

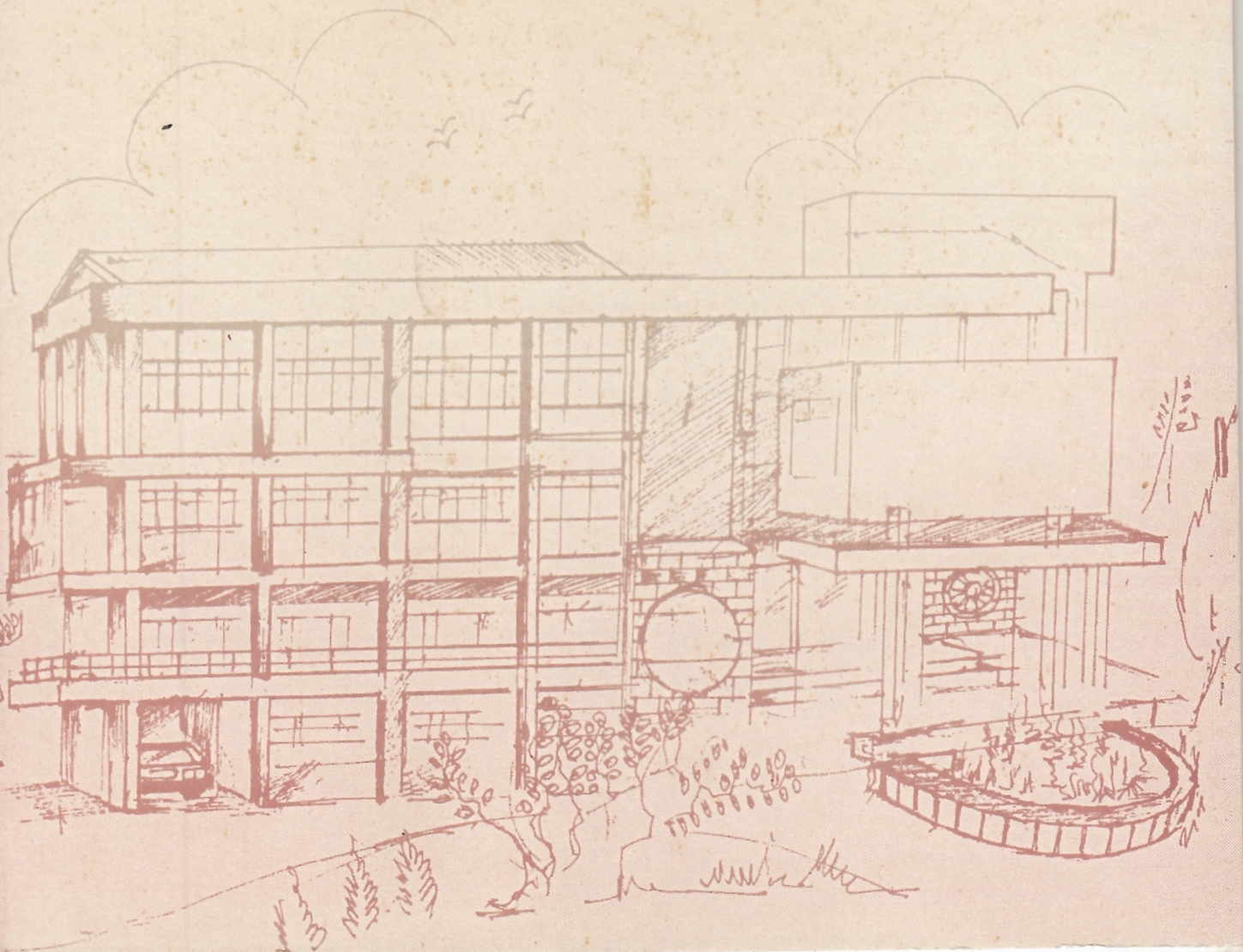


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Exploratory Dialogues on Leadership Communication



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Exploratory Dialogues on Leadership Communication

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Abstract:

Leaders are people with vision and the capacity to see the larger whole. However, it is important to have the ability to communicate that vision in order to seek its fulfillment. Leaders are distinct individuals who use different methods to communicate their message. The paper seeks to derive meaning from exploratory dialogues [with people and texts] on Leadership Communication. The questions that engage us include: how do leaders communicate? To what end and by what means? The dialogues have been open and exploratory. We have freely engaged in conversations with those who could contribute to the process and the paper from their experience and/or knowledge.¹ The paper also covers instances of reflection on our encounters with leaders in the past. Based on the inputs received and drawing upon experiential learning [personal and shared], this paper discusses the means used by leaders to communicate. It is an attempt to understand leadership communication not just in the organizational context but other life situations as well.

¹ We gratefully acknowledge the valuable inputs from the Director, Prof. Nagabrahmam, Prof. Rajagopalan and Prof. Balasubramanian of TAPMI.

INTRODUCTION

Communicative ability has always been considered the hallmark of a leader. It is a well known fact that communication is vital for conveying ideas, strategies, goals, vision and ideology. Once that is conveyed, the leader has to show his/her own commitment to the goal and take the followers or colleagues/employees along, again through communication. Issues of legitimacy are important in this context. In other words, a person is a leader only if others are willing to be led by him/her. One may argue that there are leaders who force a following. Such leadership is based on fear and manipulation. While one may use communication to convey such messages also, such leaders are powerful only until there is someone more powerful than them or until time destroys them.

This brings us to the role of communication in a leader's life. The paper deals with three major ways that leaders use to communicate: through words, acts and action. The scope of the paper is limited largely to real experiences of the writers or their conversation partners in educational institutions, organizations and well known examples in the Indian context. Nikunj Sinha and Abhinav Arya have contributed to this paper on the basis of their conversation with Prof. Balasubramanian; Anurag Mishra has shared his understanding of leadership communication on the basis of his observation of how leaders communicated during his experience in a leading organization in India; Rohit Prasad Sarma has written about a student leader. I have contributed to this paper thoughts and insights gathered from Prof. Nagabrahmam's real life experience as a leader; ideas generated and shared by Prof. Rajagopalan during our conversation about how leaders communicate and my observation about two distinct styles of communication in an educational institution I worked in earlier.

In our conversations at TAPMI with Professor Nagabrahmam, Professor Rajagopalan and Prof. Balasubramanian on leadership communication, some interesting facts and views about how a leader communicates emerged. Beginning with the premise that a leader sees the larger picture and has a vision, we went on to discuss how that vision/mission in life is communicated to the followers, whether they are the common masses or organizational citizens. Interestingly, one point that everyone agreed on was: while communication is important, one does not need to be a great orator in order to communicate one's message. However, clarity of purpose, understanding

of intent and the manner in which it is communicated is of utmost importance. As in any communication situation, the receiver is supreme: people will follow only if the leader is perceived as trustworthy, committed, credible, competent and capable of fulfilling the goal/s.

COMMUNICATION THROUGH COLLABORATIVE PARTICIPATION

Prof. Nagabrahmam, Director, TAPMI believes that the new leadership is collaborative rather than autocratic. One important aspect of the modern leader is to understand his strengths and weaknesses and work with colleagues who complement his abilities. This awareness of the need to work with someone whose strength complements him is the key to the new leader's success. It also creates the environment for more wholesome participation and more significantly, recognizes the priority of achieving the goal over personal aggrandizement. This in turn helps the institution move closer to the fulfillment of the mission itself. An example of this is the case of the leader with excellent conceptualization skills choosing to work with someone who is good at the practical aspects of carrying his plans through at the ground level. Thus he has the best of both worlds: the ability to create, innovate and conceptualize on one side and the complementary analytical skills required to see the project through.

Another equally important achievement that becomes possible through collaborative participation is the scope for growth both as an individual and as an institution. It is a way of gathering the strength of the community to achieve the best possible results under the given circumstances. Communicating to people that they have certain special qualities and abilities enables better inter-personal links, smooth working relationships and results in a desire to grow and excel. The institution in turn reaps the benefits of having a happier and more committed work force, which signals growth as well.

Communicating a vision of excellence

Though collaboration is important, the competition (both internal and external) in the academic sphere is the impetus that has the ability to propel one towards excellence. Excellence is a matter of uniqueness, of rising above the mundane and it can only be achieved by constant striving. In the specific context of TAPMI, Prof. Nagabrahmam emphasizes the importance of competing with oneself—getting better at what one does, and at the same time competing with others—

benchmarking and improving. For instance, reshaping and redesigning one's courses according to present needs; inviting and listening to other perspectives at seminars based on research papers; visiting other institutions to learn about aspects that could enhance our offerings. Here he cites the example of his visit to the Asian Institute of Management in Phillipines where he learned about student internship in organizations as a part of the institute's Market Research project. Later this idea was adapted and modified to suit the Indian conditions. As a result we now have Management-in-Practice (MIP) in place for our students. Thus, the leader must communicate his vision of excellence, and help create the climate that fosters and enables the fulfillment of the vision.

Communicating institutional culture and values

Creating and communicating to the members (especially newcomers) the values and institutional culture is also a part of the leadership role. This may be done in many ways: through coherent, cogent and appealing manner of speech; thorough inclusive actions that show acceptance and appreciation. At TAPMI there is an atmosphere of interactive communication and faculty members have a role to play in the recruitment process, in the design of the overall curriculum of the PGDM, etc. We are also encouraged to build academic and community networks and have the freedom to work with other faculty members if we so choose. There is a process of informal mentoring in place and faculty partnerships, faculty-student partnerships in research, etc. are keenly pursued as a result.

While openness is an important aspect of TAPMI culture, toughness in terms of living up to one's commitment and fulfilling the personal and institutional goals set is equally important. Openness is a function of trust; and trust is built over time (Darley, 1996; Shaw, 1997; Harkins, 2005). However, one gains more by trusting others than by being distrustful. A leader who expects more from the followers and trusts them to live up to his expectations stands a much greater chance of having his dreams and vision fulfilled.

Effectiveness of communication comes from complete involvement, specifically in the task at hand and in fulfilling the mission of the institution as a larger goal. Prof. Nagabrahmam believes that before getting an idea across the leader must mull over the message to be conveyed and think about the best way to convey it so that it has the maximum impact. Clarity of

communication comes from being sound about both what one has in mind and the way one puts it across. While keeping the larger interests/goals in focus leadership communication must be able to touch the emotional chords of the followers. It is only when the mission/goal is internalized and accepted as one's own that the task will be undertaken with the ownership attitude that makes the difference. Excellent organizations seem to know how to use organizational fluidity and the nature and uses of communication in such organizations are far superior to those that are not in their category of excellence (Peters & Waterman, 1982).

In the Absence of Collaborative Participation: A demonstrative case

This case is about two contrasting communication styles of Principals at a Senior Secondary school under the National School Organization (names of the characters and the organization are disguised).

The Dipa Valley case (Gupta, 2001)

The Principal, Mr. Jacob, an elderly person, close to retirement, had grown with the institution and knew all the rules in the Education Code and the manual of NSO rules. In total control at all times, he delegated responsibility to his carefully selected team of teachers after a lot of consideration. He was fond of writing long, deliberately worded memos, on which he relied to spread the word around, rather than on the word of mouth. Verbal and face to face communication was kept to a minimum, especially with the less powerful persons in his administration. Mr. Jacob followed the rules and ensured that everyone else did so, too. There was a balance of academic achievements, sports, and other cultural activities, as expected of a NS with the objective of achieving an all-round development of the student. Under his leadership, there was strict adherence to the rules and regulations of the school and there was over all improvement in the academic situation. However, people lived in fear and did only what was absolutely required in their position.

The person selected (by the NSO) to be the next Principal was new to the NSO system. She was comparatively young, had a Ph.D. in literature and several years' experience of working in a college. Dr. Vern's style of functioning was more open and flexible, with a far greater degree of interaction with the teachers and students. She also visited several teachers at their homes, bringing about a social network, which was inclusive of the teachers' families as well. The new principal's efforts brought about a change in the way the school was perceived in the school community and the society in general. A lot of emphasis was

laid on improving relationships with the local authorities, which had the direct impact on increasing the resources available to the school. The interaction of the school with the local newspapers, radio, and television stations extended with the increase in public events and the need for publicity. Extracurricular activities were encouraged and Annual Day celebrations were held with great attention to detail and perfection. The school seemed to have gone through a total transition.

Drawing upon Gareth Morgan's metaphors (1986), the change in the two scenarios may be linked to a movement of the school from the mechanistic to an organismic model. While Mr. Jacob followed the rules implicitly, Dr. Vern pushed the boundaries to maximize gains from all possible resources in the environment, both internal and external. It was her unique style of communication that enabled the fulfillment of her vision and made NS Dipa Valley a model school.

LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION—CONTEXTUAL AND CONVINCING

Prof. Balasubramanian, Group Chairman—Industry Interface at TAPMI, believes that the principles of communication remain the same while communicating with different sets of people, be it a colleague or a subordinate or a worker in the shop floor. To communicate is to convey one's views in a manner so that the context is well understood. This may not necessarily mean that the verbal communication of the speaker needs to be excellent. In fact, he says that research has proven that verbal communication constitutes only about 7% of the total (Bovee, Thill & Schatzman, 2003). The rest includes non-verbal communication like body language, gestures, the words chosen, the tone etc.

Communicating by getting one's point across effectively

Applying this understanding, an effective communicator should be able to convince the other person. The mode of communication may or may not be different while talking to different people. The language used may differ, but it is more important to modify the body language, the gestures, the words and the tone of one's voice. The example of Mahatma Gandhi's choice of words and tone to suit different contexts and people is apt here. In the famous Johannesburg speech in South Africa, he whipped up the passion of the people against the unfair rules of the Government by stressing on the most unacceptable part of the rule and touching the most vulnerable chord: dishonour of women. Gandhi probably, would not have used such words in a

different context, but he considered it suitable to use them to include the masses in the Freedom struggle: the context and conditions were right.

This method of communication is also very useful while talking to people on the shop floor. It does not necessarily mean that one has to be like them to communicate, although Gandhi used that philosophy to dress like a common man so that the masses identified with their leader and trusted him. In today's context, while talking to people on the ground level, it is more important to understand their point of view and lead them accordingly. The situation is different while talking to people of the trade unions during negotiations. An effective negotiator convinces the other person so that he may also take it as a win-win situation. However, it should not end up in vengeance or humiliation as most of the problems arise only when egos come in the way. So, sometimes even when one's point is well negotiated in the process, it is very important to provide an "escape route" for the other person so as to avoid a clash of egos.

Communicating perseverance, credibility and motivation

The leader has a vision; he shares his vision with others so as to gather views towards achieving that. Further, he aims at achieving the vision, come what may. In the process, he may find difficulties and at times he may also fail. But those failures should not deter him from achieving his goal. It is not that leaders never fail. Leaders do fail, but good leaders are those who get up and go on to achieve their goal after facing all the challenges. He has to communicate his tenacity by the attitude – "I have to make it happen" and get up and run towards his goal again. Leaders never give up and that makes them credible.

Credibility helps create shared values and makes the path to the goal/vision easier (Peters *et al*, 1982; Kouzes & Posner, 1993). This is particularly important as a good leader should be able to influence others to fulfill his vision. Motivation, a critical aspect of leadership, is essential in order to get the best out of a team. A team is successful in achieving its objectives if all the team members share a common vision (at a particular point of time, completion of the task at hand). They may differ in opinion or mode of working or philosophies, but when it comes to communicating with each other, they should have mutual trust, respect and confidence in each other. There is no use of superficial concord and harmony if there is no credibility in the leader's

words. Gandhi did not agree with the British rulers but he spoke to them with the awareness and the expectation that the differences of opinion between them would not come in the way of their interacting as two human beings. This is also an essential component of assertiveness i.e. to agree to disagree. We can solve any problem if we intend to resolve it.

Communicating assertiveness

Assertiveness is an essential component of the communication strategy of a good leader. A leader should be firm and always back his words. This means that he should never say something which he is not sure of or which he knows that he would not be able to fulfill in future. This is also a test of the power of a leader's vision. Great leaders have taken more than twenty years to achieve what they promised, be it achieving the No. 1 spot in business, or landing man on the moon, or for that matter achieving independence. But, they have stuck to what they had committed to do. The manner in which a leader chooses to communicate assertiveness may vary.

For example, Gandhi proposed to his fellow freedom fighters that in order to protest against the British, they would like to set a day meant only for prayers to God. This was surprising for the others who could not understand at first how that would be a protest. But, Gandhi explained that if a day is meant only for prayers, that would mean that there would be no work in the factories, no transport on the road, no transactions in the markets etc. That would mean there would be no work that day. Gandhi didn't call it a strike, but he certainly helped a strike happen as a protest against the British.

Communicating with understanding

Prof. Balasubramanian also uses his favourite concept of the MBTI® to understand that all people are different, and we can make our communication more effective if we can understand this fact: the person we are talking to is of a unique "Type". Hence, he would have a particular way of thinking and thus, would approach a problem accordingly. In corporate situations, there would be people who would see a case in a more rational way, they would like to see numbers, market shares, statistics etc, but perhaps another person would be more concerned about the specific conditions prevailing in that particular industry, the market and case specific conditions, the human behaviour behind that, and perhaps respond in a more intuitive way. Leaders have to

understand and bear in mind this reality while talking to their subordinates and not panic about the manner in which results come. At the same time, subordinates should also recognize that the boss has certain expectations and try to put forth his/her point in the most suitable way. In either case, the project should be completed in due time, as there is no excuse for unpunctuality or moving back from word once given.

Thus, some of the critical aspects of the communication abilities of a leader are: recognizing the context and the receiver; being assertive and persistent; communicating with understanding. A leader is a man of words, he may or may not be very expressive, but when he expresses himself, it should be understood by all. Effective communication is one of the first steps towards encouraging, motivating and driving a team forward in order to achieve the pre-set goals.

COMMUNICATING CARE AND GAINING TRUST:

DEMONSTRATIVE CASE-LETS

The real-life case-lets demonstrate how leaders show concern by their gestures and actions. There is an attempt to draw a comparison between the response of followers to those leaders who demonstrate care for their junior officers and other leaders who fail to show concern for the employees.

Communicating acceptance and concern

Mr. U. N. Chandra² is the Vice president (Long Products) in Torino Steel and holds a top position in Torino Steel's newly acquired Steel Plants in South East Asia and Sri Lanka. He is also the Director of Torino Refractories Ltd, Additional Director in Tayo Rolls Ltd. and over the years he has proved to be very successful in all his endeavors. A few years back when he was the DGM (Steel), he paid a visit to the Heritage Park (which was located inside the steel works) to review the progress of its construction. While alighting from his car he eagerly waved his hand in the direction of Mr. Pradeep Sharma³ who was supervising the construction process.

“Hi Sharma! How are you?” he asked with a glint in his eyes and a warm demeanor. He had a tête-à-tête with him for a minute or so before starting the review process with other members. Mr. Sharma was a new recruit in the company and looked after the civil construction work. He

² Name changed for confidentiality

³ Name changed for confidentiality

was just another face in the crowd of more than three thousand officers of the company. He never expected a top official like Mr. Chandra to remember his name let alone chat with him with such bonhomie as he had met Mr. Chandra only once before. Mr. Sharma was pleasantly surprised at being acknowledged by such a high official whom he admired greatly. He was touched and decided to give his best to the officer and the work.

Communicating strong messages without words

There are many incidents which bring to light Mr. Chandra's amiable disposition and unique style of handling people and situations. When he was the Sr. Divisional Manager in LD#1, a steel making unit, he noticed that one of his managers Mr. Sham Khatri⁴ had a tendency to come late to the office. Mr. Chandra decided to change this habit as it was against the work ethics of the company and would set a bad precedent for others. The following morning he went directly to Mr. Khatri's office before entering his own office; Mr. Khatri as usual, arrived late to work and was surprised to see the Sr. Divisional Manager waiting for him in his office. Mr. Chandra assigned him some work and ignored his late coming. He continued the same routine for a few days and finally Mr. Khatri got the subtle yet clear message that his habitual late-coming was not acceptable to the management. He was never late after that.

Mr. Chandra joined Torino Steel as an Operative Trainee and has grown meteorically in the organization. He is known for his unique human touch and leadership style.

Communicating responsibility, clarity and focus

Mr. H. M. Nanda, Vice President (Flat Products) in Torino Steel and one of the highest paid executives of India in 2005, was reviewing the idea implementation of Total Operational Performance Improvement Program. During the presentation it was identified that an activity had got delayed and nobody was willing to accept the responsibility for it. As the managers were arguing about the person to blame for the fiasco, Mr. Nanda interrupted with the words, "OK. Write that this activity got delayed because of VP (FP)!!" His messages were simple and to the point—work as a team, refrain from playing blame-games and focus on the work and not at the faults. Mr. Nanda is now in-Charge of Torino Steel's six million ton expansion project in Orissa.

⁴ Name changed for confidentiality

Communication in the absence of care and responsibility

Mr. Jayant Rastogi,⁵ a senior executive in a company, was in the habit of holding long meetings without any clear agenda. He also passed personal comments about his subordinates and made the officers stay in the office for long hours. Occasionally some of the officers even had to work in the office till 4:00 a.m. on the next day. He demanded everything at the last moment and often after the normal working hours. This unprofessional conduct of Mr. Rastogi created dissatisfaction and made the subordinates unproductive. This issue came to the notice of the top management. As a result, his responsibilities were curbed, his power was reduced and eventually he was completely sidelined from the scheme of things. The organization in this case relied on the communication and feedback from subordinates both in the form of direct statements of dissatisfaction revealed, and the disturbing loss in productivity.

Communicating to build trust

While it is important to get the work done and meet targets, it is important for a leader to show that he/she also cares about the followers. Robert Bruce Shaw writes of the imperatives of trust: Result, Integrity and Concern (1997: 39). In other words, in order to gain trust, a leader must be able to deliver promised results, demonstrate integrity in his dealings and show concern for the well-being of others. Explaining how one may demonstrate this concern, Shaw writes of showing confidence in people's ability and establishing familiarity and dialogue (p. 85). Both of these qualities have been demonstrated by Mr. U. N. Chandra and Mr. H. M. Nanda of Torino Steel. As a result they are held in high esteem by the organization and the employees.

COMMUNICATING THE ABILITY TO LEAD

No one is a born leader. A person must inculcate some unique qualities to rise above the proletarian masses and emerge as a leader. Some leaders rely on their oratory skills to inflame passion in their audience; Caesar and Mark Anthony are good examples. Some leaders stamp their authority in order to stand out: Hitler and Aurangzeb, for instance. Still others, good speakers with a noble cause, show their followers a dream of better things to come if they act and the people follow them: Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and Martin King Luther Jr. may be named in

⁵ Name changed for confidentiality

this category. They were effective and efficient leaders. However, there is stark difference between an efficient leader and an effective leader.

Communicating effectiveness and efficiency—a demonstrative case

The Mechanical engineering class of 2000-04 had a Class Representative who was at best an efficient leader but not an effective leader. He was elected as the class representative in the 2nd year as the class felt he had the qualities of a good leader. He was a good student, fine sportsman and shared a good rapport with the faculty. It came as no surprise then that 58 out of 66 students in the class voted in his favour in the elections. But contrary to all expectations, he became quite unpopular within a couple of months. Though he was good at heart, he liked getting things done in his way without consulting others. The authority he held as a class representative also played a part in inflating his ego. Decisions regarding issues were always taken within the stipulated time, but with every decision, the level of discontent in the class rose further. He was authoritative on many occasions and the concerns of students, who disagreed with him, were seldom addressed. Thus, although he took a number of good decisions, some of which benefited the class to a large extent, he faced stiff opposition very soon and was thus forced to relinquish his post before the end of the year. Thus, in spite of his good decisions, his leadership style and his mode of interaction with his classmates made him very unpopular among his peers for the rest of the course.

As seen in the above mentioned case, an efficient leader may not always be an effective leader. The erstwhile chief ministers of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka; Mr. N. Chandrababu Naidu and Mr. S. M. Krishna would definitely vouch for that. In order to lead a team effectively the leader must communicate his ability to lead through words and actions. Failure to demonstrate effectiveness erodes the credibility that he holds as a leader and he loses legitimacy as a result. Leadership cannot be forced in a democratic set up and though the C.R. seems to have been efficient, failure to communicate his intent effectively and failure to take the class along in his decisions (which were largely autocratic) cost him his position. According to Warren Bennis, a good leader must judge himself on his ability to make a difference and ponder on how he would increase his effectiveness in future (1990 p. ix). The leader who wishes to be successful cannot take his supporters or his position for granted.

COMMUNICATION IS ACTION

Professor Rajagopalan, Dean Academics at TAPMI, believes that the most effective leaders are those who communicate through their actions and not words. They are the people who make a difference to the society silently and have a following when their actions are noticed and appreciated. People are so inspired by them that they are ready to follow in their footsteps. Such people make a significant point by *living* their message and that is their mode of communication. They may, or may not be great speakers.

Communicating one's message through life

Citing the example of Mother Teresa, he points out that she was not known to be an orator, yet people followed her. She was the leader of the Order of the Missionaries of Charity established in 1950 and was highly revered during her life time. Of the several bold steps she took, one was to change from the traditional dress code to the local sari for herself and the nuns in her care. This attire made them approachable and helped them build a closer relationship with the people they wanted to serve. The simple lifestyle and genuine interest in the welfare of the patients made them acceptable to the poor and communicated their credibility.

Communicating one's intent through practice

Mahatma Gandhi realized that it is only by visiting the *real* India and reaching out to people at the grass-root level would he be able to make a difference. He also chose to wear simple clothes to identify with the people he wished to lead. The impact of this change on the masses was first felt in the invitation and subsequently the visit to Champaran, the rest is history. He communicated his positive intent and trustworthiness by his actions. Gandhi lived the life he believed in, he did not merely preach. In his own home when his wife Kasturba refused to clean the toilets (suggesting that it was the work of untouchables), in a moment of anger he said she could leave. It was important for him to live his message and that is the unique quality of a committed leader.

Communicating commitment with passion and force of convictions

Prof. Rajagopalan points out that there are times when circumstances catapult someone into the role of a leader. Sometimes an event in a person's life triggers action and the most unlikely (under normal circumstances) person becomes a crusader for justice denied or the rights of

people whose voices are either not heard or ignored by those in power. One example is that of a Delhi group determined to check fire escape violations in large buildings after the unfortunate cinema hall fire incident. Members had lost their dear ones in the tragedy and have taken it upon themselves to ensure that such lapses do not go unnoticed.

Another instance is the case of C. K. Janu, the tribal activist from Kerala, who faced a lot of struggle in her early life, but decided to stand up for the rights of the tribal masses. She launched a land agitation movement for the return of tribal lands in September 2001. After 48 days, on January 1, 2002 the Government started distributing land to the tribal people (Verma, 2006: 158-159).

The writer, Arundhati Roy, lent her voice and presence to the *Save-Narmada* crusade because she felt that the people's woes needed to be heard; believed that they needed more publicity and a celebrity could make a difference.⁶

Thus, life itself becomes a means of communication for some leaders, while others communicate their commitment to a cause and are heard because the listeners believe them and identify with their goals.

CLOSING REFLECTIONS

Leaders lead by their ability to communicate through words, gestures, actions and by example. Communication is essential as organizations need to “attract people, hold people, recognize and reward people, motivate people and serve and satisfy people” (Drucker, 1992). To enable each of these activities one must communicate, and do so effectively. The leader's role extends further to serve as “meaning-maker” to the people in the organization or institution by conveying to them how they may make their work more meaningful and positive (Mai & Akerson, 2003: 37). Organizational citizens are more likely to appreciate the organization and value their work if they see both in a positive light and feel valued in turn. A communicative approach also increases the leader's acceptance and legitimacy among the followers (Eriksen, 2001). The leader in response must show faith and trust in the followers.

⁶ Based on her speech to the faculty and students of the University of San Francisco, USA

Communicating faith in the follower's ability: mentoring

A recent advertisement on NDTV 24/7 shows a young man in an interview scenario asking an older man, "What is the most radical or exciting thing you have done recently?" The answer is that he had allowed a young man to handle a large project all by himself.

"All by himself?!" is the incredulous question thrown back at him.

"Yes. He is a young man like you," is the reassuring reply.

The young man responds by saying, "I think I would like to work for you."

That is when it is revealed to the viewer that he is the interviewee and not the other way round! The message, in the leadership context, is that a leader must trust the followers and give them scope to grow and become leaders as well. Mentors or "leader growers" (Bennis & Townsend 1995: 141) help develop the next generation leaders. These leaders communicate the faith that they have in the ability of the juniors who are being groomed for potential leadership positions. They encourage their followers to take a more decisive position and play a more significant role in the organization. They are also aware that the followers are not infallible and sometimes mistakes will be made by them.

Leadership communication from the media and the public

The recent acquittal of all the accused in the Jessica Lall murder case has caused widespread outrage. Ironically, in this case two of the accused are the sons of political leaders of the nation. The media, more specifically a news channel (NDTV 24/7) is playing a leadership role here and has started an SMS campaign to reopen the case. Within a short time they received more than one lakh fifty thousand votes in favour of the motion. When leaders lose credibility and legitimacy and fail the followers, the vacuum is often filled up by a person/agency that is perceived to be trustworthy. The masses then assume responsibility and take a stand, each person communicating in clear, unambiguous terms: I have a stand on this issue. In a small way each one stands up to make a big difference. We all have a leader in us, perhaps overtly visible, perhaps hidden from sight, that comes to the fore when our belief systems are attacked or when a grave injustice is done to the helpless. When the leader in us rises for a good cause there is hope for the country. Communication keeps that hope alive.

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