KOODAM WORKING PAPERS

Working with and in Group Relations

Table of Contents

Preface

On behalf of Group Relations India, it gives me great joy to introduce the first of the **Koodam Working Paper Series** - Working in and with Group Relations.

Group Relations India (GRI) was founded in September 2013 and is nearly 6 years old! We offered the 11th in our series of Group Relations Conferences in June 2019. While it is important to acknowledge that the first 5 were sponsored by HIDF, many of us associated with GRI were closely involved in making those happen - in some ways it was a collaboration, if I may say so, with a yet to be born organisation!

When GRI was formed, we wanted that we should architect the structures and spaces of the institution as we went along. So, we got going in a small way, and kept adding to our plans and offerings as the energy, camaraderie and colleagueship built up for it. Thus, GRI as an institution is growing based on the needs and responses of a wider group, and with increased and distributed ownership.

We also wanted to offer ways of continuing the education and the engagement with GR methodology and frameworks, and many offerings were conceived and offered in that spirit - the flagship annual GRCs; the popular workshop titled "Listening to the Unconscious" offered once or sometimes twice a year; specialized theme based workshops on themes such as Furthering Learning about Small Groups; the Brahmin in the Mind, Task, Role, & System, and short gatherings of those often on staff of GRI offerings to puzzle about what "working in and with GR means for us". The Study (reading) Groups have also been well subscribed – we are half - way down the 4th edition as this preface is being written, and it has been online for 3 editions. A series of short curtain-raisers or introductory sessions on working with the unconscious that we have offered in different cities has also been a way many of us have taken the idea of group relations to wider audiences. Colleagues associated with GRI have been invited to be on the staff of other international conferences, have presented papers / addressed the international gathering of Group Relations practitioners at Belgirate, and have also chosen to be members in conferences abroad.

Often in the midst of all the work, we do not have enough time to reflect on issues that puzzle us. This is when we long for deeper and more meaningful conversations about GR frameworks to further our insights and practice. The idea of an annual or biannual gathering was on our minds for some time, and it took shape in the summer of 2017, when we paid some more attention to what GRIs future structure could be and how that could best serve its task. In designing structures and spaces we knew that what mattered most was the building and nurturing of a community, that found meaning and value in thinking about, puzzling over, and discovering in everyday experience what the practice of group relations was really about.

Koodam is envisaged as a gathering of practitioners of group relations work to further the thinking and practice in this field in a collegial space. The Primary Task of Koodam, held in April 2018, was to broaden and deepen one's thinking about and practice of group relations work through collective exploration.

In the run up to Koodam 2018, the task of the co-convenors (Rosemary Viswanath, Anuradha Prasad and Ganesh Anantharaman) was to encourage those engaging with GR to conceptualize their experiences and insights to further collective thinking about GR frameworks. Some of the presenters shared early drafts, or in some cases parts of their papers. We kept in mind the primary task being an exploration, with the presenters' thoughts being a catalyst. During

Koodam our task as co-convenors was to as unobtrusively as possible, anchor the sessions, managing boundaries of time and task.

Koodam 2018 was a stimulating two days, and a wonderful container of insights, warmth, camaraderie, history, nostalgia, gratitude and a strong sense of community. Following Koodam 2018, Ganesh and Rose took on the role of editors to a "Working Paper Series" to encourage presenters to bring their papers/presentations to the shape of a working paper.[1] This proved far more energy-intensive than all those concerned had bargained for at times, as perhaps the idea of the "published" word was more terrifying than a conversation or exploration, and led to many starts and stops and near give ups!

Nevertheless we all persisted courageously, and here is the result of our efforts - a working paper series I. The idea of the working paper is that while it is a 'finished product' in one sense, it is also simultaneously work in progress. We are all encouraged to take the thinking forward. As editors, while we did work with each author offering extensive comments, the final paper that you read is what they as authors wish to say, and what they believe they are comfortable with at this point in time.
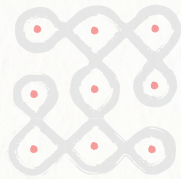
We also encouraged reflections on the Koodam experience itself, and we have one such contribution in this series.

Rosemary Viswanath | Managing Trustee | Group Relations India

August 2019, Bangalore

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[1] Only one paper by Gouranga Chattopadhyay does not feature in the series, as we had invited him to present a to be published paper on the Sixth Basic Assumption.

ENVY - Recognizing And Working With It
Veena Pinto

Abstract

Unconscious envy plays a key role in human nature. Envy according to Melanie Klein, is the angry feeling one has that another person possesses and enjoys something one desires, often accompanied by an impulse to take it away or to spoil it. Klein further says that envy is as an innate expression of destructive impulses, meaning it is present from birth and that it has a "constitutional basis", implying it is quite resistant to change. Being a socially unacceptable emotion, it is secretly held, rarely admitted to anyone and more readily noticed in others than in oneself.

The paper begins with a summary of definitions and some observations on the perception and experience of envy of the author and others. These will then be compared with psychoanalytic definitions. The distinction and at the same time the connection between feelings of envy, jealousy and greed will also be explored. The aim of the paper is to stimulate an exploration of unconscious envy, the various forms it can manifest and its implications for self, relationships, groups and systems. It is also hoped that such exploration will lead to developing some hypotheses about the roots of envy which may then become the springboard for understanding and working with it.

"Certainly then, envy is the worst sin there is. For truly, all other sins are sometimes against only one special virtue, but truly, envy is against all virtues and against all goodness."
Geoffrey Chaucer – The Parson's Tale

What is envy?

The Oxford definition - if you **envy** someone, you wish that you had the same things or qualities that they have. It's a feeling of discontented or resentful longing aroused by someone else's possessions, qualities, or luck.

Being **jealous** (of somebody/something) is the feeling of being angry or unhappy because you wish you had something that somebody else has. However, Oxford also includes in their definition, the feeling of anger or unhappiness because somebody you like or love is showing interest in somebody else.

According to **Melanie Klein**, an Austrian born, British psychoanalyst, known for her work with young children, envy is the angry feeling that another person possesses and enjoys something desirable – the envious impulse being to take it away or spoil it. Envy implies the subject's relation to one person only which goes back to the earliest exclusive relation with the mother.

Jealousy says Klein, is based on envy and is mainly concerned with love that the subject feels is his due and has been taken away or is in danger of being taken away from him by his rival. For example – you are in love with a man and fear that another woman is going to take him away. Thus jealousy involves a relation to at least two people.

The essential difference between envy and jealousy - you are jealous if you think someone will take what you have (you fear to lose what you have) and you are envious if you want what another has.

In everyday parlance, the two words envy and jealousy tend to be used interchangeably to the point that the word envy is hardly used, whereas it is not uncommon to hear people talk about their feelings of jealousy. Often however, these verbalizations of jealousy appear to be made more in a manner of speaking than as a reflection of truly deep feelings of envy. For example – "You are taking a vacation in Florence. Oh I'm so jealous!" This could point to an (unconscious) reflection of the strongly negative associations attached to envy; it's socially unacceptable. In early Christian teaching, envy was ranked among the seven 'deadly (cardinal) sins'. Klein believed that it might even have been the deadliest of sins, because 'it spoils and harms the good object (the breast) which is the source of life'. Whatever the reason, envy is most often secretly held, rarely admitted to anyone and more readily seen in others than in oneself.

According to Klein, envy is innate; it stems from within and so will always find an object to focus on. The Indian practice of putting a black spot on the face or some part of the anatomy of a very young child to ward of the evil eye of envy, is possible evidence for the prevalence of the feeling of envy. Further evidence comes from the fact that the German word schadenfreude – experiencing pleasure at the misfortune of others – an emotion that is easily experienced, has entered the English lexicon whereas mudita, a Buddhist word which in Pali means rejoicing in the well-being of others, an emotion that is far less experienced - has not. It is the rare person whose automatic impulse is to feel joy when meeting someone who is richer, smarter or prettier.

Klein further goes on to say that the very envious person is insatiable. Thus the close connection between jealousy, greed and envy.
Greed according to Klein is as an impetuous and insatiable craving, exceeding what the subject needs and what the object is able and willing to give. At the unconscious level, greed aims primarily at completely scooping out, sucking

dry and devouring the breast: that is to say its aim is destructive introjection whereas envy not only seeks to rob in this way, but also to put badness, primarily bad excrements and bad parts of the self into the mother and first of all into her breast, in order to spoil and destroy her or in its deepest sense, destroying her creativity. Greed is thus bound up with introjection and envy with projection.

What do people say about their understanding and experience of envy? Below is a short summary of the few people I interviewed:

1. Envy is the desire to steal or destroy the goods or good in others
2. Envy is always present in relationships with others
3. Envy comes from comparing oneself with others without appreciating their qualities and instead preferring to diminish them
4. The object of envy is something that you do not possess. It could include possessions, qualities, achievements, and skills
5. Jealousy was defined and understood in the same way as envy but was mostly seen as less negative in its impact

These views are consistent with what psychoanalysts have written regarding the phenomenon of envy and its manifestation in social relations.

Roots of envy & its resolution – a psychoanalytic view

Delving into the work of Klein, the first object to be envied is the feeding breast. The phantasy in the infant's mind is that of it being an ever-present, inexhaustible breast. When inadequately fed, the breast becomes bad and the infant's feeling is that it keeps the milk, love and care associated with it all to itself. He hates and envies what he thinks to be the mean and grudging breast.

However, the satisfactory breast is also envied because the ease with which the milk comes – though the child is gratified by it – it also gives rise to envy because it's like a gift which seems unattainable.

This primitive envy may be revived in the transference situation. For example, the analyst has just given an interpretation which has brought the patient relief and a sense of hope and trust from the earlier despair. Yet this helpful interpretation may become the object of destructive criticism – the interpretation should have been given earlier, or is too short or too long implying it has not been sufficiently understood. The patient's need to devalue the analytic work which he has experienced as helpful is the expression of envy. Sometimes a patient may avoid criticism by becoming confused. The confusion is both a defense and also expresses uncertainty as to whether the analyst is still a good figure. The uncertainty can be traced back to feelings of confusion arising from a disturbed earliest relation to the mother's breast and so cannot keep apart successfully love and hate and therefore the good and bad object and so is confused between what is good and bad in other connections.

One important outcome of the capacity for love is the feeling of gratitude. Gratitude is essential in building up the relation to the good object and underlies also the appreciation of goodness in others and in oneself

Strong envy of the feeding breast interferes with the capacity for complete enjoyment and thus undermines the development of gratitude. The more often gratification at the breast is experienced and fully accepted, the more the enjoyment and gratitude, and accordingly the wish to return pleasure are felt. This recurrent experience makes possible gratitude at the deepest level and plays an important role in the capacity to make reparations.

Envy spoils the capacity for enjoyment, which also explains why it is so persistent. It is enjoyment and the resultant gratitude which mitigate destructive impulses, envy and greed. The feeling of harm done by envy, the great anxiety that stems from this and the resulting uncertainty about the goodness of the object, have the effect of increasing greed and destructive impulses. Whenever the object is felt to be good after all, it is all the more greedily desired and taken in.

Recognizing and working with envy

Thinking about my own experiences of feeling envious, one that comes to my mind is in relation to a female colleague whom I shall call Girija. I never missed an opportunity to in some way disparage Girija. She was either political and knew how to get what she wanted, complex, confused, etc. I also began to distance myself from her. This went on for a bit until one day a good friend offered that I was envious of Girjia. Whoa! I was momentarily taken aback, but with some honest reflection was able to see the truth of it. I was envious of her ability to ask for what she wanted, to extend herself and through that create opportunities for herself, her personality and social network also brought her recognition and opportunities. I was envious because I believed she was getting ahead of me even though to my mind, I was more competent and capable.

Another experience that I'd like to present is as a recipient of another's envy. This was at an Indian Society for Applied Behavioural Sceince (ISABS) event when an intern announced his desire to work with me in a lab, saying he would like to learn from me. As we clinicked after the first session, he proceeded to give me quite a bit of negative feedback about my facilitation – I spoke too early, too much, he also disagreed with the content of one of my interventions, etc.

Using these experiences as a pointer, some possible pointers to the feeling of envy are:

1. Disparaging another person or attempts to make them look poorly in the eyes of others. What is unseen, is the comparison of self with the other person and a secret sense of falling short
2. Criticizing and pointing out flaws in the work of another usually has its roots in envy and competitiveness

Envy is not restricted to individuals alone. It can manifest between groups and large systems. It is not uncommon to find departments or teams in organizations at loggerheads with each other, not sharing information and competing for

resources. At high organizational cost, people prefer to reinvent the wheel or learn from external sources which is seen as enterprising, rather than borrow an idea from a colleague which would mark him or her as an intellectual leader.

Standoffs between Marketing and Sales or Support and Line Functions are legendary. Marketing feeling that Sales people are favored and get more recognition and rewards, or HR feeling that policies and practices take care of the needs of the Line Functions only and so retaliate by becoming controllers and gatekeepers. Practices in organizations that reward leadership and individual achievement on one hand and the apparent lack of value for collaborative followership and team work on the other, further fuel feelings of envy and competitiveness between teams and individuals. Upper caste anger and continued attempts to suppress the Dalits come from their envy for the latter's skills, rising levels of education, greater opportunities, better jobs and income.

Competition between large corporations that is encouraged and even revered, that has the big fish trying to swallow the small or get a bigger and bigger share of the pie in truth has at its roots envy and greed. Envy between nations isn't spared as can be seen in Donald's Trump's boast of having a bigger & more powerful nuclear button in response to North Korean Leader Kim Jong Un's statement that the "Nuclear Button is on his desk at all times".

Envy takes a high toll on organizations, the envious person and also the envied. Do you envy people with bigger titles or higher salaries or those who get praised by the boss? Knowing one's envy triggers is a helpful starting point in keeping it in check. Instead of drowning in envy, you can focus on developing yourself. Affirming oneself by reminding oneself of one's own strengths and successes is very important.

It is possible to cultivate more generosity of spirit and quiet the cruel voice of envy by consciously attempting to develop the neglected virtue of Mudita and feel happiness for the person we envy. Showing true appreciation, and admiration for others' abilities and achievements, and trying to rejoice in others' good fortune is a good starting point. But like any other personal quality or practice, the development and cultivation of Mudita is something that takes time. We need to be compassionate for ourselves rather than judgmental of the feelings of resentment or envy that we are un-conditioning.

According to the Turkish poet Rumi, envy is the non-acceptance of good in others. If we accept that good it becomes inspiration

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Feminine, Masculine and Dynamics of Gender in Group Relations Work
Uma Ravikumar

About me and the context of this paper

I am a leadership development consultant and coach with 15 years of full-time work experience, 13 of which have been in Oracle Consulting. I have held roles like Head of Leadership Development, Culture Building, Program Manager of Org vision, Head of Regional Delivery for EMEA and APAC, Member of Management Board etc. I currently facilitate leadership workshops, coach leaders in for profit and non-profit organisations and consult in the area of Prevention of Sexual harassment and gender diversity. I have been involved in Group Relations Conferences and workshops since 2013 as a member and then staff.

My interest in gender dynamics was evoked as I grew up in a patriarchal (a term I knew much later) South Indian family/society and due to the exposure enabled by my mother who worked as a professor in a women's college. Witnessing her life experiences and consequently undergoing my own, and her steadfast focus to get me educated and choose a life partner of my choice laid the early seeds of relating to what was then called 'women's liberation'. Later on, working in a corporate and observing how gender dynamics played out in multiple situations related to women's growth into mid-senior leadership roles strengthened the interest further. Working with and through group relations' methodology helped me see the large systemic phenomenon of patriarchy and get curious about the many faces of it.

In the context of this paper, I am particularly thankful to Ganesh Anantharaman who was an external consultant at Oracle during 2009-2012 for initiating me into experiential learning and the many discussions we have had around gender dynamics in the organisation. Grateful to Rosemary Viswanath for the many times she has challenged me to unpack my introjected patriarchy and nudged me to own my leadership, including through this paper. Thanks also to my friends and colleagues with who I have had many conversations around gender - Yash Kaul, Rukmini Iyer, Haritha Sarma.

This paper was written in response to an invitation by the convenors of 'Koodam' 2018 (an event by Group Relations India), Rosemary Viswanath, Ganesh Anantharaman and Anuradha Prasad. The theme of the paper was proposed by GRI and it helped me think, connect and bring together my personal life experiences, specific professional experiences and understanding of systemic processes. I do believe there is scope to invest on this topic and develop the paper further by strengthening/rethinking the hypotheses as well as sharpening it with research and academic data. The theme is very potent and vast and this paper works on small parts of it. Personally it has been both joyous as at times I had an 'aha' moment and could make some connects; and challenging, as it demanded that I face my personal bias, stance and conceptual clarity. I am happy about bringing it to some logical conclusion at this stage.

Definition of terms as used in this paper

Feminine and masculine

Feminine and masculine are abstract concepts used to define traits/attributes. Generally defined masculine attributes are independence, aggression, strength, competitiveness, etc. Feminine attributes include nurturing, caring, empathy, tolerance, etc.

Gender

What one identifies with as one's gender based on societal, environmental and genetic factors. In this paper, gender and gender dynamics are considered as a binary, man and woman and do not specifically cover other gender identities.

Patriarchy

It is a social structural phenomenon in which men have the privilege of dominance over women and those with other gender identity. It is a function of male physical, social, economic and political power. The phenomenon is manifested in the values, attitudes, customs, and institutions of the society.

Getting into the theme

In my growing up days at home, there were generally not many face-to-face conversations between men of the household and the younger women. We stood behind men at the threshold of another room. Often even when we spoke loud enough, we were asked to repeat and then reprimanded for mumbling our words. And when we no longer 'made sense', we would be summoned to make an appearance and be clearer, so the man understood. Ridicule would follow, for not being clear the first time. It was intriguing that though we made sense and were clear the first time, it had to be converted into one of ridicule, reprimand and approval - common everyday occurrences that could lead to a slow erosion of confidence and self-esteem.

Fast forward to recent times, my daughter shared her opinion in an extended family discussion. She was immediately instructed, 'don't interrupt when elders are talking. You better manage your studies well'; When my son spoke something irrelevant in a while the expression changed to, 'He is learning to be included and to be heard among elders, allow him'! Though discriminating behaviors are not as loud and dramatic as before and are subtler today, I wondered if much has really changed. Was this just about my family or could it also be symbolic of some aspects of current day gender situation? Isn't 'the personal often political'?

Undoubtedly, progress has been made towards gender equality in the past century. More women in parliament than ever, some women rising in the corporate ladder, permits to drive vehicles in more countries, the globally recognized #metoo movement etc. are changes towards progress. Yet increasing male-skew in India's gender ratio from last century, rising incidences of rape and violence against girl children, legislations against abortion in more countries of the world etc. have been some regressive steps too. Just when there are aspects of progress to rejoice, one does get a sense of being clamped down unexpectedly by systemic aspects of a patriarchal society. Since these aspects are so complex and multi-layered, it helps to take a closer look at what we do, with the intent to gather deeper insights, relook at our methods, rejoice in changes however small and engage in the cause with more compassion towards self and others. This paper makes two propositions with an aim to look deeper and understand better.

Proposition 1

Working towards gender equality is an arduous task. Multiple methods of intervention happen at individual, group and systemic levels - empowering women through skill building, furthering social and public accountability, rights based approach are few such methods. In the area of personal and group transformation, working with the constructs of masculine and feminine has been a significant approach to build awareness around gender and/or leading a balanced life. In this context, the proposition I would like to offer is that:

The construct of masculine and feminine traits is a product of patriarchy and hence fundamentally flawed as a tool for gender-equality related work. On the one hand it over-simplifies work on gender perhaps making it less-threatening to engage with, while on the other it creates a fantasy that gender-related work is primarily individualistic in nature. By avoiding examining the roots of this split, we unconsciously encourage and perpetuate the very forces of patriarchy that created this duality in the first place.

While there may not be a universally approved list, there are generally accepted traits related to feminine and masculine. Some of the traits that are seen as masculine are aggressive, dominant, determined, focused, competitive, analytical, ambitious, action-oriented, authoritative, logical, self-assured etc. Some of the traits that are seen as feminine are intuitive, sensitive, caring, passionate, creative, empathetic, emotional, graceful, social, multi-tasking etc. This list, or any other published one about masculine/feminine traits, seems intricately connected to idealized images of men and women in the patriarchal society. Interventions that are fundamentally based on this split, and urge to 'embrace the other' could inadvertently reinforce the patriarchal division.

Working with the feminine in women

Working with the feminine in women has been a phenomenon in recent years, it is also termed as divine feminine and Goddess work; I have sometimes been part of this work and found it collectively euphoric and cathartic. My reflection later was, as 'feminine' was derived from the idealized image of women that typically devalued our intellectual and agentic capabilities, isn't working exclusively with feminine in women inadvertently supporting patriarchy? By reaffirming and celebrating women for the feminine singularly, is the introjected images of 'perfect woman' in patriarchy being validated and approved?

One of the arguments used in favour of this work is that divine feminine would mean women during the pre-patriarchal times, when she was considered complete and competent by herself. Then one really wonders if the term 'feminine' would be appropriate to refer to a construct that possibly came into existence due to patriarchy.

Masculine and feminine in relation to women

It is often believed that women who demonstrate more masculine traits, tend to grow through the power/authority ladder quicker than those who demonstrate less. It is ironical that they are also described as 'bossy', 'ruthless' and 'unwomanly'. Rather than explore how images of leadership are held in the minds of the people in the organization, which is frequently patriarchal and places a premium over masculine traits, she is both promoted for and discriminated against for the same qualities. It almost seems like masculine traits are then acceptable only when demonstrated by men, which brings us back to patriarchy!

During one's own career growth, most women face the dilemma of the 'double bind', an emotionally challenging situation where they are 'liked' if they are 'feminine' and seen as 'competent' if they are 'masculine'. It leads to a point of 'damned or doomed' where one has to choose between the kind of discrimination one chooses - social or career growth.

This pull between the masculine and the feminine, leads to seeing the woman as 'not ready yet' for one reason or the other, and attributing it to under-developed masculine or feminine capabilities. So using the construct of masculine and feminine to define leadership competence seems to be almost always detrimental for women as a gender.

Men and the masculine and feminine

Due to patriarchal view on leadership, male-managers who demonstrate masculinity in role advance in their career. Their career paths seem more assured, as they are described as results-oriented and action-focused. When they lack traits that are typically defined as feminine, like being empathetic, sensitive, intuitive etc. which are essential aspects to being a leader, it is usually seen as an area of improvement in 'soft skills'.

One of the emerging trends in development for managers and leaders, who are mostly men, is related to EQ and interpersonal sensitivity, to gain feminine skills, and become wholesome, so that the need to recruit or elevate more women to higher positions is possibly eliminated.

So what are we saying here…

When the discussion centers around masculine and feminine, it focuses on gender related processes at a personal level more than group and systemic processes. It tends to avoid inconvenient questions and preserves systemic status quo without challenging existing group norms and institutional practices. Without considering these elements into the change process as well, it is possible that feminine and masculine becomes one more tool that adversely impacts women by strengthening patriarchy.

Proposition 2

In patriarchy giving of formal power to women is conditional, as if we are custodians and not the real holders of power and authority. 'Ultimate power' is attributed to men who are seen as the 'force behind' or the 'power above'.

When women rise to positions of power, there is customary celebration of the 'firsts' and of institutions and systems becoming more gender-equal. While it is

seemingly a step-forward, it is worth examining if it is genuinely so. The systemic processes of patriarchy is so pervading that it sneaks itself into unexpected places!

In roles that women hold in family organisations, as mother, sister etc. the delegated authority is typically for care-giving, bringing up children according to family traditions, imparting wisdom, ensuring discipline, cultural alignment and the kinds. In my role as mother, as long as I follow this code of conduct of bringing up children in a pre-approved way, the role is not questioned. When I deviate to allow for a wider variety of choice, especially for the girl child, what they wear, when to bathe, who their friends are, where they travel, then there is disbelief with shades of condemning, expressed through arguments, advises, proposed additional approvals as if to revoke approval of formal authority.

When I co-held a managerial role with a male colleague for a key internal assignment in the organisation, questions would be, 'who are you working with?', and responses would be 'oh, so he is there, then it is OK!'. It wouldn't matter who brought what competencies in the role, this was a typical way of feeling assured of 'safe hands'. When women get promoted into managerial roles, one of the first questions is 'Whose team are you in?', or 'Who do you report into?' rather than designation, responsibility etc. which are of interest when male managers are promoted. In the rare case where a woman manager was promoted to report into another woman manager, she is usually asked 'who do you report into?' followed by 'who does she report into?' as if tracking custodianship and asking for 'but, who is the real manager'. When I discussed this phenomenon, my friend and colleague Rose mentioned very aptly, 'So it's really a ploy to say 'Behind every successful man, there is a woman'; what we actually mean to say is 'Behind every successful woman, there is a man'. That puts it in a nutshell; the woman behind a man's success is helpful, while the man behind a successful woman is powerful.

At a social level, one sees many examples of the custodial holding of formal authority in organisational context. Politically widowed queens of kings could

run the Kingdoms like Rani Chinnamma of Kittoor, Rani Jhansi, only when formalized as custodians who would give up power when the son grew up or an heir was adopted. Modern day politics also has instances of women coming into power only when their male partner or mentor was no longer alive. Then the expectation is for them to keep the legacy and run organisations 'as if' the man were there.

Stop, pause

I wonder if inquiry and wondering about this topic could ever conclude. In the writing of this article and editing it, I have become aware of how I play out patriarchy and caste-based oppression. My colleague Swathi mentioned that seeing gender as binary (man and woman) is in itself patriarchal. How true, isn't it!

Denying these don't exist outside of us or within us is a myth; believing we are in control of it all the time, is also illusory. It takes careful and sometimes painful processes of discovery to liberate us individually and collectively. And the joy of insights, liberation of knowing that there is no perfection to reach, and the compassion towards self and others that we are learning as we do, seems worth a try.

Structure of the Psyche, Models of Personality, and their Relationship with Group Relations Work

V. Kartikeyan

Background

The fascination to 'look within' to understand a phenomenon has been an abiding fascination for Man. Philosophical interest in the human mind and behaviour dates back to the ancient civilizations of the areas we now know as Egypt, Persia, Greece, China, and India. Psychology as a discipline and field of study came into cognizance as a result of this 'inner quest' and has grown considerably therefrom. If we go down a time spectrum of psychology, we come across group relations (GR) work in more recent times. Nested in a field that amalgamates two primary influences - the practice of psychoanalysis, and the task and boundary awareness of open systems perspectives, GR work is a result of Man's fascination to 'look within' groups of human beings and to understand how they function. Broadly, while individual psychology attempts to study the structure of the Psyche and offers models of personality as a result, GR work attempts to study groups, patterns of functional and dysfunctional behavior within groups and the roles that individuals tend to take on, on behalf of groups. In order for both these related fields to be able to do their work, they have had to study what we might call the Unconscious (*).

This paper is an attempt to look at both these strands of 'looking within' - (1) The structure of the psyche and models of personality from individual psychology, and (2) GR work, and explore their relationship. To elaborate just a little more on the first - When we come up with the idea of the Psyche, we are immediately reminded of the pioneering work of Sigmund Freud (eg - id-ego-superego), and Carl Jung (eg - personal unconscious - collective unconscious - archetypes - complexes). In this article, I aim to look at their work a little closely. I choose these simply because people like Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung respectively have gone deeper than many before them to give form and structure to this construct.

Structure of the psyche

Psyche been talked about by many kinds of people. Philosophers, right from Socrates and Aristotle have referred to it by name. Psychologists and Phenomenologists have, too. For now, let us stay with how this has been addressed in psychoanalysis and in depth-psychology. And since we are here hopefully to understand the Psyche better, maybe we can go a little deeper, examine their viewpoints, and then branch off into related paths.

Let us start with Freud.

Freud says that psychic life is determined by the relations between three systems, which emerge step by step: the id, the ego, and the superego.

- ‘Id’ contains the psychic representations of the organic instincts that urge for instant gratification. It also contains the repressed - ideas that used to be conscious. It is cut off from the outside world.
- ‘Ego’ emerges under the influence of the outside world. The ego controls access to the outside world through perception and motor skills and tries, based on thinking, to bring about a realistic satisfaction of the id-needs.
- ‘Superego’ - From the ego, the superego develops through identification with the parents. The superego directs its aggression against the ego and criticizes it; the ego responds with guilt, which is often unconscious.

The id acts according to the "pleasure principle" - the psychic force that motivates the tendency to seek immediate gratification of any impulse. Id would seem to have two drives - Eros (life-preserving) and Thanatos (death). When Eros is directed towards objects, Freud equates it with sexuality. When it is directed towards oneself, he calls it narcissism.

Similarly, Thanatos has two forms - self-destruction and the destruction directed towards external objects. The latter form of Thanatos usually mixes with the sexual impulses of Eros - the directly sexual, object oriented ‘erotic’ impulse is transformed by Thanatos into desexualised, self-oriented narcissism. So, it would appear that there are two forms of narcissism - the one coming directly from one’s Eros, and the other coming from one’s Thanatos, but through a process of sublimation, getting converted to somewhat ‘secondary’ narcissism.

The ego, on the other hand, operates from the ‘reality principle’. This is a regulating mechanism that enables the individual to delay gratifying immediate needs and function effectively in the real world. An example would be to resist the urge to grab other people’s belongings, but instead to purchase those items.

The ego has three dependencies – the id, the real world, and the super-ego (and therefore three types of dangers). It reacts to each of these with a type of anxiety each:

Dangers from the libido of the id - Neurotic anxiety

Dangers from the external world - Fear of the real world

Dangers from the superego - Fear of conscience (guilt)

To overcome these dangers and anxieties, the ego employs defence mechanisms. The defence mechanisms are not done so directly or consciously. They lessen the tension by covering up our impulses that are threatening. Ego defence mechanisms are often used by the ego when id behavior conflicts with reality and either society’s morals, norms, and taboos or the individual’s expectations as a result of the internalization of these morals, norms, and their taboos.

Denial, displacement, intellectualisation, fantasy, compensation, projection, rationalization, reaction formation, regression, repression, and sublimation were the defence mechanisms Freud is known to have identified. His daughter Anna Freud apparently identified the other known mechanisms of undoing, suppression, idealization, identification, inversion, somatization, splitting, and substitution.

The super-ego reflects the internalization of cultural rules, mainly taught by parents (or parental figures) applying their guidance and influence. For Freud, ‘the installation of the super-ego can be described as a successful instance of identification with the parental agency,’ while as development proceeds ‘the super-ego also takes on the influence of those who have stepped into the place of parents - educators, teachers, people chosen as ideal models’. The super-ego aims for perfection. The super-ego works in contradiction to the id. The super-ego strives to act in a socially appropriate manner, whereas the id just wants instant self-gratification. The super-ego controls our sense of right and wrong and guilt. It helps us fit into society by getting us to act in socially acceptable ways.

Now let us look at Jung's model - In speaking of mind and mental activity Jung has chosen the terms psyche and psychic rather than mind and mental, since according to him, the latter are associated primarily with consciousness. In Jung's view, the conscious mind 'grows out of an unconscious psyche which is older than it, and which goes on functioning together with it or even in spite of it'. Jung insists on the reality of the psyche - according to him, it is no less real than the physical, has its own structure and is subject to its own laws. His conception of the psyche is of a system which is dynamic, in constant movement, and at the same time self-regulating. He calls the general psychic energy, libido. The libido flows between two opposing poles.

Many opposites at varying levels can be enumerated; for instance, progression, the forward movement of energy, and regression, the backward, consciousness and unconsciousness, extroversion and introversion, thinking and feeling, etc. Specifically (and because we will refer to this pole later in this article, in connection with GR work) progression is concerned with the active adaptation to one's environment, and regression with the adaptation to one's inner needs. Regression therefore (contrary to some 'common parlance' points of view) is just as normal a counter-pole to progression as sleeping is to waking, so long as the libido is functioning in an unhindered manner.

Jung postulated the existence of the ego, the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious. The ego to him is the seat of personal consciousness. The part which says / asserts 'I' in us - implying awareness, mindfulness and agency. The personal unconscious belongs to the individual - it can be formed out of repression, subliminal perceptions, forgotten experiences, etc. The memories of the personal unconscious, though not entirely under the control of the will, can, when repression weakens (as for instance in sleep), be recalled. Sometimes they return autonomously, sometimes a chance association or shock will bring them to light, sometimes they appear somewhat disguised in dreams and fantasies and sometimes, especially if they are causing disturbances as in a neurosis, they need to be 'dug out'.

The collective unconscious is the 'psychic inheritance' of all mankind. It is the reservoir of all our experiences as a species, a kind of knowledge that we are all born with without necessarily being conscious of. A lot of this can be seen in Angeles Arrien's cross-cultural work on 'Universal Shapes' where she found that five geometric shapes were prevalent in the mythologies of different parts of the world, with similar universes of meaning attributed to them! We can also look to our own lived lives, to art, spirituality, myths and fairy-tales to understand the very real existence of the collective unconscious, a possibility that Freud refused to consider in his postulation of the Psyche. Jung went on to indicate that archetypes are the content of the collective unconscious. The unconscious, to Jung, was not a cellar where man dumps his rubbish, but the source of consciousness and of the creative and destructive spirit of mankind. The illustration below may help us understand how the Unconscious lives on in us - partly the same and partly distinctive -
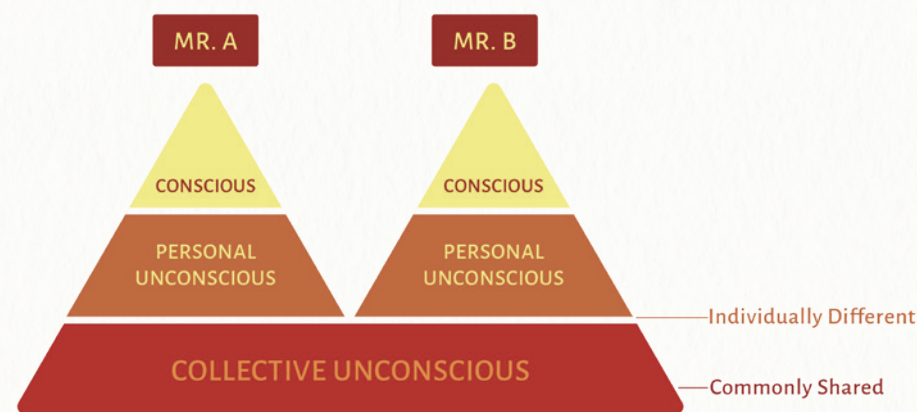
To Jung, the Personal Unconscious contains what he called 'complexes'. A complex is an agglomeration of ideas around a theme but with a certain affect. Complexes are built on the template of an archetype – as an agglomeration

of meaning, and having an affect, except that in the case of archetypes the agglomeration is universal and the affect is far, far more 'numinous' than one might encounter in one's personal unconscious. Thus, the archetype of the Mother would have an agglomeration of 'mother-centered' meanings across all humanity and all-time, and have a powerful force of impact that goes beyond what we can perhaps even imagine at a personal level. At the same time, an individual's 'mother complex' may have to do with that person's personal associations with their own experiences of a personal mother or mothering.

The Collective Unconscious contains, as we have said before, archetypes. To Jung, archetypes are "innate universal pre-conscious psychic dispositions that form the substrate from which the basic themes of human life emerge. The archetypes are components of the collective unconscious and serve to organize, direct and inform human thought and behavior". The archetypes form a dynamic substratum common to all humanity, upon the foundation of which each individual builds their own experience of life, colouring them with their unique culture, personality and life events. Thus, while archetypes themselves may be conceived as a relative few innate nebulous forms, from these may arise innumerable images, symbols and patterns of behavior (and complexes). While the emerging images and forms are apprehended consciously, the archetypes which inform them are elementary structures which are unconscious and impossible to apprehend.

Some archetypal themes that can be seen across cultures and time are - Being mothered, Exploring the environment, Playing, Being initiated, Establishing a place in the social scheme, Courting, finding a partner, mating, Child-rearing, Hunting, Gathering, Fighting, Death, etc.

Jung's ideas on the dynamics of the psyche are as follows -

1. The psyche operates on the 'Principle of Opposites'
- I cannot be one without being its 'opposite' (masculine-feminine, 'good- evil', rational-emotional etc etc
- This gives rise to libido – the essential life energy operating between the two poles of 'opposites'
2. It also operates on the 'Principle of Equivalence'
- Energy is equally distributed to both the poles, whether you like it or not
- Your attitude towards the wish you do not fulfil – could be integrative / suppressing-fragmenting
- Constellation of complexes happens (a pattern of suppressed thoughts and feelings that cohere around a theme)
- Complexes are alive / autonomous (eg - the 'I don't know what came over me' phenomenon)
3. It operates on the 'Principle of Entropy'
- The tendency for this energy to wear down by becoming evenly distributed

Let us finally look to Jung's idea of transcendence – the going beyond our 'opposites'.

Development, to Jung, would happen through individuation, whereby a person (who is essentially a 'dividual'), starts owning up his/her personal unconscious by working through their complexes, and then also proceed to experience and integrate as many archetypal possibilities. Individuation is never a destination, but a process to be on through one's life.

Connections with GR work

How do these models of the personality / psyche fit in with GR work? First of all, DO they? I admit, I struggled with this and this is an important disclaimer - the fit is not organic or easy (and is inherently problematic), at least in my limited opinion or experience. GR work emerged from Kleinian and Bionian frames and not directly Freudian or Jungian sources. However, a few possibilities offer themselves, especially as they emerge from the window of group relations conferences (largely because my own evolving relatedness with GR work is through the experiential interface of such conferences). I am offering these exploratory possibilities with a hope that you, the Reader, will engage with these yourself and offer your reflections and responses as well.

Let us start with Freud's work. And some thoughts that came up for me as I studied his work in juxtaposition with my GR experience -

Here are some of my views -

1. Id - Freud had pointed out that to observe the id, you need to look towards the neurotic behavioural cues (aside of dreams) of a person. Coming to group behavior, If we take the view that basic assumption behaviours are a form of 'neurotic behavioural cues', we may be right to suggest that the basic assumption behaviours are a form of 'group id' in operation.

2. Ego - When work groups are beset by uncontrollable anxiety, they tend to form in to one or more basic assumption group patterns of behavior. This now reminds us of the ego at the individual-psyche level which employs defence mechanisms to deal with its perceived dangers and threats from the id, the external world or the superego. Basic Assumption behaviours can also be seen as a form of defence mechanisms operating at the group level. In that sense, we can say that the group-ego tends to take up such behaviours when it fears engaging with the primary task.

Non-engagement with the primary task may also be a form of Thanatos of the group. This Thanatos takes the form of Ba behavior. Over a period of time the group may learn to identify Ba behavior, confront it and move towards staying in on the task (which enables it to survive).

3. Superego - From Freud we know that the superego aims for perfection. There is no space for neuroses and anxiety driven aberrations in the super-ego or the ego ideal. At the group level, Freud himself has this to say - 'The ego ideal opens up an important avenue for the understanding of group psychology. In addition to its individual side, this ideal has a social side; it is also the common ideal of a family, a class, a nation' Now, could we add to this common ideal - 'and a primary task of a group'. The ego-ideal of the group may well be considered as the primary task that the participating members have signed up to work towards. And with this consideration in place, it may be possible to see how the group ego and id operate as suggested above.

Now, let us turn to Carl Jung. The work group can be understood as being constellated in the unhindered flow of libido (libido as postulated by Jung) between progression and regression (again, progression and regression as articulated by Jung and stated earlier in this document). Just as with Freud, we considered Ba behaviour as being possible expressions centered in the Id (neurotic impulses) and the Ego (constructed / internalised anxieties), we can also look at where Ba behaviours may be arising from a Jungian lens. When the group is not in free flow of libido, and when the thwarted libido is not confronted and worked with, it would generate behavioural equivalents of complexes. For example - Dependency could be a 'complex' arising out of not owning up authority where the authority to work on the primary task may be pushed into the group's unconscious. This unworked complex may give rise to BaD behaviour.

Besides these, events in conferences that work with dreams (Sensing Matrix) and on themes such as 'Mind-Body-Spirit' also offer possibilities of touching aspects of the Collective Unconscious, which may well offer groups (and members) access to deeper reaches of the unconscious.

In conclusion

Looking at the structure of the psyche, models of personality, and GR work has been an interdisciplinary challenge of some measure. The first two bracket a 'human being' and look at them, while the latter looks at human systems beyond a single being. However, these are contiguous fields of inquiry, perhaps cousins that belong to one family. So, with some tightrope walking, it IS possible to straddle the two and offer an interface space of new possibilities, which is what I have attempted to do in this brief paper.

I would like to enjoin the Reader of this article to stay with the reflections and comments in the section 'Connections with GR Work' above. Not necessarily to only agree / disagree but to search for more perspectives. And perhaps as the field of GR develops, such perspectives may be able to add hues, nuances and directions to the field itself.

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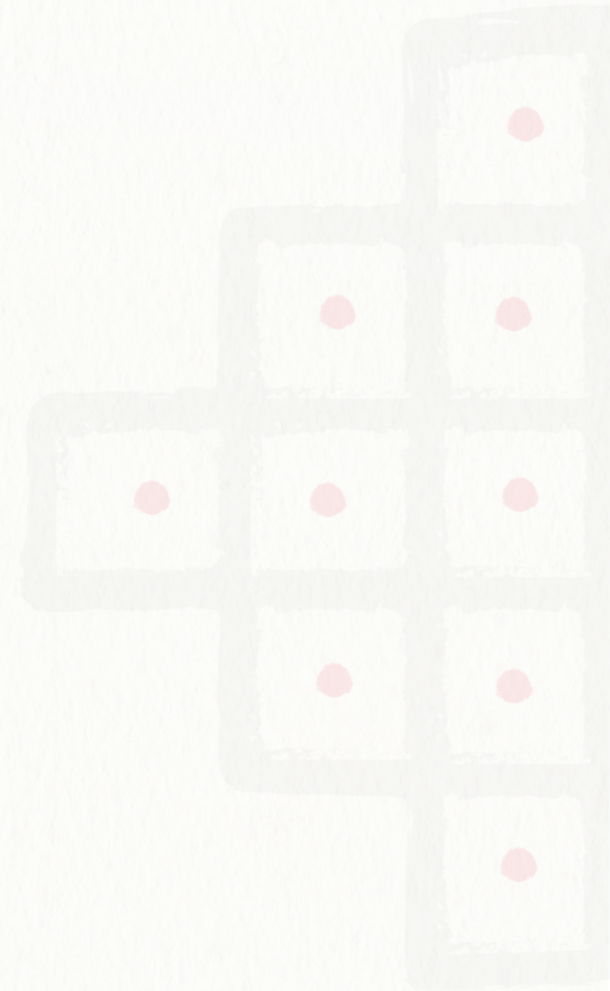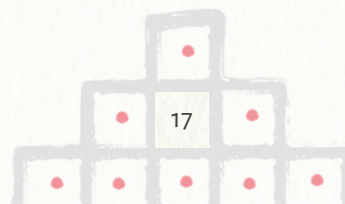
Rol(l)ed Into One

Yash Kaul

I work with a Medical Device company as Vice President for the Southern APAC Region. My association with Group Relations work started when I attended a workshop on "Listening to the Unconscious in self, groups and systems" (LTTUC) six years ago organized by Group Relations India. Since then I have attended three Group Relations Conferences (GRCs) (including one Leicester Conference) and a workshop on "Task Role and System" (TRS) as a member. I have also been on staff of two LTTUCs and one GRC. When I attended the first LTTUC, I was managing only India, and South-East Asia was added to my region, then Australia. The GR framework has been a partner in this growth all through, helping me to work with increasingly complex diversities, roles and a plethora of other changes and challenges.

The purpose of this paper is an attempt to the meaning-making of how my relationship with GR frameworks has influenced me, and how I lead and manage the organization differently as a result. An exploration of what I have started doing newly or differently; or have stopped doing. I myself was astonished during the rather anxious, and at times frustrating journey of writing this article, about how GR had changed me. I will be reflecting on the dilemmas and challenges that I face(d) being a GR practitioner and heading an organization as they both get Rol(l)ed into one.

Skill set or a set up process?

Typically, in corporate organizations we create teams that have individuals with varied skill sets or talents to run projects, which on the surface does serve the need of having multi skilled work teams. For example, one of the commonly used methodology is Strength-Finder where one operates through strengths of a person rather than focus on weaknesses and the organization would put together people of different strengths for effective task performance. In one of the organizations I managed, one member of our senior management team was considered as an expert in analytics, another was considered capable of being critical and bringing up worst case scenarios, and yet another was the person who would drive things with speed and so on. On the face of it having such varied personalities does support the right decision-making. This is true, but this has other consequences in the long term for the organization because as a group process, it is common to see these specific people get 'set up' to perform or act out these specific roles only, or predominantly.

In the above case, two things happen, firstly, if a person is set up to behave on behalf of the group in a certain way, let's say of 'being the critic', then he becomes the holder of that psychological role for the group as well for himself. His whole existence becomes holding this specific position almost like a projective identity formation, and he may end up becoming excessively negative about things in general. Any attempt to abandon that image or any other role-taking and role making attempt is met with a strong resistance from the group. E.g. if this person says that let's go ahead with implementation of a strategy and not waste time thinking too much about it, the group would respond with an expression as if he has abandoned his role. They would behave in a way that is partly sarcastic

/ partly accusative / but also superficially appreciative. Secondly, the rest of the group abandons this particular role and completely de-skills themselves on this specific aspect. If one is not aware of these unconscious processes, in the long term, it's a lose - lose phenomenon for the person, for the group, and for the organization.

It's generally accepted that there is more competition within corporate organizations. Perhaps this process of set up at an unconscious level is used as an invisible tool for competition, and that too in a highly sophisticated and subtle way. When the existence of the person is restricted or reduced just to his valency, he is denied an opportunity to present himself in totality and completeness and hence rendering him or her incompetent for more senior roles which typically require multi-skilled personalities. This in itself could be a stimulus for role-making and role taking processes - which may or may not be aligned to the primary task.

These set up processes are not just restricted to individuals but happen even at the department or sub-system levels of the organization. For instance, in the organizations I worked with, our finance and legal teams got set up to be the ones managing the various risks of the organization, so much so that all functions will send risk-laden proposals to them for approval (sometimes even after being aware of risks) and hence set them up to be the sole responsible function for risk management. Even when the process was clearly defined that multiple functions have to review a proposal, rest of the functions would typically just sign off proposals without proper review, assuming that Legal and Finance will look at the risks - but in the process they abandon this part of their role / skill. Realization of processes like these have helped to move the focus on the larger system as a whole, how sub-systems get set up etc. Discussing this with each of the sub system has been of immense help - to help them see what they are getting set up for, or setting up others for, and deskilling themselves in the process. The focus moves from the individual or even the sub-system to the larger systemic processes which minimizes the 'personalizing the issue' part of it.

Teamwork or displacement / projection and other processes

Perhaps the most talked about and intervened theme in the corporate world is around teamwork. A lot gets projected or displaced on this word and a large number of training organizations primarily offer and survive on team building events – often working at a superficial level. After associating with GR, over a period of time I have developed a belief that such interventions are mostly the management of superficial pain, and not working at the root cause, because deep down the issues may actually belong to the larger organizational processes or projections, which may not even belong to the organization. Hence when the focus is on the individual or only on what happened within the team, how effective will the intervention be? I recall an instance when we were battling a so called teamwork issue between two managers. Discussion with them on what was happening hovered around discontent around methodology of target distribution. But something seemed amiss, as the anger and hurt seemed to be disproportionate and this decision of target distribution could have been easily reversed, which both individuals resisted, getting into a what seemed like a fit of infantile regression. On exploring further, it surfaced that one manager had felt deeply pained that the other manager did not go to see him when he was hospitalised, and how he had considered him like his elder brother. The latter was deeply anguished that the other one did not come to his house warming ceremony. There were also further reasons from their respective personal lives as to why they felt especially bad about each other in this behaviour, which was worked with. Rather than teamwork issues, these were perhaps displaced feelings. They explored how and what they were projecting on each other from their family, and the pictures of the organization they had in mind. This was the last we heard of teamwork issues between them and it has been two years since.

In my pre-GR life, I would address such issues by changing the target split; or by warning them to work together; or maybe use a team building activity. In hindsight, I wonder how effective and or permanent those interventions would have been. It almost seems like the system has introjected a picture of healthcare where many a time the disease is treated, and the patient remains forgotten.

The lone troublemaker or the true messenger

Another process that now I look at differently is to believe the possibility that a single person may represent something bigger, even if it may ostensibly be contrary to the larger belief, or against what everyone says. Corporate world in general considers these loners as misfits, or people with 'attitude issues', or a statistical deviation. I have started looking at these people as perhaps the voice of the larger organization who have set them up to speak (mostly) the uncomfortable issues. An employee came up and said that 'the organization has started taking decisions top down and we are not consulted'. While the general belief was to the contrary, when we checked with a few more, they reluctantly agreed to what this employee said. Another example is where a solitary manager raised an issue about the salary being low compared to industry benchmarking. This was presented as if it was a disgruntled employee behaviour, but again we realised that there were a few more who felt the same... they had suppressed their voices because they didn't want to be seen as selfish people who worked only for money. Hence this particular manager's behaviour was so over-expressed. It was more than clear that we had a clearer idea of larger organizational feelings and stresses by listening to the lone voice, which easily gets neglected or punished in many of corporates.

Personal needs care or primary task centrality?

The centrality of the primary task that GR focusses on has changed my own way of being and that of the organisation. What is our primary task? is used as the "gospel question" whenever we are in doubt, for instance in various meetings like strategy meetings or where we have to take complex decisions on investments. We have had forums where the attempt is to break the overall larger primary task into what it means for the sub-systems, and at an individual level. While I don't have hard data to prove it, I am convinced that it has helped the organization tremendously to be aligned - especially in a matrix organization like ours which at times is more complex to manage.

It has also generated some anger perhaps because it reminds people of the primary task but also because there are individuals / subsystems who want to manage themselves the way they believe is right. E.g.: the conflict in the mind of the service centre, whether it is to be a separate profit centre or just a cost centre to the organization i.e. whether it's to run as a separate PnL or as a part and contributor to the larger organization even if it means not making much profit at the service centre level. Perhaps the struggle was to get prominence in relation to the sales subsystem which is seen as a key driver of primary task or for power and control. Or perhaps to compete with me to run a parallel PnL, as if the manager of the service centre is second to the person at the top, and appear to be second in the organization.

Leadership, management, and caste systems in organisations

Dependence on authority or unquestionably following the directions from the top is seen as a sign of discipline and implementation capability, and hence great management in our industry. We have consciously moved from this to an approach which is more collaborative and engaging where teams are part of strategy building; they are encouraged to disagree and challenge the top and each other rather than blindly following what comes from top. This approach has surely been much more chaotic and more challenging for each level of managers, particularly the senior management, because it prevents the fragmenting and splitting of the team into decision-makers and decision-implementers, which makes it more challenging to make decisions speedily. But one thing is for sure: it requires less management energy later on, i.e. during the implementation phase. This is the phase where I believe most energies are spent by the organizations and is the make or break stage, as most organizations falter in this stage. This could also be the stage to show conscious and unconscious resistance and anger shown by those who are perhaps perceived as the equivalent of the lower caste implementers towards the higher caste brahminical strategy makers. Not surprisingly, it is a microcosm which mimics the macrocosm of the larger society that we are in.

So working on authority dependence is not just a theoretical aspect restricted to the containers of the GRC or LTTUC, but it has a direct and straight relationship with what happens in corporates on a regular basis. It seems like we have, in our organization, evolved a process where the strategy is mutually created and accepted, and then those who are responsible for implementation delegate the authority upwards to be accountable for implementing it.

Diversity and inclusion (D&I): How much can it really be a corporate reality

Diversity & Inclusion have been two themes that have particularly impacted me in work with GR spaces, especially in the Indian context with its caste and class dynamics. I was perhaps unconsciously blind to these processes (perhaps because I am an upper - middle class Brahmin) and now I wonder did I overcompensate? While I do believe that the diversity and inclusion does have a larger than visible positive impact on the organization systemically, and that there is plenty of data and research to support that D&I supports the growth and profits, I still struggle to find a justifiable and a measurable corporate Return on Investment (ROI) type justification of the same. I can think of an example where I very consciously hired a replacement of a man of a religion by a woman of the same religion so as to lend the balance in the organization which at least was almost conscious. I can 'sense' the positive impact of this but at least till now have not been able to think of a way to prove it.

I am wondering on two aspects, firstly, have I become tolerant of less performance of certain diversities or minorities? Secondly, knowing that that there are larger dynamics at play that sets up certain diversities maybe to perform or lead a tad lower than the rest, but corporates are not designed to look at or be lenient of such processes. E.g.: in a GRC giving a bursary to an individual of a certain need is aligned to the primary task, but such things may be seen as bias in corporate world and even as a leader of the organization I may find it difficult to take such decisions. While this example is simpler, there are other

complex and subtler processes that get difficult to explain to the larger system. E.g.: why does a new woman manager need more mentoring than a man in same role? E.g.: why I am more supportive to a woman in not taking leadership to the expected level in a mostly men managed organization? Although the work is on ... it is arduous and complicated, - perhaps till the primary task is only defined as the profits and shareholder value enhancement, this will continue to be a tricky balance.

At the same time, I am also wondering whether it also because of me externalizing my own need to avoid possible challenge on this, and be in the good books of everyone.

Leadership: A place to project and an organisational mirror

Two newer aspects of leadership come to my mind and that a big part of the role of a leader is somewhat similar to the consultant in a conference in some critical ways i.e. firstly, giving hypothesis which gets extrapolated in some ways to the process of giving feedback in corporate parlance and secondly allowing projections on self.

Looking at the first point, a leader has to give hypothesis. This can surface the conscious or unconscious image of the employee which he has tried to hide from everyone. This potentially creates deep anger on the leader. This can take a different form in my role because firstly the anger may not get expressed at all due to the role authority I hold and secondly the longer permanency (v/s a consultant in GRC who will be out of the role in certain number of days) of the organizational leader which can be further causing anger and frustration. This leads to an equally opposite need to further suppress the anger due to these two reasons and hence If the leader is not doing this job of giving feedback, he fails his role. It is almost like a situation where you are doomed if you bring up these processes and doomed if you don't bring these up. So you will generate deep

anger within the organization for bringing up these processes and a fantasy that you cease to be leading the organization. At the same time, if you don't bring up all this, you will land up as an ineffective leader and anyway on a course of natural death. Somehow it seems like the death of a leader is going to be ultimate reality. The only way to perhaps work with this is making the teams more independent and self-aware of themselves and that has helped immensely. As more of my team members participate in LTTUC / GRCs they and through them the larger organization seem to understand these processes.

Coming to the second point of a leader like a consultant to be okay to be projected on. The realization that many things get projected on a leader/manager and all that is said may not always belong to you or the organization. It may be a host of projections from various spaces of individual and society itself … although there is always a doubt about what actually belongs to you and what does not. Although projections are inevitable, one has to be reminded that in the organizational role, one may not be actively inviting projections as that may be a consultant role and not aligned to the task in the organization.

There is a big difference in the approach from the past where I would 'reject something saying that this is not true' but now I see it as 'this is a truth but may not belong to me' but possibly something outside of me and projected onto me. So what is being said gets constructively worked upon and also respects what the person brought up.

It seems that very often managers and the organizations have to become the container of social anxieties which need not be avoided and learnt to use them for seeing what's happening in the individual or the system. This has helped to explore the organizational stresses, anxieties, defences that exist and how the subsystems are interacting. One common projection that I have seen is where team members project the images of the past and especially family and old managers on the current organization. E.g. one senior team member of mine kept saying that I do not take care of him repeatedly and explored that he

imposed the image of his family onto the organization where he was actually pampered and that his mother was a principal in a school, and this image was the image projected onto me. A very recent example where we were intrigued by a newly joined middle level manager who invested significant time to collect information of what was happening in the organization just because it was encouraged by his senior managers in his previous organization and had become his method of being close to the senior management.

Rol(l)ed into one: Creating an omnipotent leader - who should neither live nor die

My formal role authority has increased consistently over time in the organization and might have already been something that the organization is trying to adjust with. In addition to this, now the same person also at times behaves like a (GR) consultant might have made it further complicated. Perhaps the duality of the roles may make me too big in their eyes or perhaps they see themselves as small as compared to me. I do hear such comparisons often and I wonder how it impacts them. On the other hand, it also makes me a rare combination and hence I am too difficult to be replaced by someone else and hence the conflicting feelings of wanting me to be there and hating me to be there.

It is usually seen that the threatening task of bringing up what's not right in the organization is mostly left to the external consultants. It's a unique situation where I myself heading the organization and surfacing these processes - so I am myself challenging the image of the organization that is held collectively. This gets met at times by shock and disagreement or perhaps anger with a question on the face that which side do I belong to, or seeing me as someone heading the organisation but almost outside the organization. This perhaps is the leadership role like the Greek mythological figure Janus where one is actively participating, and also observing. Also a large part of leadership is about boundary management, seeing what's happening at the various boundaries and also be at the boundary and have an internal and external view. It could potentially make

some people feel like organizational orphans with the leader of the organization abandoning them in moments.

Hierarchies and colonialism in mind

While I was writing this article, I was actually amazed to notice how much being associated helped me to prepare better to take up my new Southern APAC role that includes diverse geographies of emerging nations as well as developed nations. The hierarchies in mind were more than visible in myself and well as outside E.g. a distributor in a developed nation in Asia that I was managing asked: 'are you an Indian based out of London HQ' and on learning that I was not, the next question was 'so you are in based out of Singapore'. It almost sounded like okay even if you are an Indian managing Hong Kong business at least have you been baptized or taken a holy dip in the Ganges of the developed world to be pure enough to manage this region.

It did help the relationship with my team also in a much deeper way and helped look at what unconscious pictures we hold in each others' minds. I was discussing with my regional manager from a developed country who handled an emerging world country as a part of his region, as to how he sees this country (I had, in the back of my mind, the troubled relations he had with them). He was frank enough to talk and explore the hierarchies he held - which were not in his conscious thoughts and by the end of the discussion, he was amazed how he operated from those hierarchies and created a strained relationship with his team there. Well, the next question was "so what does it mean to you to report to an Indian based out of India? and the exploration of that transformed the relationship between us. What amazes me is that the relationship with his emerging world country team transformed after that - I am not even aware that did he even do anything conscious and whether that realization was enough.

Well while it's easy to work on these aspects with my own team as the formal authority (in an authority dependent region) but I often question myself that have I done enough upwards or westwards. Even with my own team, I am becoming aware of the colonization in my own mind in a few coaching sessions, where I saw I was surely being nicer and less pushy with the out of India team compared to the India team and how it inhibited me to be in my natural style, and hence possibly impacting the role as well.

Influencing the ecosystem

Believing in this type of framework and seeing how it has helped me and the organization, an attempt was made to take the framework out of the organizational container to the world outside i.e. to our customers which includes Anesthesiologists and Critical Care specialists. This was a big risk as this has been never tried before (perhaps anywhere in the world) especially in a hierarchically set up relationship with and within the industry and customer community. Two reasons why we experimented. Firstly, from pure marketing, it helps up to create a blue ocean strategy where we take customer service from product arena to a field of growing them as leaders. It was a unique systemic approach to growing the leaders within the community. This is a blue ocean which the competitor will find extremely difficult to find an entry because it does need an expertise into seeing what's happening in the community. It's a novel and atypical initiative not related to business and products and we clearly define. Secondly, it seems like a seamless transition or flow from what we do inside the organizational container to the open system outside of us and hence the alignment. It seems like a large interconnected system breathing together on similar principles.

Too much to see: Too much to work on self!

Trying to live the phrase 'if you want to see the world, one needs to open the third eye... and that third eye is to be able to see what's happening to self' speaks to the belief is that one of the most critical ways to work on organization is to work on self which eventually helps the organization. Even while working systemically, one is encouraged to reflect on one's own valencies. This type of learning and focus has perhaps been imbibed in the larger part of management

and as a culture we have perhaps become a culture constantly curious about what may be happening when we look deeper. These process at times become too heavy and perhaps painful - but nevertheless they are real. At the same time, looking at these things systemically makes it system-focused and organization-centric, rather than just looking at what is wrong with me, or someone else as an individual.

The atmosphere seems to be one of the larger part of the organization becoming too self critical and ... seeking constant feedback on where are we going wrong (too often). I am also aware that these may be actually parts of my own anxiety that get projected on the larger system and at times it actually holds my anxieties which are perhaps filled with pain of growth because we seek only what needs to be worked on. One senior manager actually told me that '`at times after having a conversation with you I sometimes feel so tired and feel that there is so much that isn't good in me and have to improve' It's almost like sadomasochism where there is no pleasure, or no growth without pain.

In summary... all rol(l)ed into one

It has been an incredible journey. When I reflect back, I am a different individual, leader and manager and I can say the same about the organization(s) that I have led. It has made my concept of leadership more reality based, more focused on task and on the system. The work with the Task and the Role and being sensitive with individuals as a whole and what makes them do what they do brings a fine balance. It has made me sensitive to people but non-compromising on the task. The whole work also has been humbling in many ways to see the potential that people hold to work on self and the systems irrespective of having done GR work. I realise that there aren't many people at the senior management level in corporates that are involved in GR frameworks, and I wonder and also feel sad about what corporates miss in the process.

Post being exposed to GR, I am more curious about what could be happening in the unconscious at individual or organizational level. It has been empowering in itself, where one doesn't engage only with the symptoms or in problem solving but also understands the root cause, which is more problem dissolving rather than problem solving; more willing to move from blame-assigning or externalizing or individualizing to introspection in self and especially the system.

It has in a way initiated a change in culture that is more tuned to working on the task of the organization amidst volatile and uncertain environment. Yet as a leader also playing the role of the internal change agent, the process of engaging in a newer way is at times anxiety-provoking. It challenges me about the picture of leadership I hold in my mind; it evokes defences that I am at times reluctant to look at. At times I wonder if my GR consultant-colleagues can identify with my dilemmas; at other times I wonder if my organizational team is willing to embrace newer approaches. However, I also realize the privilege I have of getting the best of both worlds, which makes the journey enriching, meaningful, and joyous .... all roll(ed) into one.
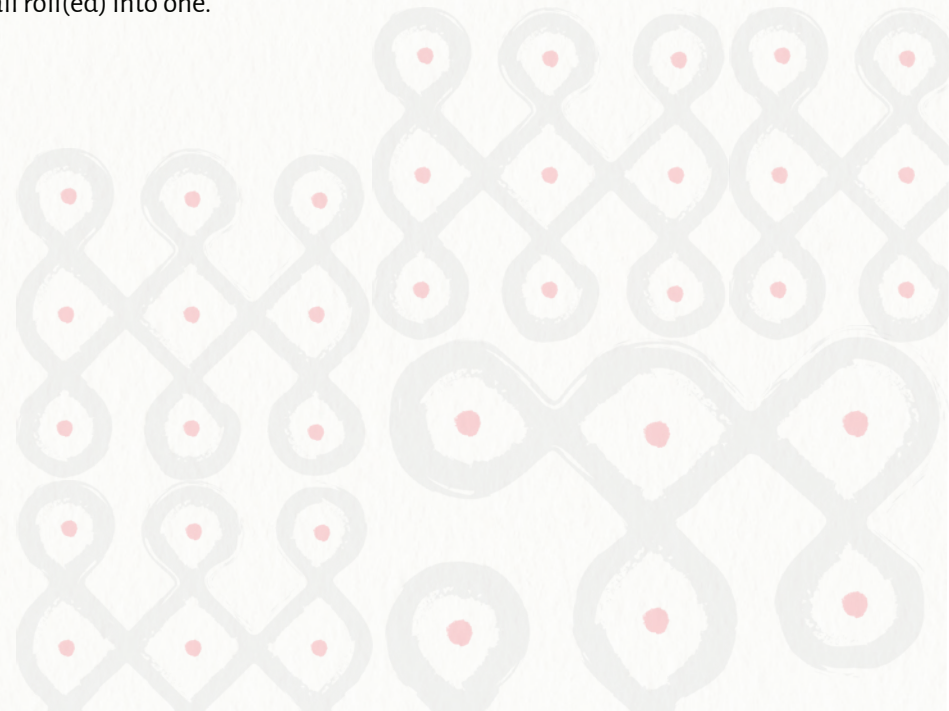
Shadow Consulting (Consulting Supervision) for Learning: A Review[1]

K.V. Eswara Prasad

Preamble

As a process consultant, I have always believed that I need to make a difference to clients, be they individuals, groups, or organisations. I have often reflected on how my consultation process is progressing. During my engagement with client systems, I have at times felt helpless, incompetent, uncomfortable, and so on. For quite some time, I was unaware that these feelings could so considerably affect the consultation process. About my relationship with client systems, I have often asked myself: am I operating from a comfort zone or colluding with them, or am I distancing myself from them 'too much'.

Working with organisations on long-term change initiatives, I have craved for having an outsider's perspective on the assignment. I have often sensed the need for a sounding board to share about my dilemmas, hesitations, and, in particular, my loneliness. I have wondered repeatedly if I am learning from consulting experiences. I wished to be able to speak with someone who could offer me fresh perspectives; someone who could provide me with feedback to further my learning.

Three educational processes helped me look at consulting differently and point me in this direction. The first was learning from Group Relations work, especially from its application in organisational consulting; the second, which is drawn to the first, was engaging proactively with shadow consulting (also known as consulting supervision); and third, seeking therapeutic support to understand self-level issues.

My intent here is to present (i) a brief review on the shadow consultation or consulting supervision process, and its relevance for OD practice; (ii) some experience of using shadow consulting; and (iii) being a shadow consultant for other consultants.

Structure of this paper

The paper introduces the idea of shadow consultation in Section 2. This is followed by an exploration of what makes shadow consulting or consulting supervision different in Section 3. In Section 4, I examine what makes shadow consultation effective as a learning process. In Section 5, I present two major modalities of actually performing shadow consultation. The final section identifies skills that are essential for being an effective shadow consultant.

What is shadow consulting?

A shadow consultant aims to help other consultants become more effective while remaining in the background. Usually, a shadow consultant serves as a reliable advisor and or a coach to other consultants, experienced or otherwise. Marjan Schroder coined the term shadow consultant in 1974 when describing the informal process that consultants have used for as long as their profession has existed. Schroder noted that the shadow consultant '...at the request of a colleague (or team of colleagues) and by means of a series of discussions, helps assess – and, if necessary, change – that colleague's diagnosis, tactics, or role in a specific assignment...'(Schroder, 1974, 580). The merit of the shadow consultant '...lies in his non-involvement, which makes it easier for him to keep track of the main issues, and to take the consultant's way of functioning into account; nevertheless, because different consultants stress different aspects of a project, the shadow consultant's contribution may also broaden the consultant's general professional skills and insights...' (Schroder, 1974, 581).[2]

A 'shadow consultant' (also commonly referred to as a consultant supervisor), stays and works in the background with the intent of helping other consultants and coaches (experienced or new to the profession) enhance their learning, develop new perspectives, deepen their skills, and become more relevant to their clients. As Critchley (2011) points out 'The process of "shadow consulting"... involves a consultant or team of, telling the story of a current piece of work in the presence of other professional, consultants usually from a related field. The role of the "other" is to listen to the story, paying attention less to the content (the specific problems, themes or issues inherent in the work) and *more to the relational dynamics, between the consultant and the client organisation, as well as within the consultant team, if it is a team.*' The relational dynamics are both unconscious and systemic.

The consultant project can be at any stage: beginning, concluding, or somewhere in the middle. It can also be going 'well' or 'badly'. The word 'shadow' does not

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2 See Critchley (2011)

purport anything undesirable, but, taken literally, it means aspects about us and/ or the relationship not in our view. From a Jungian viewpoint, a shadow consists of those parts of us we are not aware of, as they are lodged in the unconscious, and possibly includes motives that run counter to what we espouse. For instance, we may claim in our practice to 'empower' client systems, such as a senior manager, but actually we might be making her dependent on us, thus deriving a sense of power over a senior figure. It is unlikely that we would permit ourselves to be conscious of such an inferior motivation!

Studies in psychology, psychotherapy and group relations suggest that our early childhood experiences leave us with a range of feelings that stay with us deep inside. A variety of emotions are evoked repeatedly as we encounter experiences that trigger these feelings. We may be unaware of how repetitive our reactions are, and they continue to shape us over time. We tend to take these patterns for granted. Our patterned behaviour is also unconscious, emerging from a pattern of repeated experiences. We also develop our tendencies to cope with such experiences in order to either deal with or avoid situations that evoke such emotions.

For example, in my early days of consulting, I would remain quiet while listening to clients and not necessarily *engage* with them. My quietness would leave an adverse impression about whether I understood enough about the assignment. Any conversation with a client system would trigger my early childhood experiences of growing up in a stifling atmosphere. Quietness, and especially talking less, was compulsorily perceived in my socialization as positive behaviour. Over time, I began attempts at talking more to just impress the client. This would often result in an adverse reaction of a different nature. It is through the support of a shadow consultant that I developed an awareness of and an understanding of how to cope with this behaviour. We saw this together as 'my stuff.'

As available literature points out, a major role for OD practitioners is to establish helping relationships with and among individuals and groups within

organisations (Schien, 1998 PC, HC; Cheung-Judge 2001). It therefore seems essential to use the self as an instrument (or instrumentality) and demonstrate heightened self-awareness in our work. Developing one's instrumentality requires that we as practitioners invest continuously in personal growth efforts to understand who we are, and how issues of family history, gender, race, and sexuality affect our self-perception. It also means exploring our values and developing spiritual capacities to examine how we lead our lives apart from our work fields. Today, many OD practitioners seek some form of therapeutic support in addition to participating in experiential learning labs, and they seek specifically to get in touch with themselves at the emotional or feeling level, to serve client systems better.

What makes shadow consulting or consulting supervision different?

Case illustration 1

An OD practitioner shared with his shadow consultant about entry and contracting experiences with a manager of a multinational firm. The client context was unfamiliar for the practitioner. The client, a manager, had sought this practitioner's help as they were friends in other spaces. As the dialog progressed, it became evident to the shadow consultant that the practitioner lacked clarity on the task at hand; he was looking for affirmation of what he has planned to do for the client. On further exploration, the practitioner realized he was agreeing to whatever was asked rather than arriving at some clear understanding of aspects such as the organisational context, the boundary of task, what needs to be done concretely, and so on. The dialog helped the practitioner to get in touch with the history of his relationship with the manager and how they were colluding with each other during the current engagement. The manager was under pressure to perform. In turn, he was transferring this pressure onto a trusted friend! Ultimately, with the help of a shadow consultant, the practitioner realized his tendency to collude with a client.

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3 Further discussed in section 5 of this paper.

Case illustration 2

A practitioner spoke to his shadow consultant about entry experiences. The practitioner claimed that he provides real-time solutions at entry to the client system as part of his selling pitch, his reason being that in his experience, client systems tend to resist long-term commitment to change processes. The problem he faced was that he was not landing contracts. During his exploration with the shadow consultant, the practitioner became aware of his need to 'impress' potential clients to land contracts. He also became aware that he was rushing to suggest interventions without any attempt at diagnosing the issues in the client system and/or clients' context.

As the case studies above show, '…the distinguishing characteristic of consulting supervision (or shadow consulting)…is that the consultant's internal relationships with peers and managers become more prominent and provide unique material to help supervisee and supervisor learn about the relationships and dynamics in the client organisation(s). The parallel process[3] per se is prominent in all supervision, but this ability to carry the systemic back into the system is distinct and very powerful (Erik de Haan and David Birch, 2011).'

The extent to which patterns are picked up by the shadow consultant and amplified or reduced depends on the personality of the practitioner and the shadow consultant, which is known as personal 'valency' (Bion, 1961). A person's valency, or their propensity to enacting unconscious patterns of their behaviour, is related to their life experiences. Patterns we enact consciously are those that we are able to observe from our conscious reality. Patterns that we tend to enact unconsciously are those patterns that move us emotionally, since they remind us of earlier experiences or patterns that we do not allow ourselves to experience; and so we deal less consciously with them, allowing them to remain as secondary processes within (Amy Mindell 2016).

Case illustration 3

An OD Practitioner presented to a group of consultants a complex consulting case that was not progressing well. The assignment was related to change in a non-government organisation (NGO) with an illustrious history of extending disaster related support. The organisation, now having shifted to work on inclusive development, claims to work for the inclusion of very poor, disadvantaged, and voiceless minorities in national development. The practitioner had discussed with the Executive Director of the NGO at the contracting stage about the need for an OD Steering Committee, an internal anchor person for OD, and staff participation in organisational diagnosis. These were agreed on readily. However, as work progressed, no one was specifically designated as anchor for the OD process despite several reminders from the practitioner. The ED remained the point of contact, claiming that the others are not yet ready or familiar to take up the role. The diagnostic data collection began soon after at the head office with full staff participation. The ED, after internal discussions, asked the Practitioner to also visit field offices for data collection and agreed to also amend the ToR (Terms of Reference). The field visits were completed as per schedule.

Once a draft report of the diagnosis was submitted, the ED did not act on it. Instead, he started pointing to purported faults with the methodology, the outcome, the veracity of data, and other aspects of the diagnosis. He did this despite being fully aware of the high level of staff participation and the full availability of raw data generated from reflection events with various staff. In particular, the emerging observations in a draft report about the lack of voice and agency faced by staff, as well as observations about their vulnerability, were not received well. The ED also cast aspersions on the practitioner's capability. Amendments to the report were suggested.

The practitioner stood his ground as he had enough evidence to support all emerging observations made in the report. He agreed for amending in the final report any factual errors that might have appeared in the draft. He also had discussions on the draft report with the senior staff of the organisation. Many of them concurred that the report had nailed critical issues in the organisation. They also admitted that they had been strong-armed by the ED into disparaging the report. Subsequently, the practitioner submitted a revised report. Since then, communication between the practitioner and the ED have been minimal. As per the contract, the Practitioner was to continue with hand holding efforts following the diagnosis. The OD process went into a state of limbo. The practitioner shared with a group of shadow consultants about his sense of being exhausted and helpless as a result of this debacle.

The discussions that followed provided opportunities for the practitioner to get outside view(s) on the assignment. They were about, first, a collusive process evident from the consultant's entry and a lack of firm negotiation on his role and task, role and task of the internal consultant, that of the Head of the organization (who kind of became the de facto internal consultant- after putting up one who was bound to fail), and the role and task of the steering group – which is the same as the Management Team; second introjection, evident from the exhausting ToR and amount of information presented during the shadow consultation process to the shadows and almost exhausting them; thirdly splitting, unconsciously separating the OD process from current realities (as seen by one small sub-system) of the organisation such as the imperative for retrenchment; and finally the containing process, namely the organization having to chew so much but having little time to digest, an experience also faced by the consultant.

This case illustrates how consultant supervision can play a significant role in helping OD practitioners '..."step back" from the drama of their assignments and perform an inquiry into the assumptions, prejudices, and unconscious processes that can interfere with their ability to think clearly about their clients or their own teamwork (Erik de Haan and David Birch, 2011).' It also shows that shadow consultants can, in addition to providing an outside perspective, act as mirrors for picking up behavioural patterns, blocks to change, and other issues faced by the practitioner and the organisation. In the process, they also pick up spots or issues in the mirror and in themselves. In the shadow consultation process, the

consultant has the opportunity to infer the dynamics between the practitioner and the organisation. If more consultants are involved, the dynamics in the team and its implication for the consultation process (Hirschhorn, 1980, p.40).

How can shadow consultants be effective?

Deep listening and reflection and the ability to understand unconscious dynamics of systems are essential for being an effective shadow consultant. Shadow consultants need to listen to the practitioner and their stories without any sense of judgement. They need to remember that what they are hearing may not be the whole truth. They need to remain immersed as they reflect about the practitioners' relationship with client systems and organisational processes. One important role for shadow consultants is that they need to help practitioners reframe their stories. They also need to lead them towards understanding that their capacity to think clearly and act appropriately might have been distorted by their engagement with client systems.[4]

Shadow consultants also need to maintain sufficient distance, or remain 'outside' the engagement, in order to be of service to individual practitioners or a team there of. Effective shadow consultants remain invisible to the client system, and lend direct support.[5]

Shadow consultants serve as sounding boards or trusted advisors. The process is tailored to meet the specific requirements of the individual practitioner or team. However, the process includes some, if not all, of the following aspects:
- Giving an outside view
- Providing systems psychodynamic perspectives
- Proving an opportunity for reflection
- Providing constructive feedback

- Focusing on relationship dynamics between the practitioner and client
- Focusing on ethical issues, and
- Enhancing awareness about but not limited to, interrelationships between such constructs as anxiety, social defenses, projection, transference and counter-transference, valence, resistance to change, boundaries, role, authority, leadership, relationship and relatedness, and group-as-a- whole (Bion, 1961; 1962; Hirschhorn, 1993).

Processes and practice of consultancy supervision/ shadow consultation

As was mentioned earlier, an OD consultant, practitioner, or practitioner team may call upon professional colleagues to provide supervision or shadow consultation on their assignments. In view of the sensitivity of emerging issues, it would be useful to have this process take place in a quiet locale with virtually no disturbances. For many practitioners who claim 'learning' is their second nature, coming face-to-face with their own potential unconscious behavioural patterns may be disturbing. This is where the shadow consultant's skills of being both empathic and challenging make a significant difference to the practitioner's learning.

Regardless of what stage the assignment is at, it would be useful to encourage the practitioner to provide a narrative or detailed 'data' on the following aspects.
- How do they perceive the client organisation now?
- Do they believe they have a contract?
- What type of interactions that have occurred so far? What perceptions, feelings, and dynamics have emerged thus far from their interactions?
- What can they share on how they see emerging client-consultant relationships?

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4 See Critchley (2011) Part of this could be due to not paying adequate attention to the psychological nature and covert behavior within systems. Especially covert meaning of organizational behavior, and the deeper and unconscious challenges faced by leadership, in short system psychodynamics. See also (Cillers, 2004) and Cznder (1993)

5 See Stevenson, 2008

- What has been the nature of interventions with client system? What are their perceptions about the impact of these interventions?
- Do they have any working hypotheses on what ails the client system?
- What could be done next?
- Do they have any other details they may wish to share, such as dreams, physical symptoms, or anything else?

A starting point for the shadow consultation process is giving adequate attention to the practitioner's narrative. An important function for shadow consultants is to decide when, where, and how to intervene, or, namely, how to use the practitioners' 'data'. Two modalities of consulting supervision are identified in the available literature (de Haan, 2001; Critchley, 2011). Each offers numerous possibilities for picking up organisational patterns.

A single practitioner and a shadow consultant or consultant supervisor

In this mode, the practitioner is directly exposed to the organisational dynamics between individuals working for the organisation or for a sub-system. It is possible that the practitioner may get unconsciously swayed or ignores them or they may even become part of the dynamics within the organisation.

The first step for the shadow is to reflect on what is happening between the practitioner and the client system, where they take note of any behavioural patterns and / or feeling dynamics: for example, does the practitioner feel overwhelmed by outcomes expected; or do they feel exhausted or appreciated; or do they feel they have been used to execute something personally unpleasant; or are they feeling close to or distant from the client system; and so on. It is important for the shadow to invite the practitioner to examine if these patterns or feelings are within or in that part of the client system the practitioner is currently engaged with. This line of exploration could provide rich diagnostics relevant to the consultation.

Also, as the consultant engages more with the client system, they will unconsciously encounter and sometimes become co-opted into these patterns. Paying due attention to its implication is important if consultants are serious about making a difference to the client system. The capacity to make a difference becomes adversely affected the more we become enmeshed into client dynamics. Our behaviour becomes moderated and our capacity to make a 'difference' gradually erodes.[6]

Consulting supervision can help practitioners get in touch with the subtlety of this mutual influencing process. Once practitioners understand the nature of such dynamics, they can consciously make the choice of changing their own behaviour, interacting differently with client system, and taking other measures to maintain perspective. This is unlike taking the all too familiar path of practitioners playing the role of powerful or invincible influencers, instead redirecting them to their goal of managing change.

A team of practitioners and a shadow consultant/ consultant supervisor or a group of shadow consultants/ consultant supervisors

In this mode, a shadow consultant or consultant supervisor is exposed to a richer variety of organisational dynamics, especially dynamics between practitioners, with an implicit focus on organisational patterns. Here, the first step remains the same as in the previous mode. The important second step is to draw the attention of the practitioners regarding what is happening between them or in their team. The dynamic between the practitioners may reflect or mirror very strongly unconscious organisational dynamics. This is also termed 'parallel process' - a phenomenon emerging from the dynamic, systemic nature of organisations.

Put very simply, 'it (a parallel process) suggests that the dynamics within an organisation are potentially reproduced between the organisation and a consultant, or within the consultant team.'[7] Discovering parallel dynamics is a

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6 See Critchley (2011)

unique opportunity for the consultants to learn about the organisations' patterns, review their approach to designing interventions, and, importantly, learn about themselves.

It is relevant to remind ourselves here that practitioners participate and, on many occasions, contribute to these observed organisational patterns. It is unlikely that they would remain objectively neutral. Perhaps as new participants they may remain emotionally less engaged during early stages of any engagement. With time, they are likely to be drawn unconsciously into the patterns, and the depth to which they are caught depends on their own unconscious material or valence. This is one major reason why there is a need for consulting supervision.

In the second step, the role of the shadow consultant is to empower the team to process interactions and the dynamics within itself. This is both a sensitive and subtle task: it involves unpacking the dynamics of rank, power, privilege, inclusion and exclusion, values, and norms that are evolving in the team. A team's dynamics are jointly created by its members but what is important to recognize is that a likely and critical influence on the consultant team's dynamics are the organisational patterns and dynamics of the client organisation.

The third and final step in the supervision is to review and explore the dynamics of relationships in the supervision process. The interaction between the supervisor and the consultants is likely to mirror those in between the consultants. This is, by inference, likely to throw more light on the dynamics of the whole field.

Skills required for shadow consultation

Shadow consulting (or consulting supervision), it is an extremely sensitive process where one, while providing an outside view to the other, helps unpack aspects not visible to them. The real intent is to support the insight making process of the practitioners. With this in the background, my review of relevant

studies identifies the following skills as important and useful to be effective shadow consultants:

- Deep listening and giving full and close attention
- Being fully present, and without expectations of specific outcomes (creative indifference)
- Observing patterns, repetitions and interactions
- Noticing energy flows (intensity and quality)
- Noticing one's own physical symptoms and sensations
- Allowing intuition to work on the unfolding story
- Paying attention to one's own feelings and responses
- Noticing one's fantasies and associations
- Reflecting, summarizing, and clarifying
- Giving feedback and offering hypothesis
- Exploring options

This review began by acknowledging dispositions I faced as a practicing organizational consultant. I opted proactively for consulting supervision to better understand their implications. I end with a summary of my four major learning from experiencing shadow consultation: First, it has allowed me to recognize the importance of my feelings, my background, prejudices and other such baggage I carry or receive unconsciously and how they could affect my understanding of an engagement with any client system. Second, it has reinforced the need to focus on psychodynamics of consultant-client relationship in any assignment and draw inferences from there to be of service to the task at hand. Third, shadow consultation experiences have taught me to celebrate professional successes and failures, without going overboard. Finally, while being in a shadow consultant's role, I have found it useful not to solve a practitioner's consultancy problem. I find myself more mindful towards 'empowering and not 'fixing' practitioners who opt for support.

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7 See Critchley (2011). Also see Erik de Haan and David Birch, (2011).

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Group Relations Conferences in India: A Historical Perspective

Gunjan Zutshi

The earliest GRC brochure available with me of the conference in 1982 had this line as part of the introduction: "Working conferences, which are 7-10 days residential conferences designed for experiential study of groups and organisational behaviour were started in India in 1973 and sponsored by IIMC & ISTD". That makes it almost half a century; 45 years to be precise, of GRCs in India. So, what better place than Koodam to look at this journey through a study of conference brochures made available by some individuals[1] who have been associated with these conferences over the years.

The idea of this research started slightly differently during my visit in 2015 to Belgirate conference. During one of the sessions, a group of members worked at understanding how Group Relations (GR) work is communicated and marketed to prospective members by looking at some brochures of conferences organized in different parts of the world. That led to the idea of doing a comparative study of brochures of international conferences and conferences in India.

Prior to that Rosemary Viswanath and Anuradha Prasad had initiated the idea of GRI documenting history of Group Relations work in India and had attempted to organize interviews with Gouranga Chattopadyaya, Zahid Gangjee and Dipankar Banenerjee as a group in Kolkata. In spite of some efforts, it was difficult to get them all on the same dates, and then other circumstances made them push this idea to a later date. For that purpose, brochures were collected and we decided to expand the scope of research from looking at just the brochures from a marketing perspective but to study them and make meaning of history of GR work through them.

Before we engage with the findings, it is important to clarify a few points:

1. The data presented is from brochures of earlier conferences held by Indian Institute of Management Calcutta (which Gouranga Chattopadhyay (GC) directed), some in which GC and others directed conferences organized or sponsored by different organizations, brochures of which were available with GC, Dipankar Banerjee and Rosemary and later conferences sponsored by Human and Institutional Development Forum (HIDF) & Group Relations India (GRI). There are other organizations in India that are also engaged in similar work[2] but the study does not focus on conferences offered by them in this paper.

2. Data includes only working conferences or group relations conferences. Other workshops like Listening to the Unconscious (LTTUC), which use the same theoretical framework of Group Relations but have a shorter and different format, have not been considered for this research.

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1 Rosemary Viswanath, Dipankar Banerjee accessed their personal collection of brochures for this research.
2 AIKYA, SHSD, Bion Institute, Parikrama, ISABS Sukrut and IIM Ahmedabad being some of these organisations who offered or continue to offer Group Relations Conferences.

3. The brochures available for the study are from 1982 till 2019, a total of 32 brochures.[3] Thus, brochures for all conferences organized during this period were not available and therefore information and inferences shared in this paper are based on this set of brochures.

4. And lastly, to say that making meaning from brochures is like reading a book and then making one's own meaning and interpretation because you cannot ask the author! Similarly, many a time I had questions that I couldn't find answers to in the brochures and as the study was a quick desk research, not including conversations with the 'authors' of these brochures, I found myself filling in the blanks to complete the gestalt. Thus projecting my ideas, wishes or experiences and making it difficult to present the information objectively which is the ask of a researcher! It made me realize how easy it is to distort reality and present one's own view of reality. Thankfully it was pointed out to me during iterations of the draft of this paper and I hope I have been able to keep myself out of this equation when presenting the findings and yet, I wonder if it is possible to fully do that? Maybe, parts of this are still my version and not the historical perspective as it really was intended to be!

Having made all these disclaimers, I want to share an anecdote before I delve further. In my first GRC as staff, in the role of administrator in 2015, which GC was codirecting, I remember him mentioning that he attended his first GRC in Tavistock in 1972 and I told him that's the year I was born. And I remember being filled with a sense of awe at the fact that the journey that was so new for me had begun so long ago for some of us, and that there was so much for me to know and learn from those early travelers who now were co travelers.

I couldn't help but wonder about how our journeys collide and we meet each other so that here I am, presenting this paper to you all at first edition of Koodam and becoming a part of creating another chapter in the history of GR work in India!

Primary task of this research

Primary task of this research is to understand the evolution of GR work in India based on secondary sources of information available - that is the conference brochures. It is to study and present the findings on how these conferences have evolved in aspects of

- Conference Titles / Themes
- Primary Task of conferences
- Conference Design / Structure
- Sponsoring Organizations
- Participating Members

For ease of reference as well as to highlight some significant changes that can be seen in the conferences, I have clustered the conferences around the year of the conference being held.

1973-1980	No brochures available with us
1981-1990	8 brochures
1991-2000	4 brochures
2001-2010	12 brochures
2011- 2019	8 brochures

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[3] At the time of presenting at Koodam 2018, only 22 brochures were available. Later Rosemary Viswanath was able to access some more, and she filled in the information and research gaps while editing for this version of the paper. The author's personal views however have been left unedited.

Relevance of GRCs in various contexts and applications - as seen through conference titles/ themes & primary task

Conference titles / themes

IIMC was the key sponsor of the conferences in the period 1982 – 1994. Many conferences from 2005-2008 were primarily sponsored by Business World. A series of conferences from 2006 onwards were primarily sponsored by HIDF and from 2013, GRI. Looking at themes in relation to organizing institutions, it seems that the titles / themes of the conferences are as much a reflection of the context in which these conferences were being organized as also a reflection of the organizing / sponsoring organizations interests. The titles reflect a certain steady core of exploring authority, leadership, management of self in role and an expansion of the scope of the conferences by including aspects beyond these, which reflected broader societal dynamics.

The earlier conferences from 1982 - 1994 were titled as Executive Development Program/Management Development Program with "Authority, Organization & Leadership, Management of Self in Role" being the most common title. There were two conferences in this period with different titles namely "Organization Consultancy - A Tavistock Open Systems Approach (1982)" and "7th Working Conference on Management of Helping Relationships (1988)".

The 1988 brochure talks about diverse themes for working conferences such as developing organization, advisory skills, management of differences, politics of relations etc. but actual brochures of these conferences were not available for further reference.

The 1992 conference had the title - "Authority, organization & leadership - managing transitions for the 2020s" and the brochure talks about why in 1992 a conference on 2020s was relevant even though it was so far off. It perhaps reflects

the thinking that the conferences are not just to work on current issues but also to address the needs of the future.

This is reflected even more in conference titles in early 2000 where words like "identity, resistance transformation, social systems find place alongside authority, organization and leadership.

- Identity, authority, leadership - resistance, self-empowerment & transformation in organizational and social systems (2003)
- Authority Leadership and Role - exploring resistance and transformation in organisational and social systems (2004)
- Authority to Manage Learning (2006)

These were sponsored by social development organisations and academic institutions, and the interest of the sponsors were reflected in the titles.

A series of International conferences, sponsored by Business World magazine and other corporate or academic institutions between 2005 and 2008 had the title Managing transformation of self & organization in a globalized economy (2005, 2006, 2008)

From 2006 onwards, with the series initiated by HIDF and joined by GRI as a co-sponsor, the titles take on varied hues though Leadership and Transformation appear as frequent words (in conferences in 2013,14 and 15) reflecting the sense of the world around us as it was transforming under the onslaught of social media, digitization, advances in internet technologies and changing political and social realities. Also, the titles of these conferences are very evocative and reflective of the theme of the conference as seen from the following examples:

- Exercising Leadership in a Gendered World (2006 and 2008)
- Exploring & Managing Differences in Groups & Organisations ((2010 and 2011)

- Leadership for Transformation in Self, Groups and Systems (2013 &2014)
- Transforming Systems - exploring the place of compassion in the exercise of leadership (2015)
- Knowing and Not Knowing - exploring intention and risk in self and systems (2016 & 2019)
- The Courage to Lead: Exploring Dynamics of Collaboration and Dissent (2017)
- Meeting the Other, Meeting Oneself - fear and longing in working with difference (2018)

Primary Task (PT)

"To experience and interpret within the program, the nature of authority and interpersonal, intergroup and institutional problems encountered in its exercise." (1982)

"To study exercise of authority in the context of interpersonal, inter group and institutional relations within conference institution" (1983, 85,86)

From 1982-1994, these two statements capture the PT of the conferences with focus on "exercise and nature of authority".

From 2000-2010, the PT looks at exercise of authority but in specific contexts of managing transformation globalization, gender etc. Transformation and exploration of problems encountered in managing that is the focus of PT in many of the conferences in this period.

"Exploring problems encountered in working towards transformation at self and institutional level as they occur within the conference as an institution." (2005)

2007 conference describes as its PT – *"To explore the problems and potentiality encountered in one's role in the conference and the extent to which transforming self and the institution is circumscribed by gender based authority."*

What caught my attention was the use of the word 'potentiality' in addition to the problems encountered. The word occurs in later conferences too post 2010. PT of 2015 conference says - *To experience processes of learning how to learn and internalize based on one's personal authority, particularly focusing on how unconscious material can shackle oneself to repeated dysfunctional patterns or free oneself to experience one's potential more richly and fully.*

From 2010 onwards, there are some clear shifts observed in how PT is articulated:
1. The 2011 conference has the **conference theme** included in the PT. "*Study exercise of authority in taking up of roles through interpersonal, inter group and institutional relations that develop within the conference as an institution. In particular, the primary task focuses on exploring the assumptions that underlie our experience of differences, and therefore the possibilities and challenges associated with working with differences within conference as an institution.*" Theme of the conference was "Exploring & Managing Differences in Groups & Organizations

2. The other change is the inclusion of "*exploration of **dimensions of leadership and followership** that emerge and contribute to transformation of self, group and system through the taking up of roles and exercise of authority within the conference institution*". While exploration of authority and roles remain part of the PT, leadership and followership are added to it.

3. The most distinct difference is the inclusion of dual PT in conferences from 2014 onwards which brings the task of learning and unlearning from unconscious into the PT

a. To explore the dimensions of leadership and followership that emerge and contribute to transformation of self, group and system through the taking up of roles and exercise of authority within the conference institution.

b. To experience processes of releasing and unlearning, particularly focussing on how unconscious material can shackle oneself to repeated dysfunctional patterns, or free oneself to experience one's potential more richly and fully. (2014)

This went back to a single primary task from 2017 onwards, but the title and theme got mentioned as providing the first circle of context for the task, with the wider context being the second circle.

So, while some things have remained integral to the PT like exploration of authority, leadership, followership, self in role in the context of the GRC as an institution, other elements have been added. Over the years, articulation of PT has become more detailed encompassing exploration of problems & potentiality, unconscious, learning / unlearning within the context of the theme of the conference not just at individual, group, intergroup, organization level but also in wider societal context.

See annexure for detailed list of conference titles/themes and PT.

People and organizations involved in GR work

The question that arose for me was - who were those pioneers, both institutions and individuals, who led the growth of this work? And what might have been the driving force behind starting and continuing this work?

While the second question cannot be answered by studying the brochures, an attempt to answer the first question can certainly be made.

The key organizations associated with sponsoring / organizing GRCs have ranged from academic institutions like IIM Calcutta, Eastern Institute of Management, Calcutta, IMDR, Pune to social sector organizations like HIDF, AIKYA, SHSD, DAPPU, YUVA, and GRI (which is a registered trust run on not-for-profit principles), to organizations like NHRD, ISTD, The British Council, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration Mussoorie, consultancy organisations such as Group for Institutional Development, Learning Network and Organisations and Alternatives Pvt Ltd, and corporates such as Duncans, ITC, Business World, Tata Management Training Centre.

The 1982 conference was organized by IIMC and ISTD. Conferences from 1982 - 1994, and the ones before that too, were primarily organized / sponsored by IIMC. I didn't have access to brochures of conferences organized by IIMC post 1994 and I was wondering about it when I came across an excerpt in brochure of 2007 conference organized by Business World which says that IIMC discontinued conferences post 1994 due to lack of available personnel for directing conferences.

In 2003, the working conference was organized by two organizations - Dappu - a collective for Dalit empowerment and Learning Network - an OD consulting company.

Conferences from 2000 - 2010 were organized by corporations like Business World and social sector organizations like Dappu and HIDF.

HIDF sponsored the 2007 conference and since then, has been one of the primary sponsors of these conferences. From 2014, GRI has been the sponsor and HIDF has sponsored the conferences along with it. The 11th conference in the series, this one sponsored by GRI was in June 2019.

It does not take a study of brochures to say that since its inception, Gouranga Chattopadhyay has been instrumental in the growth of GR work. Having directed or co directed most of the conferences till 1994 and then some more from 2000 onwards, GC has been involved in this journey every step of the way. Others like Dipakar Banerjee, Zahid Gangjee, MM Kumaraswamy, and Ajeet Mathur were part of GR work from 1982 till 1990s and beyond that.

Rosemary Viswanath has been on staff of GRCS from 1989 onwards. In 2003, she co-directed the conference and has been deeply involved in taking this work forward by directing since then.

While institutions such as IIMC, HIDF and GRI and individuals like Gouranga, Rosemary, Dipankar and Zahid have been instrumental in the growth of GR work in India, it is also important to acknowledge that many others played a role in this journey even if their names are not mentioned here.

What strikes one is that associations with corporates have been few and far between. My view is that the methodology seems too different from known ways of learning. I must admit to some confusion regarding the role the sponsor institutions played. The brochures use different phrases like "organized by", "sponsored / jointly sponsored by", or "sponsored / presented by A in association with B", or "offered by and supported by" or "offered by, in collaboration with and supported by". And hence I found myself using the terms "sponsor" and "organizer" interchangeably and not being able to make the distinction.

It made me wonder what are my assumptions about this and the thought that came is that sponsors sponsor or promote something and can change from season to season. They are not really producers / makers or deliverers of the product or service they sponsor while when one "offers" something, it is something that is produced, created, marketed or delivered by oneself. And that to me signifies a certain difference in the level of involvement and commitment a sponsor might have versus an organizer or provider.

The brochures from 2005 onwards seem to make the distinction more clearly between "presenting or offering" organization and "supporting or collaborating" organization. In fact, brochures from 2011 use the phrase "offered by" and perhaps the change from "sponsoring" GRCs to "offering" GRCs signifies that shift in involvement and commitment of organizations associated with the work.

Conference design / structure

The design and structure of conferences does not seem to have changed much. Some things have remained core while others have been included / omitted from conference to conference.

Duration

1983 brochure says that Working Conferences are 7 - 10 day residential conferences. Conferences from 1982 - 2000 were primarily 7 - 8 days long and since 2010 have been 6 day events.

Events

Some events have remained constant through the years albeit with different names. They are - **Plenary (P), Small Study Event (SSE), Large Study Event (LSE), Institutional Event (IE)**.

Conferences till 1994 did not seem to have Social Sensing Matrix (SSM) or Conference Sensing Matrix (CSM) and Yoga Event (YE). The first instance of YE that I could see is in 2005 conference in Jaipur. Social Sensing Matrix (SSM) was part of 2003 conference and offered as CSM from 2006 onwards and has become quite an integral part of conferences along with YE. The YE was renamed Body Mind Spirit Event in GRI's 2017 conference.

Review groups appeared as two separate events, RG (Review Group) and AG (Application Group) in conferences till 1994. From 2000 till 2006, RCE (Role Consultation Event) and RE (Review Event) and from 2007 onwards, the event has been RAAG (Review and Application Group).

Other events which make an appearance in conferences till 1990s are Praxis, VSSG (Very Small Study Group), AAG (Analysis and Action Groups), FFIG (F2F interaction groups), Paradox event, seminars, lectures, and case presentations.

From 2010 onwards, Dialogues, Personal Reflection and the Exploraxis event were added in some conferences.

Conferences in 1983 and 1985 offered sub conferences – Conference A & B. However, there was a long gap in between and the next instance of sub conferences is in 2015 conference that offered Entry and Furthering Conferences
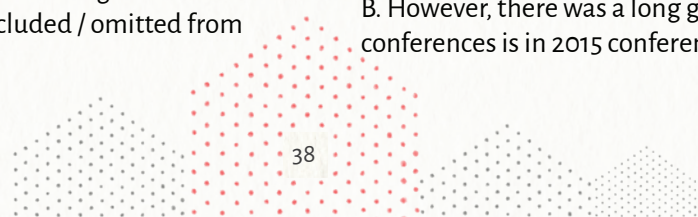
(this is basis the available brochures, there may have been more in between). 2017, 2018 and 2019 conferences all offered Entry & Furthering sub conferences, indicating the interest in furthering one's learning through this way of learning.

Staff

Number of consultants/ staff: The number of consultants / staff in the conferences has ranged from 6 - 10 with a few conferences having as many as 12 or as few as 4.

Directors: Most conferences have Director and Associate or Co Director though there are conferences with only one Director.

Conference administrators: Conferences till 2006 had only one Conference / workshop administrator. First instance of two administrators in the conference was in 2007. However prior to that there have been many instances where one person was the pre-conference administrator and another person as the administrator in the conference. All conferences from 2015 onwards had two administrators which is perhaps indicative of growing reach and membership of the conferences, and a changed view of the task of administrators.

Gender: The ratio of Men: Women consultants on staff has evened out from 8:1 to 4:1 to 1:1 in conferences from 2010 onwards with some conferences having more women on staff. Rosemary Viswanath and Anuradha Prasad have been women directors on the conferences (at least from the brochures I have, but I am given to understand that other women have directed in conferences sponsored by other institutions).

International staff / consultants: Staff from other countries have been invited to these conferences from the beginning. The 1982 conference was directed by Gordon Lawrence and he is the only international staff to have directed or co directed conferences in this set. However, many more have been part of these conferences in staff roles.

As I was writing this, it occurred to me that another interesting area of research could be to see how consultant profiles have changed over the years. But that is for round two!

Fee

1982 - 1990 - 4500 - 6500
1990 - 2000 - 12K to 38K
2000 - 2010 - wide range from 14K to 60K
2010 - 2019 - 25K to 72K

While the fee for conferences from 1982 - 1990 remained largely in the range of 4500 - 6000 INR and from 1990 - 1994 from 12K - 38K, a wide range is observed for conferences held between 2000 - 2010. Fee ranged from 14K to 25 K to 60K and a look at the organizers / sponsors of the conferences throws some light on this wide range.

Conferences with higher fee structures were ones presented by Business World in association with other organizations while the ones with lower fee were organized by social sector organizations like HIDF and Dappu.

2007 conference offered by HIDF had a fee of 25K for corporates and 10K for NGOs. This trend of conferences having two different types of fee applicable – one for corporates and one for social sector / NGOs continued from 2005 till the conferences in 2015 post which there is a single fee (available with significant bursaries for those form social sector organisations, or those who needed a bursary to enable them to attend). Conferences from 1982 till then had a single fee not distinguished by any category.

This shift in fee structure and difference in quantum of fee and the possibility of bursary relates with shift in nature of organizations offering / sponsoring these conferences and the shift in intended membership of the conferences.

Scholarships & bursaries

Conferences from 1982 - 1990 do not mention offer of scholarships and the first instance of scholarship being offered is in 1994 conference where 4 scholarships of 18k were available (conference fee was 38k and 28k for early bird). Conferences from 2003 onwards had bursaries being offered.

Looking at the fee for conferences held from 2010 onwards, I felt that the fee for GRCs is low. For the number of days of conference, the number of staff and the learning that these conferences offer, the fee seems low when compared to other programmes. Eg., a quick look through 3 - 4 day open, residential programmes offered by IIMB are priced in the range of 78 - 88K. Many nonresidential, 1 - 2 days training programmes offered by leadership consulting companies are priced in range of 75K - 1.5 lakhs and hence in comparison, GRC fee seems to be really low.

Locations held in

Conferences from 1982 - 1994 were held in Patna, Goa Varanasi, Agra, Bangalore with Varanasi hosting many of these conferences.

From 2000 - 2010 - Hyderabad, Jaipur, Bangalore, Goa were the venues with Jaipur holding most conferences.

From 2010 onwards – Bangalore became the preferred venue perhaps because of presence of HIDF and GRI in Bangalore. Until in 2017 when the conference venue moved to Mumbai after 5 consecutive GRCs in Bangalore from 2011 - 2016.

Participating members

1982 conference brochure says this regarding participating members – "*This program is designed for responsible managers, professionals and administrators from diverse institutions like industry, government organization, trade unions, academic and other institutions.*"

The brochure for very next conference in 1983 increases the scope to include "*managers, professionals and administrators in medical, social service organizations, religious and voluntary bodies.*"
Brochures from 1982-1994 conferences clearly specify the membership while brochures from 2000 onwards don't mention this with as much specificity.

2007 brochure in its introduction says - "*participating members have so far come from a very wide range of institutions such as public and private sector, MNCs, govt, civil services, churches, academic institutions, consulting organizations and NGOs*". And that's how reference to intended membership is made in brochures since then.

One thing is clear from this that while in the beginning it may have had a smaller scope of organizations and participating members, the scope was widened and has stayed so to include participants from a diverse membership. My own experience of GRC' that I have been a part of over the past 6 - 7 years is of diverse membership.

Brochures

This is where it all started for me at Belgirate where we looked through brochures of some conferences to try and understand how this work was being presented to the world. And the thought originated to study how brochures of GRCs in India were designed.

Conference brochures are not only how we market or talk about these conferences but also the contract we make with prospective membership.

While the content of the brochures may have remained more or less the same, the presentation of brochures has undergone a sea change. From simple, mono color booklets for conferences from 1982 - 1994, there is an evident change in design and aesthetics of the brochures of conferences from 2000 - 2010.

However, it's the brochures of conferences from 2011 onwards that wow one with beautiful designs and aesthetics that not only represent conference themes but allow one to associate with the conference right from the brochure itself. They are works of art (and this is very much my association with them). Not only that, these brochures start with a note from Conference Director/ Directors and that somehow makes the engagement with the brochure almost personal.

This shift in brochures coincides with Rosemary Viswanath being the Conference Director or Co Director on all these conferences and seems to signify the shifting of mantle from Gouranga to Rosemary.

In terms of contents of the brochures, most have a write up on theme / issue that provides the backdrop or context for the conference, about GRCs and the methodology, conference primary task, conference design and description of events, role of staff and staff profiles, administrative information and short write up on sponsoring organizations. Brochures before 2010 also contained application forms and conference schedule. The Business World conferences also had a list of participating companies and institutions in earlier conferences and testimonials from members. The brochures from 1982 - 1994 had bibliography as part of the brochures.

As I went through the brochures, there is no doubt in my mind that these brochures offer to prospective members a detailed view of the conferences and the methodology. However, a doubt that keeps raising its head is whether members engage with it as much as the organizers? In the fashion of keep it simple and low attention spans, in my own experience, I have had to almost force prospective members to go through the brochure before committing to the conference. Availability of digital version of brochures certainly seems to

make it easier as it allows for faster dissemination and makes it more accessible. However, I have heard my colleagues also report that members sign up because the brochure both appealed and spoke to them.

Conclusion

And with this, I come to the end of sharing what I have been able to glean from taking a peek into the past through these conference brochures. This is not an exhaustive study but it holds the potential to take this research further. I do hope that it provided you with a glimpse of the development of GR work in India and through that, open the possibility of engaging in a dialogue of what more, what else, what different can be done to take this work further.

Annexure

Conference titles/ themes

1973-1980	1. The 1982 brochure gives the conference title and below it says (Previously entitled Managerial Leadership and Conflict Resolution)
1981-1990	1. Org consultancy - A Tavistock Open Systems Approach (1982) 2. Authority, Organization & Leadership management of Self in Role - EDP (1982,83,85,86) 3. 7th WC on management of helping relationships (1988) 4. Authority, Organization & Leadership management of Self in Role - MDP (1989, 1990)
1991-2000	1. Working Conference on Managing Change and Conflict (1991) 2. Authority, organization & leadership - managing transitions for the 2020s (1992) 3. Authority, Organization & Leadership management of Self in Role - MDP (1994) 4. Authority, Leadership and Organisation (2000)
2001-2010	1. Authority, Leadership & Organisation (2001) 2. Managing Transformation in Self & Organisation: Issues of Role, Authority and Leadership (2002) 3. Identity, authority, leadership - resistance, self-empowerment & transformation in organizational and social systems (2003) 4. Authority, Leadership and Management of Change (2004) 5. Authority Leadership and Role - exploring resistance and transformation in organisational and social systems. (2004) 6. Managing transformation of self & organization in a globalized economy (2005) 7. Gender & Authority - Expanding capacities for personal authority in work roles (2005) 8. Managing Transformation of Self and Organization in a Globalized Economy (2005, 2006 2007 2008) 9. Authority to Manage Learning (2006)
2011-2019	1. Exploring & Managing Differences in Groups & Organizations (2011) 2. Leadership for transformation in self, groups and systems (2013) 3. Leadership for transformation in self, groups and systems (2014) 4. Transforming Systems - Exploring the place of compassion in the exercise of leadership (2015) 5. Knowing and not knowing - exploring intention and risk in self and systems (2016, 2019) 6. The courage to lead: exploring dynamics of collaboration and dissent (2017) 7. Meeting the other, meeting oneself - fear and longing in working with difference (2018)

Primary Task

1982	To provide opportunities for participants to take authority for their consultancy roles
1982	To experience and interpret within the programme, the nature of authority and interpersonal, intergroup and institutional problems encountered in its exercise.
1983	To study exercise of authority in the context of interpersonal, inter group and institutional relations within conference institution
1985	To study exercise of authority in the context of interpersonal, inter group and institutional relations within conference institution
1986	To study exercise of authority in the context of interpersonal, inter group and institutional relations within conference institution
1988	To study and interpret the experience of problems arising out of exercising ones' authority in helping relationships within the WC as institution
1989	To study exercise of authority in the context of interpersonal, inter group and institutional relations within conference institution
1990	To study exercise of authority in the context of interpersonal, inter group and institutional relations within conference institution
1992	To examine the problems encountered in using one's authority within the WC as a system
1994	To study exercise of authority in the context of interpersonal, inter group and institutional relations within conference institution
February 2003	To explore the realities and problems encountered in taking one's authority in creating and managing transformations within the conference as an institution.
February 2005	Exploring problems encountered in transformations at the self and institutional levels as these occur within the conference as an institution
August 2005	To develop insights into gender and authority dynamics in order to expand capacities for personal authority in work roles.
February 2006	Exploring issues / dynamics and problems encountered in working towards transformation at the self and institutional levels as they occur within conference as institution. Given the international nature of conference, assumptions about globalisation and its dynamics - both conscious and unconscious - are also open for exploration in the context of transformation

May 2007	Exploring problems encountered in working towards transformation at self and institutional level as they occur within the conference as an institution.
August 2007	To explore the problems and potentiality encountered in one's role in the conference and the extent to which transforming self and the institution is circumscribed by gender based authority.
September 2008	Exploring problems encountered in working towards transformation at self and institutional level as they occur within the conference as an institution.
March 2011	Study exercise of authority in taking up of roles through interpersonal, inter group and institutional relations that develop within the conference as an institution. In particular, the primary task focuses on exploring the assumptions that underlie our experience of differences, and therefore the possibilities and challenges associated with working with differences within conference as an institution.
January 2013	To explore the dimensions of leadership and followership that emerge and contribute to transformation of self, group and system through the taking up of roles and exercise of authority within the conference institution.
February 2014	Dual PT - 1. To explore the dimensions of leadership and followership that emerge and contribute to transformation of self, group and system through the taking up of roles and exercise of authority within the conference institution. 2. To experience processes of releasing and unlearning, particularly focussing on how unconscious material can shackle oneself to repeated dysfunctional patterns, or free oneself to experience one's potential more richly and fully.
February 2015	Dual PT - 1. To explore the dimensions of leadership and followership that emerge and contribute to transformation of self, group and system through the taking up of roles and exercise of authority within the conference institution. 2. To experience processes of learning how to learn and internalise based on one's personal authority, particularly focussing on how unconscious material can shackle oneself to repeated dysfunctional patterns or free oneself to experience one's potential more richly and fully.
January 2016	Dual PT - 1. Study the exercise of authority in taking up roles through interpersonal, intergroup and institutional relations that develop within the conference as an organization within its wider context. 2. To experience processes of learning how to learn and internalise based on one's personal authority, particularly focussing on how unconscious material can shackle oneself to repeated dysfunctional patterns or free oneself to experience one's potential more richly and fully.
June 2017	To study the exercise of authority and the nature of leadership that emerges in taking up of roles - through interpersonal, intergroup and institutional relations that develop within the conference as an organisation within its wider context.

June 2018	To study the exercise of authority and the nature of leadership that emerges in the taking up of roles through the interpersonal, intergroup and institutional relationships that develop within the conference as an organisation within its context.
	The Theme - Meeting the Other, Meeting Oneself-provides the immediate context of this GRC. It furthers the invitation, whilst engaging on the primary task, to explore if (and how) fear and longing come up in obvious and in subterranean ways when working with difference.
	The GRC is also situated within its wider context, and therefore work on its task is also an invitation to explore these dynamics at various levels–the individual, group, organisation, and wider social systems, recognising that these levels of awareness are interdependent fractals, and are constantly shaping and co-creating each other.
June 2019	To study the exercise of authority and the nature of leadership that emerges in the taking up of roles through the interpersonal, intergroup and institutional relationships that develop within the conference as an organisation within its context.
	The theme - Knowing and Not Knowing - provides the immediate context of this GRC. It furthers the invitation, whilst engaging on the primary task, to explore if (and how) intention and risk influence in obvious and in subterranean ways, the exercise of authority and the taking up of roles.
	The GRC is also situated within its wider context, and therefore the work on its task is also an invitation to explore these dynamics at various levels - the individual, group, organisation, and wider social systems, recognising that these levels of awareness are interdependent fractals, and are constantly shaping and co-creating each other.

After Gunjan Zutshi's paper was presented, the Koodam convenors felt that it would be most appropriate to use the occasion and Gouranga Chattopadhyay's presence to have a conversation on the 'Genesis of Group Relations in India'

Here is a transcript of the conversation between Rosemary Viswanath (RV), and Gouranga Chattopadhyay (GC):

RV: Speaking about the titles of GRCs: I think we looked at Group Relations as a space where the unspeakable and the unworkable can be worked with, and the need for that. So for instance, when we spoke about dissent, we were aware there is so much work on team, collaboration, etc; but why is dissent never looked at as an important element, and the kind of courage it takes both to dissent and the courage it takes to, to be a leader who welcomes dissent? It was also the broader political arena in this country, for instance, that inspired this work, but it was also the work that happens in within organizational systems. And within ourselves.

We really see the GRCs as a space in which, we don't quite know how, but in some way, by putting it in the title, it invites people to work on that issue. And that collectively at least that group can think a little more, and in its own way, that itself could have a wider effect. Gender for instance, when it came in first, had very strong links to the fact that HIDF was the sponsor. And as an organization that had worked in the development sector and had gender in a very deliberate way, as one of the key lenses from which it would view work in organizations and systems. I'm sure Anuradha and Haritha can speak more to that. But I think it was not a coincidence that it was HIDF's sponsorship of the GRC that 'allowed' gender to be named as an issue for Group Relations to work on via the title.

And the very same "gender" in the title did not appear very much later, not because it was no longer relevant, but because in subsequent conferences work on gender became more natural and integral to the work in a Conference. Or take the case of the 2003 conference titled identity & authority, which was significant in being an early attempt (perhaps the first) at looking specifically at caste

and the dynamics of caste, sponsored by Dappu (a network working on caste discrimination), and Learning Network, a consulting group working with the social sector. There are clear links, as Gunjan indicated between the interests of the sponsoring organisation and for certain piece of work to get space, so to say.

RV then invites GC to speak.

RV: Gouranga, what were the complexities in first offering this strange animal? How did you do it Could you tell us something about the first decade or two of introducing and taking forward Group Relations work in India?

GC: It is difficult for me at times to disassociate myself from GRC, it is so much a part of me, because of how I got interested in it.

Actually, I made a mistake about the first GRC I attended. The first GRC was in 1971. In 1970 I went to Manchester and it took me about eight-nine months to be ready mentally to go to a Group Relations Conference. Pressure on me was there go to a Group Relations Conference. What happened to me was my whole idea about who I was changed. It had been projective identification drilled into me that I was the most foolish boy around in the family. And my mother's most endearing term for me was, if I translated to English, "a bundle of stupidity". A bundle of stupidity! (audience asks: is there a Bengali word for that?

GC: It is a rhyme (........ in Bengali.....).

And then this Group Relations Conference came along that completely changed everything! I found myself in a new way altogether, which is why I said this GRC is such a powerful thing. I benefited personally so much, that felt I must take it back to Kolkata. I was fortunate that not only did I attend the first GRC, but I could be

invited on the staff of several other GRCs, one offered by Emeritus Professor John Allaway who was responsible for taking GRC to Leicester from London.

Allaway used to have a combination of both - the kind of GRCs is we are used to and also encounter groups. And then another man was Patrick Behan who ran GRCs from Sheffield, and he also got me on staff. So I had the experience of being staff in two kinds of GRCs several times and the Leicester Conference. And I came back here. And I, as I said, I was asked to be the Director of IIM Calcutta and I refused. There was pressure on me in the Institute to do something new, because the T Group had failed. And I said yes, I'm quite ready.

So first, what I did was I ran 12 or 13 Small Study Groups. I had to have colleagues, I couldn't offer a GRC by myself! So I ran a number of Small Study Groups. And from which, finally, I could get two colleagues. And then I had two former students. I had run a GRC in the Institute for students at one point of time. Not the entire thing, but part GRC. From that Shyamal Gupta and Bapadita Chakravarthy emerged as staff. So with this crew of five, including me, I offered the first GRC in 1973. And the less I recall that the better!! (hearty laughter)

I'm amazed how I got away with it and did not get beaten up by the membership! But I ran it, and lo and behold, next year they sent some of their people too! But after I finished directing the first one, since I got a lot more people than normally are participants in Management Development Programmes (MDP), the Institute was very happy; they were earning money. That's all they were interested in - profit. I then wrote to Eric Miller (Tavistock Institute), that you or somebody else can come and work with me because I do find a lot of reasons why I need support. Because here are people who are expecting support from me, and I find myself sort of beyond my depth at times, with this. They sent Gordon Lawrence. Gordon I had met in Manchester Business School GRC; he was on the staff. So Gordon came and our relationship started – in one GRC I am the director, in the other he was the Director. So this is how initially it was started.

I had to learn a hell of a lot. And it was a very lonely business, because nobody else really was there as my colleagues in the Institute when every year I had to negotiate with the Board through the Director. So this lonely business continued for quite a few years till, I was running several GRCs every year and I was getting enough money and enough people and enough consultancies from the members who came to GRCs. Then, I started making experiments. Different, although the term did not change AOLMSR, but within it, if you read the brochures, you will find. And also at that time, I was a consultant to Aikya, an NGO. And since I had plenty of consultancies, there was no problem in not taking money from NGOs, and just go in. Schedule, it at a time when some Bangalore-based company would invite me and I would work here. Then after that work with Aikya, Kumar then became Director. He could take the authority of Director in several Conferences. And then I don't know their internal politics, but then he started Bion Institute.

Anyway, many things happened here and I'm not going to talk about... All that I'll talk about is that yes, Aikya and another associated NGO (SHSD) they both offered together GRC. So I was very pleased at the beginning, that I had started something outside of myself and they had taken over. No other organization at that time was interested in GRCs. So that's how it started.

And I didn't look for outside sponsors; in one way, outside sponsors came to me. That's how it happened. See, my problem was that I could never save money. I could make money but I could spend more money. Yes, one of the things is that two values came to me from my father: one was the value of education and learning. The other was a negative value of money, money's a dirty thing. So as soon as you can - distance yourself from money. So all my life I have distanced myself from money.

And then, when Rose started.... I have thought of if I can ever make money, I will have a foundation and its name would be "foundation in search of creative

organizations"; acronym would be 'FIASCO' (hearty laughter). It never happened because I never made that sort of money.

So then, Rose started taking over. I realized that I was shedding more and more responsibility and passing it on to Rose. The first time was when Supriyo Chowdhury another former student, who was then the Director of TMTC called us to run a conference. It was not only for the Tata Sons, but it was also for others.

RV: Which Steve attended.

GC: Yeah Steve attended it. And there one of our co-consultants was Dr. Shelley Ostroff, who said, Gouranga why don't you experiment with a Co-Director? So I invited Rose to be the Co-Director and we had to really sit down, I think, one whole evening we spent the day before. (RV: I was suddenly elevated!!) ... because I have worked consulting with Hindustan Machine Tools HMT, they had joint directors or co-directors, joint general managers. But I found that when there was a General Manager and a Joint General Manager, there's a hierarchy. So how to break through this barrier of hierarchy? That's what our work was, there is a lot of work on that at the international scale and I think there is a publication also on, you also wrote on, (RV: no, I didn't write on that). So I was invited to contribute my experience of having co-directed. So that was how the co-directorship idea came here.

And then HIDF came into the picture, and somehow it passed on there. Anuradha was Director once, and asked me to design something else, and the early form of Listening to the Unconscious I designed and that took off. So, this is how Group Relations in India started.

See, it is not for nothing that I like poems; I'm a great dreamer. So I nursed and nurtured this dream for five decades. And one of the greatest gifts I got was when Rose founded GRI.

While we had requested Gouranga Chattopadhyay to present this paper, it had already been accepted for publishing by the Journal Organisational and Social Dynamics, so we offer the citation and abstract here

Citation and Abstract of Gouranga Chattopadhyay's paper on The Sixth Basic Assumption

Citation

Abstract

W. R. Bion postulated on the basis of his experience that workgroups engaged with tasks of the system from time to time unconsciously get engaged in pursuing non-task related activities when a number of members of the group feel threatened by some issues that arise in the course of engaging with the task. Such groups in the grip of unconscious assumption behave as if their survival depends on a particular person or process. At other times they may behave as if the group members' survival depends either fighting or taking flight from an issue in the group. Thirdly, such groups under the grip of an unconscious assumption that if only they allow a pair to verbally copulate that the solution to the threat will descend from, perhaps, heaven. These assumptions were named as basic assumption dependency, basic assumption fight/flight, and basic assumption pairing, respectively. To these three Turquet added the fourth basic assumption O, Bain et al. added the fifth basic assumption Me. In this article, the sixth basic assumption of Purity/Pollution is added. Groups operating under this unconscious process behave as if their survival depends on distancing themselves from impurity, as they define it.

Looking Back in Wonder: Reflections on the Experience of Koodam 2018

Ganesh Anantharaman

The idea and its purpose

The idea of Koodam, and the name itself were both the brainwave of Rosemary Viswanath, managing trustee of Group Relations India (GRI). Anuradha Prasad, trustee of GRI, and I were invited by Rose to co-convene along with her, the first attempt by GRI to create a Learning Forum for GR practitioners. Koodam, a Tamil word meaning 'a space to gather', which had parallels in other Dravidian languages all signifying a space with some defined but not very rigid boundaries that allows for new possibilities to emerge, was in line with the convenors' thinking that all GR work is subversive and political, and challenges the dominant narratives in every culture. Koodam, with its Dravidian origins was deliberately chosen also to move away from the predominant narrative in India that all 'thinking work' is the preserve of Brahmins, and to also challenge the hegemony of Hindi and Sanskrit as default alternatives to English when it came to choosing names.

As stated in the brochure, Koodam 2018 was envisaged as a space to collectively think about and explore a range of ideas and issues such as:

- What does our practice of GR frameworks mean; what is its relevance in various contexts and applications?
- What dilemmas does it throw up? What challenges and opportunities does it offer in terms of conceptual and theoretical advances and the taking up of roles?
- How does it intersect, engage, and learn from other traditions: where are the boundaries drawn, and why?

- How do group relations practitioners make sense of their contexts – social & professional when they apply this way of working? What have these experiences and impacts been?
- How would we want to shape this work in the future? What would we like to do within the space of GRI towards this?

The primary task of Koodam 2018 was definWed thus: "to broaden and deepen one's thinking about and practice of group relations work through collective exploration."

As co-convenors, we were aware that all the above objectives were, at this point, possibilities through Koodam. Given the reality that GRI is a relatively young institution, it might take a while for the possibilities to fructify. In hindsight, it is even more clear that our primary task provided an appropriate container to all the inherent possibilities stated in our objectives, by locating Koodam as a space to explore our thinking as well as our practice of GR frameworks.

Architecting Koodam

Because the objective was to further collective thinking about GR concepts and practice, membership of Koodam 2018 was open to anyone who had participated in a Group Relations Conference (GRC) or Listening to the Unconscious workshop (LTTUC) and was interested in furthering their understanding and offering their thoughts and experiences for exploration with others. Koodam was conceived of as a peer learning space; hence all participants, including the convenors, were members. It was the first time GRI was offering a non-experiential 'thinking' space that even the conveners weren't sure prospective members would find

alluring or cost-effective (as it was designed a two-day residential programme offered in Bangalore). A part of our risk-mitigation strategy was to offer Koodam on the heels of a new experiential program Task, Role & System (TRS), which also required prior experiential participation in group relations, so that members who signed up for TRS could consider staying on for Koodam, or vice versa. It was a strategy that worked, as out of the total 23 members that attended Koodam during the weekend of April 21-22, 14 had also attended TRS in the preceding 3 days.

Koodam 2018 had a simple design: besides opening and closing plenaries, there were slots for presentations. Before formally announcing Koodam, the convenors decided to invite 3 presenters to specifically present on themes they already had done some work on; themes that were also in line with the task of Koodam. Announcing these three presentations to prospective members in our Koodam brochure was our way of giving them an idea of what they could expect from Koodam. The remaining slots were open to volunteers who would like to present on a GR relevant theme of their choice. Volunteers had to send the convenors a proposal about their proposed topic of presentation in advance, so that the convenors could engage in a dialogue with them where needed and plan the schedule. We had planned for parallel sessions in case there were many volunteer-presenters, but as it turned out we only had 4 other volunteers. Hence by tweaking the schedule slightly, we could accommodate all 7 presentations without any parallel sessions. Given the small size of the audience, it was helpful that everyone was present for all sessions.

While conceptualizing from one's experience and constructing a theory or model around it is never an easy task, what we as convenors hadn't quite anticipated was the anxiety that it would evoke in many presenters, and the consequent hand-holding we'd have to do to some of the presenters to build their own clarity about their respective presentation, and their confidence to present. In most cases, it involved multiple rounds of feedback at every stage: from abstracts to the final draft of the respective presentation / paper. The anxiety perhaps had

something to do with presenting in front of a peer group. All presenters were GR practitioners who had been in the role of staff in GR learning events. The audience too comprised of other staff colleagues, besides members who had attended GR learning events. It may also have something to do about the Indian culture being predominantly oral in learning, with writing (which demanded a certain kind of specificity and clarity) therefore being a very underutilized skill for many. Thirdly, writing, even more than speaking, makes liable one's views and stances 'public', a task not without its anxiety even for the most experienced. This anxiety over writing has continued post Koodam too, in our invitation to the presenters to "finalise" their papers as working papers. The need for a perfect product, instead of being ok with 'work in progress', has resulted in shifting deadlines from some and long silences from others! However, to be fair, the presenters have been courageously working through these challenges!

Themes & flow of Koodam

Day 1, Saturday April 21
The four sessions on Day 1 were all about the dynamic dance between Group Relations theory and the audience's experiences, each informing and influencing the other:

The Sixth Basic Assumption: Two decades after Lawrence, Bain and Gould postulated the 5th Basic Assumption Me-ness, Gouranga Chattopadhyay, who introduced GRCs in India in 1972 and played a big role in embedding it as a learning methodology about leadership, presented his latest paper: The Sixth Basic Assumption: Purity / Pollution, that he had recently unearthed, based largely on his life's experiences.

Envy: Recognizing & Working with it: Veena Pinto delved into psychoanalytic definitions of envy and explored her own experiences of working with this widely-prevalent, but usually unconscious phenomenon in self, groups, and systems.

Feminine, Masculine, & Dynamics of Gender in GR work: Uma Ravikumar brought to bear her experiences as a Gender Dynamics professional in helping explore the largely unconscious role of culture and mythology in shaping our constructs of 'masculine' and 'feminine' and the impact of these constructs on systems and organizations.

Structure of the Psyche and Models of Personality: V. Kartikeyan engaged the audience on the following questions: What is the thing called 'the Psyche'? Does it have a structure, and if so, what might that look like? What constitutes 'Personality'? What is the contribution of Ego Psychology to understanding the impact of the Psyche & Personality to the exercise of leadership?

Day 2, Sunday April 22
The first two sessions on Day 2 explored the application-related dilemmas and challenges of GR frameworks as manager and consultant respectively. The concluding session was a historical overview of the themes of many Group Relations Conferences in India over the years, and learnings from the past for the present and future of GR work.

Rol(l)ed into One – Heading a Corporate and being a GR Practitioner: Yash Kaul reflected in public on his experiences of applying GR frameworks in his chief executive role, and the opportunities and challenges that emerged in taking up the role of the leader of the organization / team and that of consultant / coach simultaneously.

The Art of Shadow Consulting and its Relevance for Learning: K.V. Eswara Prasad shared his experiences of being a shadow consultant himself, as well as using another shadow consultant to figure out unconscious dynamics in his client system, with the intent of examining the need and relevance of this methodology in assisting consulting work.

GRCs in India: Looking at the Past, Experiencing the Present & Preparing for the Future: Gunjan Zutshi surveyed the themes and other aspects of GRCs in India since the 1980s, and helped us reflect on what do we learn from the past and the present to make GR work more relevant and more available in India.

Experiences of Koodam 2018 and Reflections

The atmosphere in Koodam 2018 was robust and participative and even joyful, with members ready to engage with the presenters and the themes of their presentations. Group unconscious dynamics were very much at play, with the nature of listening and engaging being somewhat contingent on the age, gender, and presumed expertise of the presenter. Who the presenter was, as well as the theme of the presentation played a part in whether the group demonstrated curiosity and openness to explore on the one hand, or anxiety / envy-driven defence mechanisms, on the other.

Some important questions that members collectively wrestled with during the presentations were:

- How ready are we to face the fact that purity-pollution is a dynamic that we ourselves (each of us in the membership) end up unconsciously setting up or sustaining, in our personal or professional decisions / choices? Do we see it 'out there' – in our culture, society, global politics etc. but believe that we ourselves are exempt from it?
- Can we learn to recognize envy operating not just at the individual level, but at the level of systems, cultures, and societies, and the consequences of envy to larger systems? What keeps us from exploring this more often?
- Are we genuinely keen on recognising and questioning our own patriarchal stances? How ready are we to move out of the comfort of familiar constructs of masculine and feminine, and look at how this very classification may sustain patriarchy?
- Is our interest in psyche and personality rooted in just our desire to be successful, or is it about recognizing their impact on our ability to provide required leadership to task?

- How do we understand and work with GR frameworks in a manner that helps us make choices that avoid the all too common splitting: between leadership and management; task and people; being decisive and being consultative, etc.?
- As GR practitioners, how much do we really work with the unconscious in our client systems that we consult to? How ready are we to face up to, and work with our own unconscious needs and drives that impact the stances we take as consultant?
- What do the change in the themes of GRCs offered in India over the decades, from purely leadership-focused ones to those that place leadership in the wider socio-political context mean for the members and for the staff? What does the shift from each GRC being a stand-alone annual event (from the 1970s till 2010) to GRI as an institution offering a host of learning opportunities based on GR frameworks mean for the future of this methodology in India?

At different points of time in each session, the convenors had to manage the complex role of keeping the focus on the 'collective thinking' while being mindful of, and at times work with, the here & now unconscious dynamics at play, to be in their role as convenors to support the task of collective thinking. They negotiated this complexity by also tapping into the members' experience of working with the unconscious, as well as the members' own clarity about task. A key learning from the experience of Koodam is that the widespread unconscious desire to split conceptual learning and experiential learning is unreal and dysfunctional, and that even grappling with a mode that is primarily conceptual requires of us that we engage with the here and now dynamics that the unconscious processes cause, in a manner that supports the primary task.

Looking back, it does seem as though collective theory-building on Day 1 was more energizing for the membership than the application-oriented sessions on Day 2. On the whole, the membership was more participative in the first 4 sessions, compared to the latter 3, which were about our lived experience of the GR frameworks in our day to day lives and our back-home roles. The membership's way of coping with anxieties about application related dilemmas and challenges appeared to be either of taking recourse to intellectualization on the one hand, or of enacting baD, where they took on the role of curious learners, at some cost to their role as contributors.

Perhaps it was an enactment of the ambivalence towards a key challenge that the GR methodology poses: a questioning of our baM mode of functioning. It was as if the members were saying: GR is fine so long as it gives me insights into the unconscious and thus aids my success, but only to the point where it doesn't challenge my fundamental paradigms. Another possibility is that GR frameworks are considered useful as a tool to work with others, but one's own everyday applications of the very same frameworks are more anxiety-provoking.

But perhaps it is in the very reality of this ambivalence and the attendant anxiety that a space like Koodam gains relevance. The possibility that a collective grappling with GR concepts or their application-related experiences may lead to some breakthrough insights or a challenging of our operating (unconscious) paradigms are brighter. Koodam 2018 is a milestone in the journey of GR practice in India for creating hope, based on some evidence in its very first edition, that both possibilities can happen for members individually, as well as for us collectively as a growing community of GR practitioners.

Ganesh Anantharaman is a member of the Programmes Committee of Group Relations India and was a co-convenor of Koodam 2018. He gratefully acknowledges Rosemary Viswanath's helpful comments on the first draft of this paper.

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Group Relations India was founded in September 2013 with the primary task: To promote experiential learning of individual group and organizational processes using group relations and socio-analysis approaches which pay particular attention to unconscious processes and group dynamics.

www.grouprelationsindia.org | office@grouprelationsindia.org

To accomplish this task:
1. Group Relations India offers a variety of educational programs and workshops for the enhancement of skills and competencies in this area.
2. It also networks with like-minded professional bodies and organizations to further this aim.
3. It functions like a public charitable trust by way of its goals and in spirit

Some learning opportunities offered by GRI

A: Workshops using the experiential methodology

Group Relations Conference: Our annual 6-day group relations conferences (GRC) offer work on the chosen theme, using the frameworks of systems psychodynamics. The design of the GRC along with the diversity of members and staff contribute additionally to intense and rich learning on leadership and authority in systems.

Listening to the Unconscious in Self, Groups, and Systems: A 4-day workshop to explore how unconscious processes shape us and impact the way we take on roles in groups and systems. Write to lttuc@grouprelationsindia.org for a brochure.

Task, Role, and System: Implications for consulting towards systemic change: A 3-day workshop to enhance our understanding of the interdependence of task- role- system in providing leadership, and how this can help us take and make roles in different systems more effectively. Write to programmes@grouprelationsindia.org to learn more about this workshop.

The Brahmin in The Mind: Exploring the nature and dynamics of constructed hierarchies in self and systems: This 4-day workshop explores deep-seated and ingrained constructed hierarchies we create: caste, gender, class, religion, language, and race being just some examples; and how the unconscious and conscious dynamics around these impact us as well as social structures and institutions we belong to. Write to programmes@grouprelationsindia.org to learn more about this workshop.

All our workshops and events are residential, so that they offer a contained reflective space for deeper insights and meaning making, away from everyday pressures and distractions.

B. Online study group on Group Relations concepts

Our web-based online study (reading) group on group relations, systems psychodynamics, and socio analysis is intended for those members who have experienced the group relations methodology and are seeking to further their learning about GR concepts. Write in to studygroup@grouprelationsindia.org if you are interested in knowing more about its format and joining.