

April 24 - 29, 2023
Mumbai, India

Taking & Making Roles

Towards leadership for the systems we belong to

The Fourteenth Group Relations Conference Offered by
GROUP RELATIONS INDIA

Dear prospective member,

We are very pleased to offer our next Group Relations Conference in a face-to-face setting after a gap owing to the pandemic.

In reflecting on the theme for this year's conference, we explored what may be most helpful to work with in the current context. We live in complex times. Our societies are increasingly polarized. Our belief in the value of institutions is weakening – be they large institutions such as governments, judicial systems, healthcare, or businesses; or those that we engage with more closely such as our family, organizations we work in, or communities we identify with.

We are in groups and systems all the time, and therefore each of us hold multiple roles simultaneously. We see ourselves as part of some systems but fail to do so in others. This maybe because we are more consciously aware of our roles in some systems such as those of a family member, or a designated organizational role. However, our simultaneous roles as citizens of our country, resident of the city or town or locality we live in, or our affiliative membership roles in religious, political, educational or other social and fellowship systems are perhaps roles we knock out of our conscious awareness, except in terms of the claim we can place on them. That we also have a leadership role in shaping these systems doesn't occur to us as easily.

This GRC focuses on the theme of how we take and make roles and how that impacts the systems that we belong to, and the implications of that for effective leadership. Taking as well as making roles are processes that have conscious and unconscious elements, and both are often left unexamined.

Designed as a temporary institution, away from the clutter of daily life, with a minimum of predetermined structure, a GRC offers a fresh and different space to see familiar processes, but with new eyes. Note that we use the word conference in the sense of to 'confer' – to bring together – through exploration and making meaning of here and now experience.

Our conferences have a very diverse set of participants representing a range of work settings, roles, lived realities, and identities, which furthers the possibility of nuanced and unexpected insights for all.

Learning in a GRC is not what someone else can guarantee, but what you will arrive at and hold on to because it derives from your direct experience. If this methodology of learning based on one's own authority is appealing to you then this 'conference' is likely to be of immense value to you. We look forward to hearing from you and welcoming you to GRC 2023 - **Taking and Making Roles - towards leadership for the systems we belong to.**

Rosemary Viswanath & Ganesh Anantharaman
Conference Director Associate Director

Contextualising the Theme

The process of role taking and making is not a one-time event, but ongoing, and has both conscious and unconscious elements. What roles we take up, and how we do so, has a significant impact on how we experience the systems that we belong to, and how we contribute to them. We tend to believe the opposite - i.e. how we experience systems impact the way we take up roles. Both processes operate, and we can interrogate our own preferences.

Role taking and making is a layered process. The way we take and make our roles and how we experience the system says a lot about our inner world. It is often the case that we recreate or import assumptions or conclusions based on our past experiences into our current systems.

While we speak about systems all the time, oftentimes we do not pay careful attention to the fact that what links the system to the context it is embedded in, is its task or purpose. We often end up sidelining the actual task and purpose of a system, because the repeating or re-creating of past pictures and habitual roles has a greater pull. Not just that, we, again unconsciously, import the dynamics of other systems, derailing the task of the current system in the process.

Another common dynamic is when people take on roles that seem disruptive or unpopular in systems. This may be a way by which unwanted but important perspectives are trying to be heard. However, we may end up marginalizing or silencing aspects that cause the system anxiety or discomfort, by isolating and even dismissing these roles. By quickly attributing this to the individual's personality trait, instead of recognizing it as an unspeakable aspect of the system, we try to hush it up.

Paying attention to these varied dynamics helps us to situate the system within its context and not limit our view of the system through the lens of our individual perspective, or at best the perspective of our role.

Group Relations Conferences are designed as temporary institutions in order to learn about the psychodynamics of groups and systems via one's direct experience. Given this, they provide a unique opportunity to study how we take up roles, and what purpose they are geared to, overtly as well as covertly. Therefore, paying close attention to the roles we ourselves and others take up in the conference, and the collective study and reflection of the dynamics helps us comprehend our own preferences, and the psychodynamics of systems we co-create.

Conference Aim and Primary Task

The term Primary Task refers to the reason for the existence of any system or organisation or institution - its most important task – that which defines its nature and core purpose. If not worked at, the organisation would lose its meaning.

This GRC will work to the following primary task:

To study the dynamics of role taking and role making and how these impact the exercise of leadership towards task in the system that we co-create.

This would imply paying attention to the conscious and unconscious processes, the nature of roles that emerge, and how these shape interpersonal, intergroup, and institutional relationships in the temporary institution of the conference.

This conference provides the opportunity for exploring in real time questions such as:
How do systems work towards a shared task, which gives meaning and purpose? Do the roles its members design and take up support this task? Or are they deviating from the task to the detriment of the system? If so, what pushes them to deviate?

In doing so, the following may be observed and worked with:

- ◆ In the making and taking up of roles, where do we place ourselves and others, and why so?
- ◆ How are power, privilege and resources accessed and deployed, as are leadership, resourcefulness, and authority?
- ◆ How are perspectives that challenge the dominant narrative welcomed and engaged with?
How are conflicts and vulnerability surfaced?
- ◆ How is love/caring for one another or for the system expressed?
- ◆ What forms does collaboration towards task take?
- ◆ How are spaces to explore and learn about the system created and used?

Conference Design

The conference design provides a variety of opportunities to discover how much one's experience of the 'here and now' is influenced by phantasy (beliefs that are more linked to one's valences and untested assumptions), helping one to recognize and work with both individual and systemic unconscious processes.



Each event is designed to offer the possibilities of a varied view from which one perceives oneself and others. The multiple roles one takes up in different events in the GRC invariably reflect the assumptions and roles we deploy in our everyday life, and how these contribute to, or take us away, from the task.

The stance of the conference is one of developing a spirit of enquiry into one's experience through attention, exploration, experimentation, reflection, and the capacity to wonder. There is no pre-set curriculum or evaluation of performance. Using the theme, task, structure, and framework as resource, participants generate learning and insights based on their personal authority. They are, therefore, likely to derive different kinds of learning.

The Role of the Staff

While staff and members are both participants in the conference, they are in different roles. Staff are deployed to events in the role of consultants, to work to the primary task of each event, and thus to the task of the conference as a whole. As consultants they offer working hypotheses, which aim to interpret group or system level unconscious processes through sense making of their experience and observations, keeping the lens of the task as primary. Staff, at all times, also carry the collective management role.

Conference Management and Staff

Conference Director: Rosemary Viswanath

Associate Director: Ganesh Anantharaman

Conference Administrators: Marisa D Mello (also pre-conference administrator) and Chandan Shamnani

The Conference Directors and Administrators form the Directorate of the conference, and will also consult in various events.

Consultant staff will be drawn from among:

- ◆ Chandan Shamnani
- ◆ Ganesh Anantharaman
- ◆ Gunjan Zutshi
- ◆ Haritha Sarma
- ◆ Rosemary Viswanath
- ◆ Swathi Seshadri
- ◆ Uma Ravikumar
- ◆ Vartika Jaini
- ◆ Yash Kaul

Staff Profiles

Chandan Shamnani is an organizational consultant and consults with organizations on leadership and change. A post graduate in HR and OD from Delhi University, he worked in the corporate sector for fifteen years before starting as an independent consultant. An associate member of Group Relations India, he has participated in Group Relations based events since 2014.

Ganesh Anantharaman, M. Phil. (Mumbai University); Member of Programmes Committee, Group Relations India. Ganesh works as a consultant to corporate organizations on Leadership dilemmas. He has staffed several Indian and international conferences since 2003, and has also directed GRI offerings, including the 2021 GRI (online) conference and the online workshop on Listening to the Unconscious in Self & Groups in June 2022. He also practices as a psychoanalyst-in-training in the Lacanian orientation.

Gunjan Zutshi (MBA), organization development practitioner with 27 years of experience. Co-founder, AgileSattva Consulting LLP. Accredited Organisation Development and Change Practitioner (ODCP) from Indian Society for Applied Behavioural Science (ISABS) and certified coach (ACC) from International Coaching Federation (ICF). Practicing psychotherapist, Certified Transactional Analyst – Psychotherapy (CTA-P). Associate member Group Relations India and involved in GR work for last 10 years.

Haritha Sarma, M.Sc (University of Mysore): Organisational Development consultant, gender trainer especially working with social justice/development sector for the past 25 years. He has extensively worked with groups, organisations and networks engaged with addressing issues related to structural poverty and marginalisation. Associate Member of Group Relations India. He has been a participant member and consulting staff in group relations conferences in India and internationally.

Marisa D'Mello, M.A. Psychology (University of Mumbai & University of Hawaii), Ph.D. (Social Sciences, University of Oslo); Academic Program Committee Member of the Organizational Development Certification Course (ODCP) offered by the Indian Society for Applied Behavioral Science (ISABS). Consults with organizations on leadership development, culture building, personal and team effectiveness, and organization development. Published academic papers on identity, gender, workplace mobilities, and organizational culture.

Rosemary Viswanath, P.G.D.M. (IIM, Bengaluru), Founder & Managing Trustee, member Programmes Committee, Group Relations India. Has designed, consulted in, and directed Group Relations based Conferences and other offerings in India and internationally since 1987. Consults on leadership and strategy with a wide range of systems. Is deeply interested in the intersection of Buddhist and Group Relations approaches in furthering transformation.

Swathi Seshadri, M.Com. (Mumbai University), M.A. in Social Work (TISS), Associate Member (GRI), Striving for social justice, equity and equality through her work in rural and urban spaces, have been Swathi's primary work since 1999. While working full time in civil society organisations, she also consults to organisation change processes including on strategy and culture.

Uma Ravikumar, B.Com, MBA; Member of Programmes Committee and Associate of GRI; Uma has 24 years of experience in business and leadership roles including in Oracle Consulting; currently an organisation and leadership development professional working with individual and group learning methodologies. Associated with GRI since 2013 including as director of the workshop on listening to the unconscious in 2019.

Vartika Jaini, Founder of Vriddhi, a startup focused on accelerating impact in tribal pockets of central India. Chevening Gurukul Fellow. Member, Programmes Committee GRI. Has been in roles of member and staff in GRCs since 2010. Directed a group relations workshop in 2022. Authored two papers on system psychodynamics in non-profits.

Yash Kaul is a BITS Pilani and IIM-Kozhikode alumnus. He is Co-Founder and CEO of Helmier Limited. He is associated with Group Relations for nearly a decade and been on staff of GRCs and workshops. GR lens and methodology has transformed him as a manager, leader, citizen and overall as a person. Yash is passionate about music and marathons.

Administrative Details

Conference Venue

The venue is on the outskirts of Mumbai.

GCC Hotel and Club

Off. Mira Bhayander Road, Mira Road (E)

Thane, Maharashtra, India. 401107

<http://gcchotelandclub.com>

Detailed information on logistics and facilities will be sent to members on confirmation of their applications.

Timings & Registration

Registration of members to the conference is from 0800-0915 on April 24, 2023.

The conference will open with a Plenary at 0930 hours on April 24, 2023.

The conference ends at 1630 hours on April 29, 2023.

Fee

- ◆ The conference fee is INR 75,000 plus 18% GST (Goods and Services Tax) (i.e. INR 88500 is payable). For international participants it is USD 1,400 plus 18% GST (i.e. USD 1652 is payable).
- ◆ The Early Bird Fee is INR 69,000 plus 18% GST (i.e. INR 81,420 is payable). The Early Bird Fee for international participants is USD 1,250 plus 18 % GST. (i.e. USD 1475 is payable). We expect the fee to be transferred to us by February 17,2023 to qualify for early bird.
- ◆ This is a residential programme and the conference fee includes accommodation and board on a twin-sharing basis which is booked from late evening of April 23, 2023 until April 29, 2023 midmorning. This is to enable participants to reach the venue, stay the night and be rested, for the start of the conference the next morning.
- ◆ To avail of stay on a single occupancy basis the additional conference fee would be INR 9000 plus 18% GST. This amounts to paying INR 10620 additional to the standard or the early bird fee as applicable . For international participants this would be USD 125 plus 18% GST which amounts to USD 147.5 payable additionally to the conference fee as applicable. You need to mention this requirement at the time of applying and payment, to ensure that a room on single occupancy basis is available.

Bursaries

Recognising that access to financial resources is varied, GRI is committed to ensuring that group relations work is accessible to a wide membership. This has enabled people from a range of economic and work sectors and representing many other important diversities to attend. We believe that this diversity in membership contributes to the opportunities for learning for all members.

We are particularly committed to make group relations opportunities available to those in the social justice and development sectors, such as small, under-resourced NGOs, community-based organisations, and movements.

Those seeking a reduction in fee are required to write to us at the time of applying giving the reason for, and the amount of bursary they seek. We will revert to you on the amount we can offer based on the total number of requests made, the relative merits of the case, and the number of full-paying applicants we get.

It would help us if those seeking a bursary write to us by **March 17, 2023**.

We also offer the option of paying the fee in two instalments if that helps potential members.

How to apply

To apply for membership of the workshop, you would need to fill in the online application form [HERE](#). Kindly note that invoicing and GST details in the application form are required by us to fulfil statutory compliances.

Once your application is accepted by us, we will separately initiate with you on email the process for your fee transfer.

Kindly note that the last date for receipt of applications is **April 17, 2023**. Your place in the conference will be confirmed when your application and fee payment are both completed. This has the outer timeline of April 21,2023.

Refund policy

Refund after deducting 25% towards administrative expenses will be made to those who withdraw on or before April 17, 2023.

For withdrawals after that, refunds will not be possible, but we do consider the option of holding a part of your fee towards participation in a future GRI event within a reasonable timeframe.

Speak to us!

For further discussions and to assist your decision about participation in the conference we would be happy to speak to you. Message Marisa (+91 98692 58309), Ganesh (+91 98864 06806) or Rosemary (+91 98454 03773) to schedule a conversation.
Or email us at: grc@grouprelationsindia.org

We look forward to hearing from you and welcoming you to the conference!

If you are living through particular personal difficulties, we suggest you consider postponing your participation as the conference is designed as a learning environment and is not a substitute for personal therapy.

The working language of the conference is English.

Timelines to note

- ◆ **February 17, 2023** - Last date to avail the Early Bird Fee: Your fee should be transferred to us by **February 17th, 2023** for you to qualify for early bird rate
- ◆ **March 17, 2023** - Preferred timeline for applications that have bursary requests along with the application
- ◆ **April 17, 2023** - Last date for receipt of applications
- ◆ **April 21, 2023** - Last date for receipt of payment for confirmation of your place in the conference



About Group Relations India

Group Relations India (GRI) was founded in 2013 with the vision of an institution that is committed exclusively to group relations methodology, and of making the potential of this methodology available to members from a wide section of Indian society, having different representations and interests. It is conceived of as a 'home for GR' in India.

For more information, please visit www.grouprelationsindia.org

Design by [Smriti Chanchani](#)