each other. This inhibits the organization energy to come alive. The existing energy is often used dysfunctionally for the organization. There is blame avoidance, scape goating and defensive postures by the role holders. If the functional meetings no decision gets taken or decision get passed on upward. The energy of the individuals, groups and functions needs to be channelised through inviting participation, facilitating managers to take charge of the in between spaces, responsive and collaborative decision making and fostering inter-functional commitment for the various groups. This process will contribute to the groups and functions, to generate that self organized criticality which will release the trapped energy of initiatives and creativity, and enlivening the in-between spaces of the individuals and groups. It will further add to the cumulation of energy which will then contribute to the vibrancy of the organization.

Just as individuals and groups have interfaces with tasks, functions, organizations and institutions and the in-between spaces which need to be filled with creativity and innovativeness, the structure of the organization also interfaces with tasks, functions, the totality of the organization and the institution. Table 4 identifies the interfaces of structure with task, function, organization and the institution.

Table 4
Structure Interface with Task, Functions, Organization and Institution

Structure - Task	As an organisation grows it adds new tasks and functions. Some tasks and functions acquire centrality and visibility while some other tasks and functions get marginalised. The structure locates each task, function and role and designs strategies for overall growth of each task and function.
Structure - Functions	Structure determines the degree of autonomy, boundary and inter-linkage space that the functions will have. Organization needs to design processes of shared and distributive power amongst functions to release the energy trapped in emotional residues of discrimination and deprivations around centrality, marginality and visibility and invisibility.
Structure - Organization	The structure provides directionality and designs systemic processes so that an order, clarity and a policy frame gets created. This stops a lot of delays and dysfunctional interfaces of blame allocation and passing of responsibilities upwards, downwards and laterally.
Structure - Institution	The leader plays an institutional role and needs to foster a sense of membership with the organization and belonging with the institution.

Individuals, groups, organization structure and their inter-play with each other creates its own dynamics. Similarly the structure also generates its own dynamics and impacts how tasks of the organization are performed and functions interlinked with each other. In the designed structure of the organization and its operationalisation some tasks and functions get centralised, acquire significance and visibility and are perceived as having more favoured and strategic status with the top or the senior management. While some other tasks and functions are marginalised and feel a "taken for granted status. Structure designs and determines the directionality, degree of autonomy, boundary and the inter-linkage space in the organization. How these are translated into managerial behaviour determines the quality of energy available to the organization. The structure creates directionality and movement of tasks, systems and processes so that an order, clarity and a policy frame for results gets created. The structure also allocates responsibilities, authority and accountability at all levels of the organisation. The organization will receive the energy if and when the managers operationalise the structure through using the spaces to interlink and take functional and organizational

decisions. Similarly, the institutional role of the leader in an organization structure needs to emerge and foster membership and belonging. This is done through inclusive processes where members experience the possibility of openness and accessibility of the leader and the top management. The structure of the organization and the institution is created and shaped by the interplay of these various constituencies. The institutional culture may or may not receive energy from an organization structure depending upon the role played by the leadership and the internal dynamics of the organization. Similarly, the organization structure gets operationalised through direction from the leader or multiple pulls and pushes from the various groups in the organization. The non emergence and operationalisation of a formal organization structure generates stress and power and politics in the organization leading to dissipation of energy across all levels of management and employees. The role of the leader is to initiate those processes which will mobilise the organizational structural energy for the organization and its people.

There is an interface of the culture of the organization with the task, the function, the totality of the organization and the institution, just as individuals, groups and structure interface with tasks, functions, the totality of the organization and the institutions. The culture of the organization is evolved from the time of inception, growth, the organizational history and the interplay of various internal and external dynamics of interfaces across the organization. The roles, the membership and leaders and their inter-play gives subtle shape to the organization culture. More often the lack of energy, apathy and sources of demotivation are attributed to the past and present history and culture of the organization. The future of the organization is also determined and anticipated by the past and present culture of the organization. Table-5 below identifies where the meeting of the culture and task, function, organization and the institution gives rise to that self organized criticality and energy mobilisation and deployment and or energy dissipation and loss for the organization.

Table 5
Culture Interface with Task, Functions, Organization and Institution

Culture - Task	The organization needs to focus on result orientation based on quality, excellence and productivity.
Culture - Function	The energy of the groups needs to be channelised to foster a task and functional culture so that interdependencies are accepted.
Culture - Organization	The organization work with diversity and heterogeneity of people and their socio-cultural context. The organization needs to design processes of convergence and coherence so that a work culture distinct from social culture emerges.
Culture - Institution	People bring emotive and cognitive maps and definitions of people and systems to the organization. The organization needs to foster a work ethos anchored in values and philosophy of life space to generate enthusiasm and energy to create an institution of excellence and human well being in the organization.

The culture of the organization is either task-focused anchored in a work culture or personality and people-focused, anchored in the socio-cultural context of the country. If the organization needs to be energised in the work culture, the tasks need to anchor themselves in the concepts of TQM, productivity and excellence. The functions needs to come alive with shared understanding and clarity of goals, targets and objectives of the organization. The organization comes alive through participation in policy and strategy and shared understanding of organization mission. Similarly, the organization culture needs to foster a work ethos anchored in vision, values and philosophy of life space to generate enthusiasm and energy for the organization and the institution. The energy of the organization acquires that self organized criticality when the integration of culture and the institution takes place with the organization's concern for the life space of employees and their well being.

Put together, the multiple constituencies of people and the organization simultaneously interact with each other and create an internal organizational dynamics. Each internal sub system has its own dynamics and this pulls and pushes the organization in many directions. A comprehensive yet distinct and cumulative focus is required across all levels of the organisation for the entire organization to experience self similar processes creating the self organized criticality.

For the avalanche effect to occur this state of internal criticality is very important. Figure 3 identifies that in order for the self organized criticality to occur at each level of the organization the focus at each level needs to be the following:

Task	-	Individual, groups, structure and culture
Function	-	Individual, groups, structure and culture
Organization	-	Individual, groups, structure and culture
Institution	-	Individual groups, structure and culture

When all the inter linked interfaces and processes are impacted simultaneously the internal criticality acquires a momentum and the avalanche effect takes shape. In the avalanche process some dislocations also occur. These dislocations are inevitable as some role holders cannot keep pace with the momentum of transformations.

Figure 3
Process of Unit And Level Of Analysis For Organization Culture

	UNIT AND LEVEL OF ANALYSIS			
	INDIVIDUAL	DYADS AND GROUPS	STRUCTURE	CULTURE
TASK	PERFORMANCE & ACHIEVEMENTS	PARTICIPATION AND SUCCESS	LOCATION OF SIGNIFICANCE OF TASKS, SHARED STRATEGIES & POLICIES	RESULT ORIENTATION QUALITY & EXCELLENCE
FUNCTION	INITIATIVE OF LINKAGES CREATION OF FUNCTIONAL SPACE	QUALITY OF INTERFACE ACROSS JOBS, TASKS, ROLES AND FUNCTIONS	SHARED AND DISTRIBUTIVE POWER FEELING EMPOWERED	TASK AND WORK CULTURE
ORGANIZATION	SYSTEMIC BOUNDARY & AUTHORITY	ACCEPTANCE OF INTER-DEPENDENCIES	DIRECTIONALITY SYSTEMIC PROCESS	CONVERGENCE & COHERENCE AMONG VARIOUS CONSTITUENCIES
INSTITUTION	CO-HOLDING REPRESENTATIVE ROLE	COMMITMENT & INVOLVEMENT	MEMBERSHIP BELONGING	WORK ETHOS VALUED BASED

Figure 4
Task Interface with Individual, Group, Structure and Culture

Task - Individual	When people directly experience the measurement of performance and achievements and visibly see results.
Task - Dyads & Group	When there is participation and experience of success. Nothing succeeds like success where performance appraisal is based on merits.
Task - Structure	When there is transparency of policy and strategy and each task receives the significance in the structure and does not get marginalised.
Task - Culture	The focus of performance is both on results anchored in TQM and excellence and people being cared for.

Figure 5
Functional Interface with Individual, Group, Structure and Culture

Function - Individual	When individual role holders take initiative of functional linkages and creation of functional space which is inter-linked.
Function - Groups	When individuals take responsibility of quality of interface across jobs, tasks, roles and functions so there is enthusiasm of shared achievements and experience of success.
Function - Structure	When power is shared and distributive and provides directionality of movement without control and oppression.
Function - Culture	When islands of functional boundaries are dissolved and there is mobility across functions to create an empowered work culture.

Figure 6
Organization Interface with Individual, Group, Structure and Culture

Organization - Individual	When individuals work with a systemic discipline and accept systemic authority and translate into a personal authority to work within the spaces of the system and do not continue to carry the personal historical baggage. Thus creating freedom of contributing to the organization.
Organization - Group	When groups accept the differences as well as interdependencies without comparison and smallness thus generating trust in each other and faith in themselves.
Organization - Structure	When structure provides directionality without controls and oppression and provides freedom to have a voice without fear of suppression. When systems provide certainty of systemic belonging without compromising on the tasks and performance of the organization
Organization - Culture	When organization culture creates processes of unfolding of both people and systems where there is transparency of policies, high order living by values and there is space for individual and organizational learning and renewal.

Figure 7
Institutional Interface with Individual, Group, Structure and Culture

Institution - Individual	When individuals hold their heads in pride and uphold the institution and dignify themselves and the institution by accepting their representative role.
Institution - Groups	When groups of people grace the institution by their commitment to the growth of the institution and involvement in the well being of both the people and the institution.
Institution - Structure	When the directionality of unfolding of the institution creates a flow where people can join so that institution gets rooted to create new traditions.
Institution - culture	When the institution lives by the philosophy and values of human and systemic coherence and rhythm so that there is a freedom of being and becoming simultaneously.

Essentially, with each of the action initiatives, there is a cumulative gathering of the energy to arrive at that self organized criticality which has a self similar process, so that it becomes a self sustaining chain reaction. This process would acquire an avalanche effect which may marginalise some of the non responsive people and energise the larger population in the organization. In the absence of the energising process the negative and destructive forces may acquire strength, power and momentum while the few sagacious become self absorbed in their own activities. The creative enlivening energy of the organization / institution then goes into hibernation.

In order to gather energy across the organization so that a state of internal criticality occurs at each level of the organization to create an avalanche effect the individual leader, the collective leadership and levels of organization need to move in a co-herent direction and acquire momentum for self similar processes in the organization. In the figure below some key characteristics of mobilisation of energy at each level of management have been identified which will create an avalanche effect.

Figure 8
Roles And Functions At Levels Of Management

CEO	Institutional and organizational processes for both business and people strategies shaping a work ethos vision - values and new traditions by taking an adventure discovery.
Corporate & Top Management	Giving shape to new culture Designing corporate events Enlivening the mission of the organization Creating landmarks for the organization to be proud of
Senior Managers Group	Organizational Perspective Anchored in Excellence of Performance Resource Mobilisation for performance and mobilisation of human potentials and energy Creating Mileposts and initiatives to reach the mileposts Mobilising Potentials for giving and expression of the self. Unfolding of the self to climb a mountain.
Middle Managers Group	Task Performance Achievement and Success Task Interdependencies Career Paths and Growth by walking new paths Star Performers - Visibility - Affirmation
New Entrants The graduate Trainees	Personal Ambitions / Aspiration / Achievements Reaching New Destinations with Creativity and Innovativeness Participation - Inclusion in task decisions and implementation.
Employees, Staff & Workers	Improving Quality of Life Sense of Belonging Enhancement of Socio-economic Status Celebrations of social festival and creation of institutional and organizational events. Accessibility of CEO and Top management

The role of CEO and leadership need to evolve configuration and patterns of initiatives for the transformation of the organization. The role of the CEO of an organization constitutes the following characteristics at the level of the organization, people and processes. Unless the CEO is able to take charge to shape the destiny of the organization / institution whether unless the second in line takes charge to shape the organization would charge both individually and collectively.

**Figure 9
Role Of CEO & Leadership**

Organizational Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reshaping of Institutional and Organizational ethos through inspiration. • Taking an Adventure walk to new paths and discovering a land for rooting and investment. • Transformation through envisaging the scenarios beyond the horizons and preparing the institution and organization. • Creating new heritage for the organization • Building and fostering new traditions.
People Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating to shed historical baggage of dysfunctionality of the past. Responding to and addressing the emotional residues. • Preparing a dynamic second line through succession planning • Creating new challenges so there are heroes who create new landmarks • Creating new opportunities for others to join. • Creating an organization space where people experience a sense of pride.
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth, consolidation and expansion processes of the organization • Management of Homogeneity and Diversity and stability and mobility of people • Professionalism and traditionalism and Relatedness with healthy interfaces • Strategic choices to respond to the flux and turbulence in the environment. • Management of Pathology and dysfunctionality

The CEO and/or the collective leadership need to address the issues of the internal dynamics of the organization through designing new processes and new choices across the various levels of the organization and the total organization.

The forces of tomorrows external environment are going to overwhelm Indian organizations. The energy of the cross currents and pulls and pushes of contradictory forces are going to attempt to tear the Indian organization apart. However, the resilience of the Indian spirit can be fostered through a critical but hard reality appraisal of the internal dynamics of the organization vested in the human resources and potentials. Organizations and the CEOs would have to squarely identify the critical issues of managers and organizations.

1. Appraise the strengths and limitations of the organization.
2. Differentiate the performers and non performers and identify star performers.
3. Evaluate the star performers and the mediocre. Reward the star performers and invest in people who are mediocre.
4. Realistic assessment of people potentials so that creativity and innovativeness may flourish.
5. Design organization structures of small sub systems which may flourish and grow simultaneously in the larger context of the organization.
6. Give emphasis on quality of life space of each employee so that he/she may live and work with dignity and respect of self, others and the system.
7. Provide space so that employees may wholesomely integrate family and work systems where they find freedom to play multiple roles in multiple systems.
8. An individual and an organization can own up its own uniqueness of existence and identify and give meanings to the process of living and enlivening of the self, others and the system.
9. When this internal criticality happens at the individual, collective organizational and institutional level then a momentous energy will be released which can then be channelised with depth of wisdom, management of the competitive and complex space to grow, and a rhythm of relatedness of self, others and the system.

