

# TASKROLESYSTEM

Furthering our work with unconscious dynamics in systems



The Third Workshop Offered By Group Relations India

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**FEB 2-3 (ONLINE) | FEB 8-10, 2024 (IN PERSON)**

Bodhivriksh, Mahindra Leadership University  
Gowardhan village, Nashik, Maharashtra



# WORKSHOP CONTEXT

Human systems are interrelated, complex and dynamic. Yet our organisational processes and systems are increasingly designed to avoid this complexity. In our wish for certainty and control, we may avoid processes that bring us face to face with uncertainty. We seek comfort of immediate gratification. Change, then, may become about exhortations or injunctions to behave in 'better' ways. These often fail to achieve much positive movement, both in institutions or individuals.

Group Relations framework recognises that shifts take place when attention is given to unconscious anxieties, defenses and resistances that inhibit positive movement. What has been valuable in this tradition of learning from the unconscious, is the understanding of task, role and system, as a way to interpret and shape our experiences in systems.

'System' refers to activities and relations with a boundary. The **where** and the **why**. Organizations and families and societies function as systems (the individual too is a system); and therefore what happens in any one part cannot be separated from what is happening in other parts of the system. Systemic ideas allow us to understand the interplay between the parts of the whole and what the parts may represent for the whole. 'Seeing' it as a system in its context, gives a frame of reference for exploring and finding the place of this system and its relationships with other systems.

'Task' is about **what** is primary to any system. It is what gives meaning to this system – its reason for existence. So, task helps connect a system to its wider societal context. It points to what must be accomplished to further the purpose of the system. It also provides a boundary for exploring shared experiences in a system. One can always ask, if this is our understanding of the task, what is the experience of our work, towards this task, telling us?

'Role' encompasses both the formal authority vested in a person to further the task, as well as the personal authority the person may choose to deploy towards accomplishing task. Role answers the questions **who** and **how**? It connects individual context to the organisational context. Attending to experiences in role offers the opportunity to bring insights for oneself as also for the organisational system.

Task, role, and system – also the three elements of this workshop - are interrelated for any system. Task gives the purpose of a system. A system needs a purpose to exist. Role connects an individual with the system and its task.

Simple and obvious as this may sound, what makes this interrelationship complex is that we tend to import our histories, experiences, and desires, conscious as well as unconscious, to our



taking up of current roles. Often, we may also act out our (unconscious) pictures-in-the-mind, importing aspects of other systems that we have been part of from our past, including through our early experiences of family systems. These may be out of tune with the realities of the systems that we are currently operating in. We run the risk of abandoning or diluting task and/or messing up our role, leading to unintended, if not downright undesirable, consequences for the system as a whole.

Acknowledging the presence of the unconscious, gives an increased comfort with uncertainty and a stance of 'not knowing'. It helps to be alive to what else is happening in a system and one may be able to 'see the system', in its larger context. One may be more open to acknowledging interdependencies. All this allows for a greater reality orientation.

Nevertheless, our resistances may keep bringing the focus on the individual, as it seems like an easier choice than focusing on the complex set of dynamics at work at the level of the system in determining individual preferences and actions. Unwavering attention to unconscious dynamics, including to our own resistances, can keep us alert to our experiences in systems.

This work may need us to give up the notion of ourselves as objective, well intentioned and rational beings, driven by logic and facts. It, instead, invites us to be open to interrogating and working with deeply held conclusions based on our personal history and cultural dictates. It supports an ongoing sense making, including of seeming irrationalities,

that helps us learn from our experiences in systems. All this, in turn, opens our ability to make effective decisions, have generative relationships with others, and explore creative possibilities for the exercise of leadership in our systems.

The workshop is offered in the Group Relations tradition. This way of working on the unconscious is influenced by the work of pioneers in the psychoanalytic tradition - Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Melanie Klein and Wilfred Bion - as well as other streams such as systems thinking, socio-technical systems, particularly the work of Eric Trist and A K Rice. Also, socio-analysis, work initiated by Gordon Lawrence and Alastair Bain. Conceptualising systems as defenses to our unconscious anxieties, by Elliott Jaques and Isabel Menzies Lyth, advanced the understanding of unconscious dynamics at work in organisational/social systems.

Work on the unconscious and recognition of its impacts has had a long history and can be seen in thought and philosophy in the Indian subcontinent in the pre-Vedic era, the Upanishads, Buddhist and Jain philosophy and in literature on Yoga over millennia. Gouranga Chattopadhyay introduced this into group relations work. Applying the group relations framework to interrogate unconscious, unexamined hierarchies such as caste and gender, and their implications for leadership in systems in India, was pioneered by Rosemary Viswanath. All these have been influences on group relations practice in India and inform this workshop offering.



# ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

*This is a conceptual cum experiential workshop. The workshop will be offered over five days. The first two days (half days) will be online, to be followed by a three day in-person residential workshop.*

*The workshop will provide an opportunity to bring into view, the mostly unconscious, systemic forces and factors which influence the process through which we find, make and take roles in the systems that we are part of.*

## PRIMARY TASK OF THE WORKSHOP

By the term primary task, we mean the top priority task of a system that gives it meaning in its context; that which must be engaged with meaningfully, for the system to fulfil its objectives.

The primary task of this workshop is:

*To enhance one's clarity on the influence of unconscious dynamics on our experiences in systems, in the Indian context. This is through focussing on the interrelationships of task, role and system, and on one's own unconscious patterns at play.*

We will work to this primary task both conceptually and experientially.

## FOR WHOM IS THE WORKSHOP MEANT

This workshop is for those who are interested in furthering their application of group relations framework, towards greater exercise of leadership in the systems they are part of. This includes practitioners, managers, and consultants who work in and with systems in leadership or consulting roles.

Familiarity through direct experience of group relations framework is a prerequisite for participation in this workshop. Anyone who has participated in a Group Relations Conference or an experiential workshop like Listening to the Unconscious is welcome to apply.

## METHODOLOGY

A range of learning events such as River of Life, Role consultations, Reflection Plenaries, Concept sessions will be used. Learning is through reflecting on one's experiences, engaging with conceptual understanding, consulting to others, generating insights and conceptualising from these experiences. All this is in a collective setting.

# WORKSHOP MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Staff and members are both participants in the workshop, though 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 workshop, as a whole. Staff, at all times, also carry the collective management role.

The staff of the workshop will be in roles such as director, administrator and consultant.

**Workshop Director:** Vartika Jaini  
**Workshop Administrator:** Asha P George

Director and Administrator form the Directorate of the workshop  
**Consultants will be drawn from:** Chandan Shamnani, Ganesh Anantharaman, Gunjan Zutshi, Vartika Jaini

## STAFF PROFILES

**Asha P George**, a social development professional, she believes unconscious processes operate and impact us in the roles we perform. She attended the program 'Listening To The Unconscious in Self, Groups and Systems' (LTTUC) offered by GRI in 2019. She holds a Post-Graduate Diploma in Rural Development from XISS, Ranchi and Post Graduate Certificate in Human Resource Management from XLRI, Jamshedpur and is currently working with women farmer collectives on leadership in their roles.

**Gunjan Zutshi** (MBA), organization development practitioner and certified coach with over 27 years of experience. Co- founder, AgileSattva Consulting LLP. Certified Transactional Analyst – Psychotherapy (CTA-P) with private practice in Bangalore. Associate member Group Relations India (GRI) and involved in GR work for the last 10 years. An ardent Yoga practitioner for over 15 years.

**Chandan Shamnani** is an organisational consultant, he has worked in the corporate sector for 17 years. A postgraduate in HR and OD from Delhi University, he has held different roles in the area of learning, leadership and change including a stint as an independent consultant. Currently he is with Asian Paints in a full-time capacity and takes care of OD and leadership development.

**Vartika Jaini**, a group relations practitioner, Vartika has been in roles of member and staff in Group Relations Conferences since 2010. She directed a group relations workshop in 2022. She uses the GR framework to consult for learning and development. Also founded Vriddhi, which works to accelerate impact in tribal pockets of central India. Member of Programmes Committee, Group Relations India and a Chevening Gurukul Fellow at Kings College London.

**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.

# ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Online work would be offered via Zoom platform, while the three day workshop will be residential.

## WORKSHOP VENUE

**Mahindra Leadership University  
Near YCMOU, Gowardhan village  
Gangapur road, Nashik, Maharashtra – 422222**

The venue is located, about 21 kms from Nashik Road station, which is the nearest train station. It is also conveniently accessible via road from Mumbai and Pune. Closest airports are Mumbai, Pune, Shirdi (Code SAG, about 100 kms) and at Ozar, Nashik (Code ISK, about 35 kms).

Detailed information on how to reach the venue and other joining information will be sent to members upon confirmation of their applications.

## PROGRAMME FEE

The all-inclusive fee of the program is INR 40,000 plus 18% GST (Goods and Services Tax). (i.e. INR 47,200 is payable). This includes cost of stay, on a double occupancy basis, for the residential workshop.

To avail of accommodation on a single occupancy basis, the additional workshop fee would be INR 4,000 + 18% GST. This amounts to paying INR 4,720 additional to the standard workshop fee mentioned above. If you would like a room on single occupancy basis, do mention this at the time of your application, so that we can confirm before you transfer the workshop fee.

## DATES, TIMINGS AND REGISTRATION

**February 2 and 3, 2024 (online):** The workshop begins with a short session to welcome members at 1545 hours on February 2, followed by the opening plenary at 1600 hours. Workshop events will be between 1600 and 2200 hours on both days.

**For February 8-10 (residential workshop):** Registration of members is from 1500-1545 hours on February 8, 2024. The workshop will open with a plenary at 1600 hours on February 8, 2024. The workshop ends at 1300 hours on February 10, 2024.

## BURSARY

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.

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

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 **December 25, 2023**.



# 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.

The last date for receipt of applications is **January 25, 2024**. Your place in the workshop will be confirmed when your application is accepted, **and** fee payment are both completed. This confirmation has an outer limit of January 27, 2024 .

## REFUND POLICY

Refund after deducting 25% towards administrative expenses will be made to those who withdraw on or before end of working hours on January 5, 2024. 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.

## IMPORTANT DATES

### **Preferred date for bursary requests**

December 25, 2023

### **Last date for withdrawal of applications for refund**

January 5, 2024

**Last date for receipt of applications** January 25, 2024

## CONTACT INFO

For further discussions and to assist your decision about participation in the workshop we would be happy to speak to you.

Please contact **Asha (+91 7488984778)** or **Vartika (+91 9910866637)** to schedule a conversation or email **programmes@grouprelationsindia.org**

## **We look forward to hearing from you and welcoming you to the workshop!**

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

Working language of the workshop is English.



Group Relations India

[www.grouprelationsindia.org](http://www.grouprelationsindia.org)

GRI promotes experiential learning of individual, group and organizational processes. It uses system psychodynamic and socio-analysis approaches which pay particular attention to unconscious processes. Group Relations India offers a variety of educational programs and workshops for the enhancement of skills and competencies in this area. It also networks with like-minded professional bodies and organizations to further this aim.