

# Leadership : Today's Requirements and Future Challenges

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## Abstract

Organisations are caught in the web of globalization, facing challenges of the '**dot com**' world. It is felt that the key to the castle of organisational success is '**leadership**'. A leader is one who verbalizes a compelling vision and mission, possesses a healthy blend of optimism and courage, and looks beyond mere promulgation of plans, engagement in empty rhetoric or delivering few glib phrases and platitudes. The present paper explores the current dimensions of leadership requirements, along with an introspection of the upcoming challenges for a global leader. Implicit in the paper are certain concepts in leadership, like that of **entrepreneurial culture, fast track leaders, wisdomization of leadership, orchestration, transformational leadership and ethical leadership**. The '**Leadership Era**' seeks to succeed the bygone Industrial, Information and Knowledge era. The paradigmatic shift from the '**brick world**' to the '**click world**' has transformed the role of leaders, the only continuity between the bygone and the coming ages is that of the leader being a dreamer, daring to gaze beyond the horizon.

*Key words : Leadership, Entrepreneurial Culture, Fast Track Leaders, Wisdomization of Leadership, Orchestration, Transformational Leadership, Ethical Leadership & Leadership Era.*

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## Background

Modern organisations are facing multiple, ambiguous and complex challenges for which their existing resources, approaches and solutions are inefficient. This bears an implication on the management of the organisations regarding how it is to be run for productive growth of the organisations. This in turn is throwing a plethora of challenges and expectations for the global leaders of today. It is important that the global organisations not only operate across the national

boundaries achieving integration but also retain the local differentiation and flavour. The mushrooming of these organisations have occurred within the time frame of a single generation at a rapid pace where the global leader has been given colourful descriptions like that of 'cultural synergisers (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992) , true planetary citizens (Roddick, 1998) and cross fertilisers (Bartlett, Doz & Hedlund, 1990), (Velsor & McCauley, 2004: 364). The step towards being a global manager would involve being an international manager first, wherein the concentration would be on the

exchanges taking place across the nations; while for a global leader, collective awareness with an inclusive perspective is important therefore going international is a precursor to being a global leader. Certain questions crop up in our minds then,

- 1) What is the definition of a leader, in the changing times of today, with reference to the changing context?
- 2) What is the role and responsibility of a leader in the dynamic world?
- 3) In the face of increasing complexity in the internal / external environment, what are the implications for leaders?
- 4) What are the requirements to be met by leaders in the present situation?
- 5) What are the forthcoming challenges to be confronted by leaders of the organisation?
- 6) What are the best practices to be adopted by leaders in the global world of today?

To sum it all, how do we situate the role and practices of a leader in terms of the requirements and future challenges in the rapidly changing times? The premise of this paper is in highlighting a leader who brings desirable changes by keeping pace with complex time, demands and pressures. If we observe deeply, we can see that organisations are evolving in new directions, charting new trajectories that of artistry and spirituality (Hatch, Kostera & Kozminski, 2005: 2) along with being market savvy and profit driven at the same time. There is thus an evolution of organisation and management aesthetics (Hatch, Kostera & Kozminski, 2005: 2) since organisations today depend upon creative, innovative minds and also ethics to attain and maintain the legitimacy needed to allow a superfluous resource flow and keep talent alive. Therefore, leadership is changing from being control driven i.e. supervision and domination, to deriving powers from one's mythological consciousness like creative imagination and inspiration (Hatch, Kostera & Kozminski, 2005: 3). The 21st century leader may not completely abandon the traditional procedural techniques and only focus on the attainment of preordinate goals of rationality, profitability and excellence, rather he will seek to explore places where

there is no safe haven or predetermined outcome and engage in heroic adventures through one's courage, vision, mission, imagination and ethical discipline (Hatch, Kostera & Kozminski, 2005: 3). Thus a leader has two faces - that of an artist and that of a priest. The artistic trait of leader implies imaginativeness, originality, an innovator and a creative actor in the organisational canvas. When into the mould of a priest, a leader displays faith, devotion and purity and is inspired towards achieving the goal, and thereby also inspires his followers for attaining organisational success. The role of a leader can be visualised, as that of a director directing organisational members in the organisational arena. The leader, thus, has manifold faces, meeting the ever changing demands of the dynamic world.

### **Understanding Leadership**

Flipping back through the pages of history and looking into the earlier perspectives of leadership, the theme had been widely discussed by Plato, Caesar, Plutarch and many others in the classical era. 'Chinese classics are filled with qualities of divinity to their king like, "Authoritative offerness is in thy mouth, perception is in thy heart and thy tongue is the shrine of justice." Egyptians demanded qualities of authority, discrimination and just behaviour. Homer's Iliad (Greek) identified justice, wisdom and counsel, shrewdness, valour and action (Bass & Stogdill, 1981: 5). This provides a useful insight on leadership as evident in the bygone eras. Then came the industrial era which redefined leadership and forced the organisations to be driven towards technological advancement and attainment of profits by sidelining one's values and principles. Thus leadership competencies required changes by bringing new leaders who could adjust to the new era. Then India embraced globalisation which conquered the country in the span of a decade, influencing it socially, culturally and economically; also bringing with it, tides of stiff competition, changing demand patterns, innovation and revolution in technology. The times changed further, the booming knowledge economy led to the emergence of the Knowledge and Information era where human resources were regarded as capital for investment in organisations for growth, development and success.

The leaders again, had to confront with some new challenges like managing cultural diversity, retaining talent in times of extreme mobility, rising expectations as well as maintaining quality and standards. It can be said that the role of leadership is imperative in steering the ship from the bygone industrial era to the present knowledge and information era. Now, slowly, we are advancing towards the leadership era where leaders are at the forefront, facing brink of challenges like increased competition, work force demands, ranging diverse interests, lifestyles, preferences and to top it all, matching competencies to deal with the complexities of life. Organisations now want to be winning organisations with leaders placed at all levels (Pareek & Shukla, 2005: v) by not necessarily employing leaders but engaging in producing leaders from their organisations itself. Thus organisations are being termed as the breeding ground for leaders where they are able to develop the much needed competencies and also trained to tide over difficult situations. An organisation today without a leader stagnates which is self indicative of the importance attached to the leadership era where a leader can either help organisations to scale new heights or wipe out its very existence. There is need of statesmanship of charismatic leaders at all levels in hierarchy as organisations are flattening with more participation and empowerment of organisational members. The world is being driven to a new leadership era where a leader not only verbalises a compelling vision by possessing a healthy blend of optimism, courage rather looks beyond mere promulgation of plans, engagement in empty rhetoric or delivering few glib phrases and platitudes. We can say that leaders make the organisation and organisation makes a leader. Gary Yukl (2006) defined leadership as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives"(Rowe, 2007: 1). Whereas according to Peter Northouse (2007) leadership is "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Rowe, 2007: 1). Thus to summarise, leadership is a process that involves influencing others. It happens within the context of the group involving goal attainment which is shared by

both leaders and followers. In this context, it would be interesting to mention certain important Thai concepts of relationships in the workplace for the leaders of today as under (Rowe, 2007: 78),

- i. **Sam Ruam** means 'to travel the mid path' by exercising restraint and maintaining composure during stressful situations.
- ii. **Kraeng jai** deals with restraining one's own self interest and desires in conflicting situations and conditions of discomfort.
- iii. **Hai Kiad** is 'to show honour', paying due respect and show of honour to help motivate the subordinates and promote their skills.
- iv. **Nam Jia** meaning 'water from the heart' that is it values genuine acts of kindness, showing consideration for others and thus helping others in their workplace.

Thus the current understanding of leadership is indicative of the fact that it is a long term partnership between leaders and group members where four things are necessary for effective leadership - a purpose, joint accountability, absolute honesty and assertiveness (Dubrin, 2004: 3). The present paper explores the varied, current dimensions of leadership in the present era, what are the requirements of a dynamic leader along with an introspection of the upcoming challenges for the global leader in the future eras.

### **Varied Dimensions of Leadership**

Leadership is a universal human phenomenon and is the "most observed and least understood phenomenon on earth" (Bass & Stogdill, 1981: 5). W.F Buckley (1979) sees a successful leader "as one who crystallises what it is that people desire, "illuminates" the rightness of that desire and coordinates its achievement" (Bass & Stogdill, 1981: 20). As we all know that situations are changing, leadership too is getting moulded into newer forms where relationships and concern for productivity and growth would have to go hand in hand, mere laissez faire leadership will not be tolerated and so also not a drift back to autocratic styles. Transformational Leadership fits some what well in the present scenario,

where a leader not only recognises an existing need for a potential follower but he goes further, seeking to satisfy higher needs by providing the necessary elevation /stimulation that converts the followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents. (Bass & Stogdill, 1981: 20). Transformational leadership style is flexible as it helps one to see both the external and internal world and there is reflexivity or a kind of spiritual quest enabling one to understand self and the counterparts deeply, in turn developing strong linkages. Reflection and introspection is the springboard of all the actions of the leaders of today leading to development of inner strong self. Leadership is a circle of concern as well as our circle of influence (Pareek & Shukla, 2005: 63). Today's leaders must be able to relate to their people by connecting at deeper levels for knowing the problems skin deep. Leaders have to break the barriers that exist between material and spiritual world and enable the former to be able to imbibe wisdom from the latter so that leaders are able to sense and respond to the ever changing world and its varied problems. This forms the core of transformational leadership.

We all know that the biggest enemy that organisations have to defend themselves from is the level of uncertainty that looms over its head every moment. The one trait that helps to distinguish a leading organization from that of a mediocre one is the élan with which its leaders welcome and embrace uncertainty. The effectiveness and efficiency that leaders manifest during unforeseen circumstances, determines the altitude to which the organisation would rise up to (Pareek & Shukla, 2005: 78). Thus an organisation needs to know its strengths and weaknesses, work upon them so as to be able to better equip themselves for facing any kind of challenges and make most of the given opportunities. An important quote emphasises the importance of leader in any organisation - Show me the leader and I'll know the organisation, and show me the organisation and I will know its leaders (Pareek & Shukla, 2005: 78).

The role of leader has shifted from that of being a mere controller to being a facilitator, mentor and coach to now, even newer roles, that of a reflective thinker and a strategic transformational leader (Pareek &

Shukla, 2005: 130). In the competitive world which is technical, system driven, highly customer centred, quality conscious and that which believes in the speed and rapidity of transactions, we require fast track leaders who are able to help organisations keep pace with the changes in the dynamic world and are able to balance short term targets with long term concerns of organisations. According to Brian Lee (1997) and Franklin Covey, "Leadership is an intensely human enterprise and does not fit neatly into definition and boxes. Leaders have all the spontaneity, unpredictability, frailty, vulnerability and potential in the human race. If we are to lead with honour, we must start with the promise that flexibility, adaptability and wisdom are possible, that we have seeds of greatness in us and if we care deeply about the life of others, we can work together to accomplish worthwhile things" (Pareek & Shukla, 2005: 160). Organisations have started investing in developing leaders from inside by identifying talented people who are promising and have proved their mettle. It is important to recognise the potential leadership talent within the organisations and allow growth in their respective career graphs which motivates them to learn and advance at the same time as well as contribute to organisational productivity. As employees no longer remain wedded to a single organisation and keep on looking for greener pastures for career advancement, it is important that organisations are able to attract these fast track leaders and retain them for the benefit of the organisation. Fast track leaders are the future leaders who achieve more than what they ought to, considering their age and experience (Pareek & Shukla, 2005: 181). They are the need of the hour and helping them attain leadership powers in a short duration of time is being taken up by the organisational heads so as to cater to the global thirst for efficient leaders. Thus, in the recent era top managers are giving training, providing resources and even mentoring / coaching the new talent for developing able and efficient leaders. They are being given developmental opportunities and career advancement drives to help them take on important position as leaders and work towards organisational excellence.

Organisations are not only important at the global and national level but at the local level too. Therefore, we see

multinational companies mushrooming in small towns and villages. The leaders have to work hard to place their organisations on the map of the world covering every region, big or small. For doing this they need to influence, motivate employees to work in the right direction which is possible through wisdomization. We all know how important acquisition and deployment of knowledge is to help organisations move in the road to success. Even more important is wisdom that allows an individual to make decisions about future. Organisations need to be move towards wisdomization. This is the process by which the distilled essence of experience is used to deal with explicit and tacit knowledge (Pareek & Shukla, 2005: 213), providing a perspective through which the leaders can find their path through the vast open knowledge space. Thus wisdomization helps to integrate knowledge with action as otherwise knowledge remains sterile and arid, causing no impact on organisation process and systems. The creation of knowledge society and the rise of the specialist – Drucker’s knowledge worker – clearly points in the direction of the need for business to effectively manage knowledge and convert it into wisdom in order to keep space. The 21st century organisational leadership enables the integration of knowledge with action and institutionalising this wisdom into collective organisational psyche (Pareek & Shukla, 2005: 213). To set the journey of organisations towards wisdomization – a learning ambience that fosters continuous improvement is needed - collaboration instead of competition and support and service rather than control and command are the call of the day. Thus leaders of today have to promote wisdomization of organisation to enable its employees to be able to comprehend, analyse and make right decisions and convert them to workable solutions for any problem identified.

Winning leaders are those who make mistakes but bounce back by taking their failures as stepping stones to success or as building blocks for organisational development. They view the situations through fresh lens and make use of their opportunities. They help tap the convictions of organisational members and utilise them for organisation development. Thus a successful leader faces the challenges by pushing himself away from the comfort zones after achieving huge success

in the field. Orchestration is one important aspect of leadership which was introduced by Wallace (2002), who applied it to senior leaders in the context of school in the education system. He refers to a dictionary definition of the term: ‘to organise a situation or event unobtrusively so that a desired effect or outcome is achieved’. Orchestration is unobtrusive, characterised by behind the scenes string pulling, it is evolutionary and it includes attention to detail. Orchestration contrasts starkly with the public, visionary and charismatic behaviour widely popularised as hallmarks of leadership (Glatter & Kydd, 2003: 235). Thus it can be said that orchestration contains elements of both leadership and management. Wallace has described three major activities of this important process, they are, flexible planning and coordination, culture building and communication, and lastly, differentiated support (Glatter & Kydd, 2003: 235). These are important for an efficient leadership. Thus orchestration is an important aspect of leadership practices. It is a known fact that leadership practices fall short much of what is desired and professed. Leadership can’t do without either as they provide guidelines for behavioural disposition of employees in an organisation for maintaining quality and standards, herein comes in ethical leadership, where a leader is committed to excellence, open to constructive criticism and becomes a role model for his employees. A leader is an energy provider, an architect, a sculptor and a catalyst for an organisation. For playing such a diverse role, ethics form the pillar of strength, the sole source of energy for the vigilant leader of today (Pareek & Shukla, 2005: 246). A leader without ethics is a body without soul thus faithful adherence to one’s beliefs, values and culture is essential to traverse the difficult road to success.

After looking into the important aspects that are part of successful organisations with effective leadership like transformational leadership, wisdomization of leadership, orchestration, fast track leaders and ethical leadership we can say that all these diverse characteristics together contribute towards an embedded, people friendly culture within organisation i.e. Entrepreneurial Culture. Every organisation has its foundation built on certain values, beliefs, ideas and assumptions i.e. the underlying philosophy of

an organisation is represented by its organisational culture. We have moved from a mere functional culture to a more process oriented, time based and network directed culture (Pareek & Shukla, 2005: 219) where timely response to new opportunities and threats through networking and strategic alliances is the key to thrive in an uncertain world today. The culture of today is speeding towards entrepreneurial / democratic/ organic culture where people are important rather than single domination by top level heads. Organisations are becoming more flat with team cultures taking over. The 'YES BOSS Culture' of Autocratic / Bureaucratic culture is dwindling as one doesn't want to only create clones, as Stephen Covey puts it, "When you have people thinking like you, talking like you....then you feel that you are validated as a leader because other people value you. But they are telling what you want to hear and not what you need to know." (Pareek & Shukla, 2005: 220). Transformational Leadership, empowerment of employees, creating a team through collaboration of important stakeholders like customers, suppliers, teachers, students, administrators, government officials and share holders helps cultivate a people friendly culture. Entrepreneurial culture stresses upon building complementary, multicultural teams where people with diverse backgrounds, varied talent and different skills unite for attaining a single mission. Many organisations of today believe in a leadership team at the top which in turn is supported by several successive layers of team leaders below. Therefore we can have two important roles for leaders of today - one, that of a disciplined active doer who performs his duties as per organisational rules, procedures and maintains a status quo; the other, a creative innovator, a risk taker and a thinker who is futuristic and blends thought and action for a better tomorrow. A healthy blend of both may be the actual essence of leadership requirements to meet future challenges in the coming decades.

### **Leaders of Today**

"Troops can't be managed into battle. They have to be led" as told by Napoleon (Smith, 1996: 69). Leadership is critical in today's organisations. We need passionate leaders who can break the bureaucratic icebergs like ice breaker ships and courageously chart a new course all

together. These are innovative leaders. As traditional walls crumble, the base of power changes (Smith, 1996: 69). Initially leadership was role based on position and status but now there are a new set of forces that are operating. As earlier, it was a simple process where direct orders were passed to the subordinates and all would have to follow, but in the present times, passive management in the form of mini and major bureaucracies or teams have come up. "A leader is a person who inspires a person to take a journey to a destination they wouldn't go to by themselves. Today, more than ever we need people who breathe new life into organisations and take them places they wouldn't go to by themselves" (Smith, 1996: 71). Let us look at the traits of an innovative leader of the 21st century. They create a vision so as to fulfil their mission. They keep ahead even in times of crisis. They are experts in their fields and are risk takers. They are patient listeners and act like teachers and mentors for organisational success. Leaders need to be passionate to help transform an idea into reality. Leaders have to be open to the outside world and be adaptive to the emerging trends. Thus the most important way to bring freshness in the old sagging organisations is by bringing about innovative leadership. The occasion of change in leadership is always a useful moment to step back and examine these subtle transformations. There is an experiment in biology where a frog is placed in a shallow pan of pond water and the temperature is raised in small increments. The water can be brought to a boil, eventually causing the frog's death, without the frog leaping out because at no interval of time had the rate of change been sufficient to trigger a threshold of threat to the frog. Similarly, many of our organisations have experienced such continuous changes that only when they look back can they see how some of the significant features of the environment have changed (Gilmore, 1988: 32). Thus the present form of leadership is moving slowly towards participative styles of management by empowering organisational members who are not only a part of change, but also bring in changes of different magnitudes, whatsoever.

### **Leaders of Tomorrow**

Leaders are driven by values, principles and ethics and they motivate people, coach their efforts and

finally inspire their action. Then leadership is not an end but a means to an end; where leaders are developers, continuously developing organisations. There are emerging views regarding leadership for the coming times. To mention a few - time management i.e. accomplishment of task on time is very important. There is need to orient oneself for looking into what lies ahead thus envisioning future for better prospects is regarded significant. We need leaders who exhibit knowledge, confidence and whose leadership is based on holistic worldview in terms of flexibility and diversity. Excellence lies in adopting approaches that help foster deeper understanding by constructing bridges across cultural, religious, racial, ethical and other groups, promoting social cohesion and overall tolerance and welfare of mankind. Thus promoting humanistic culture by embracing humans in all their varied backgrounds is significant.

Thomas Friedman has said, "The world is being flattened. I didn't start it and you can't stop it, except at greater cost to human development and your own future. But we can manage it, for better or worse. A city in which we live, maybe American or Asian by geographical location or even could be a microcosm of the rest of the world today. Access is the key word. There is a palpable integration, an irrefutable buzzing and spilling over of boundaries and borders. As the world is becoming smaller and its people are getting more connected with one another, the manner of interaction between beings is changing dramatically" (Cohen, 2007: 143). A great leader is equivalent to a hiker's compass. The hiker, on his way, may be a gifted athlete but without the aid of navigation, he is sure to get lost. A leader guides and motivates others to follow a path that in her mind is clearly defined. He is able to generate a climate of honesty, trust and accountability (Cohen, 2007: 151). Leaders need to be CAPABLE which stands for Cultivate credibility, Achieve results, Practice humility, Acquire perspective, Build leaders, Leverage conversations and Exercise balance (Weiss, & Molinaro, 2002: 184) thus CAPABLE is the acronym to describe the actions of effective leadership for cultivating credibility and be able to meet the challenges that future holds for them. Thus leaders of tomorrow need to develop an insight to foresee the changing patterns of organisational life

and match the spectrum of changes by filtering and blending the positivities of present and past into a common fabric to adorn the coming future that would bring success to individual and organisation overall.

### **Leadership Challenges for the 21st Century**

It is a truism that the context of a given locale or era shapes leadership (Burns, 1984, Johnson, 1996) and contemporary educational leaders function in complex and highly variable local contexts (Murphy, 2002: 20). The focus here lies in seeking to map the contextual terrain facing contemporary leaders in term of six key features, political, economic, financial, staffing, demographic and accountability (Murphy, 2002: 21). Let us take them up one by one. Educational leaders have to meet state expectations and deal with political pressures tactfully in order to maintain a congenial environment for all. This represents the political terrain that needs to be taken care of. Education and Economics are symbiotic as both contribute to one another in a synergistic way. Education provides the human capital to be utilised for country's productivity and economic sources are vital for organisational functioning, therefore the leader must play a proactive role in establishing a positive link between the two disciplines. The educational leaders always need to answer certain important questions like, "How do I procure more resources for my institution?", "How do I manage the available resources and make best use of them?" (Murphy, 2002: 28). Here comes the role of educational leader to manage the financial terrain that would have direct bearing on organisational productivity. Coping with labour shortages, dealing with problems of recruitment, maintaining diverse and qualified professional staff and meeting their demands is crucial for any leader of an organisation if he wants to maintain the quality and standards of the organisation. Thus staffing too is an important area that needs to be looked into for organisational success. A leader is also faced with challenges to meet the diverse needs of the population, those employed, without hurting their cultural sentiments and values. Thus demographic terrain too hold significance in leadership arena as he has to arrange for capacity building and other specialised programmes for the people he is catering to. Accountability is one important terrain that

needs to be taken care of as it is important today to be accountable to entities beyond one's organisation, be accountable for not only the process but the outcome as well. Thus today's educational leaders are working in complex situations and accountability holds an important place in agenda of leaders. At the end, three important features seem to dominate the contemporary landscape - first, the shifting of the national economy from 'muscle work' to 'mind work' due to an excessive demand for educated youth.( Murphy, 2002: 37); Second, the importance of being attached to political movements and policies that have a direct bearing on the organisations' functioning; lastly, accountability to both the insiders as well as the varied stakeholders so as to facilitate smooth navigation through all the terrains without any obstacle. This definitely provides the compass to leaders for finding the path that leads to success through varied challenges posed to them in the near future.

### **New foundation: New understanding of Leadership**

Three metaphors have been used to sketch a portrait of leadership, that of a moral steward, an educator and a community builder. An important belief shared by all is "the new science of administration will be a science with values and of values" (Murphy, 2002: 75). The leaders must develop a passion to work - work towards their goals, be committed to their work and help create a moral order that will help to bond the leader as well as his followers. Thus the present leaders have to act as moral stewards to serve the organisation and society at large. Pedagogic motive, ethos and culture of teaching as a profession provides the most effective form of leadership which repositions leading from managing to learning. It requires a thorough understanding of the situation and then be motivated to learn from them. The leaders need to be educators, to be aware, to be more knowledgeable about the changing priorities, thus, be learners and dissipate their knowledge to one and all. Creating an open system where there is access and personalized learning environment is central aspect of community leaders who do not believe in hierarchical structures and leading from the apex of the organisational pyramids; rather, who lead from

the very grassroots level or from the intense web of complex societal relationship (Murphy, 2002: 76-77). The fundamental basis of leading would be based on professional expertise, participative management and moral imperative rather than being merely authoritative and controlling all. Thus leaders need to essay all the roles with great efficiency so that they are able to inspire the work force and help build an army of efficient workers. The leaders need to stretch their leadership practices across organisational members, structures and system to be able to meet the growing demands of the global world and simultaneously meet the individual and organisational goals as well. The leaders need to collaboratively develop and communicate a value driven vision for the future in order to give a sense of purpose, satisfaction, meaning and hope to all in the society. This envisioning process would definitely involve interaction with people, help build sustainable relationships and promote individual and organisational success.

### **Implications for Educational Leadership**

Leadership is the ability to inspire confidence in and support among people who are needed to achieve organisational goals, which means that leadership is said to deal with change, inspiration, motivation and influence. Leaders ought to play multiple roles like that of figurehead, spokesperson, negotiator, coach, motivator, team builder, team player, technical problem solver, entrepreneur and strategic planner which in turn have implications on organisations worldwide (Dubrin, 2004: 24). An important development has been the development of partnership, between leaders and group members, fostering team work and promoting team based organisation by empowering group members (Dubrin, 2004: 24). Team leaders thus share power, deemphasize individual glory and understand that power sharing increases their own power. (Dubrin, 2004: 282). Another thrust of leaders is to help their organisations grow by assisting workers to become better learners. A leader thus manages knowledge and cultivates a learning organisation. Knowledge Management is the systematic sharing of information to achieve desired goals. When knowledge is managed effectively, information is shared as needed, whether it is printed, stored electronically or resting in the



brain of the workers. (Dubrin, 2004: 415). A learning organisation is one that is skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge and at modifying behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights. (Dubrin, 2004: 415) and organisational leaders must take the initiative to create conditions whereby enhancement of capacities and learning takes place (Dubrin, 2004: 420) by creating a strategic intent to learn, created a shared vision, encouraging system thinking, encouraging personal mastery of the goals and team learning. (Dubrin, 2004: 422). A multicultural leader with skills and attitude to relate effectively to and motivate, influence and inspire people across race, gender, age, social attitudes and lifestyles is the need of the hour. The leader must be aware of overt and subtle cultural differences which function as starting points in the leader's attempt to lead a person from another culture (Dubrin, 2004: 424) thus management of a diverse work force helps unlock the potential for excellence among employees who might otherwise be overlooked.

The world today is dominated by the idea that leadership is one of the major factors –sometimes, the only factor – that will determine whether an educational organisation will succeed or fail. Thus, there are many colleges and training centres coming up for leadership training and development. Alongside this, many books, articles on leadership in general and educational leadership in particular are appearing at an increasing rate, emphasising on the importance of leadership and how research findings can contribute towards the same (Simkins, 2005: 9). Bolman and Deal more than ten years ago said, "An unquestioned, widely shared canon of common sense holds that leadership is a very good thing and that we need more of it atleast, more of the right kind." (Simkins, 2005: 10). Leadership is having implications in all sectors and policy structures as there is stress on standards and accountability, devolution and delegation, flexibility and innovation and expanding challenges. Educational institutions are changing as new waves of transformation are hitting them, including new forms of partnership, networking among schools, varied public- private sector enterprises, trying to move from policy climate of 'informed prescription' to one of 'informed professional judgement' where the former was crucial to achieving rapid advances

that were needed, not least in literacy and numeracy. Now, however we need to restore more autonomy and professional control to teachers, albeit within a national system of accountability (Simkins, 2005: 12). Due to dynamic policy environment and political system, expectation of leadership from our educational heads soars high as the key question for the leadership remains as to "What kind of organisation is this to be? Like should a school be conceived as – a branch office of the national educational education system, delivering a specified set of products to specified standards or a participatory community, responding to expectations and demands of key stakeholders as expressed through the governing body or a competitive business, seeking to attract parent – consumers who wish to purchase its product or what? The answer maybe – 'all of these'. This implies that the roles of leadership have to be redefined. This signals to three important roles, that of - enhanced line roles: leading, managing and supervising others to ensure their effective performance; project roles: orchestrating the use of resources to achieve specific ends, often oriented to the achievement of clearly delineated, narrowly focussed short term outcomes; and, networking roles: working with individuals and groups in other organisations to build partnerships for tackling common problems or pursuing shared purposes (Simkins, 2005: 15). In future, much attention will be given to sharing of understanding and practice between different parts of the sector - public and private and also between international educational leaders where assumptions about a particular kind of educational reform go largely unquestioned, rather welcomed and practised if it is contributing to the success of all. Internationalised universities and school are likely to be a significant development too- in one form or the other in the 21st century. (Simkins, 2005: 22).

Observing a flock of birds in flight makes us assume straight away the bird out front is the leader who sets the flight path, the same mindset is at work in our folkloristic description of the harvester ant queen who is said to rule over colonies. Yet no such things happen as there is division of labour and each is involved as a team in accomplishing the desired task. (Lakomski, 2005: 16). Similarly Leadership is not what leaders do, rather leadership is what leaders and followers do together for

the collective good. In today's society, leaders operate in a shared powered environment where many people participate in leadership, some as leaders and others as followers. Leadership in new millennium will be more collaborative by allowing cooperation and consensus rather than competition and conflict truly fostering the collaborative spirit. Our organisations are no longer the enduring institution of old but assemblage of parts, like movie producers who assemble and disassemble the elements of a film, leaders and followers have to develop their skills at recruiting, joining, direction setting, organising and managing change and short lived teams of people. We need to match hopes of finding leaders who can articulate a genuine vision and set up a mission for achieving organisational success. John Gardener tells the story of a little girl who tells her teacher she is drawing a picture of God. The teacher replies, "But Mary, no one knows what God looks like." Little Mary replies confidently, "Well, they will when I get through" (Gilmore, 1988: 248). Thus leaders need to be creative, bold and take decisions that help the organisations to be more innovative and different, at the same time, also cater to the vast majority of the people who are dependent upon them by encouraging people at all levels to take a step forward and absorb relevant uncertainties, thereby creating the necessary conditions for others to take initiative in their areas. Leaders must work for the present and simultaneously cultivate and nurture future leaders of the organisation who would take up the tasks in the coming decades!!

## **Conclusions**

Organisations have to face the ramifications of globalisation, the explosion in digital communications and a paradigmatic shift from a supply driven to a demand driven market. Worldwide the leaders are confronted with demands of greater accessibility, flexibility, cost effectiveness, quality and relevance along with lifelong provision. Thus our leaders must learn to navigate in the crude expanse they are exposed to.

The industrial era lasted for over a century and then was born the information era which too had its share of glory. Now we are in the knowledge era which too is taking a back seat, paving way for its successor, the leadership era. As all will know, by then, how to

extract knowledge, tap it and put it to best use however managing knowledge and talent will be important and herein comes the role of a leader. Leadership era will witness more plateau organisations with leaders at all levels. Leadership is not considered a one time act but a lifelong process with exchange of baton from one generation to another. This era will promote group learning, sharing of information, creation of new communication systems and providing opportunities to others to practise leadership in their lifetime. As has been said, 'It is thus necessary to navigate rather than rule!' (Pareek & Shukla, 2005: 325). Building sustainable relationships through diverse networks by blending the multicultural differences is one of the greatest challenges leaders are facing today. Successful global leaders are being called entrepreneurs who recognise opportunities and organise resources to take advantage of the same. Their main function is to produce more leaders than followers. Thus it is important that a leader today is not only a facilitator, a guide but also a mentor, a coach and a teacher who must muster these roles with great finesse! Global leaders of tomorrow must possess certain insights. They must think globally and act locally; must listen, adapt and evolve quickly; learn the language of business and the local culture and make use of technology to create transparency and remove obstacles (Cohen, 2007: 21). Leaders should be passionate about their work and be willing to listen and learn 'You have been given two ears and one mouth for a reason: listen twice as much as speak' (Cohen, 2007: 24). Adopting a versatile style of leadership by attaining professional skills and embracing cultural diversity is important. A major challenge confronting leaders today is translation of their vision to stark reality of everyday life. To head for a good start, there is need felt to rekindle the hope within our hearts, believe in our actions and stand forward in the journey that takes us from the brick world to the dot com world and help in build worthwhile organisations that are laid upon the foundations of trust and transparency. Leaders have to meet the requirements of the world of today and be prepared to meet the challenges in the coming times. The only difference that underlines leadership of today and tomorrow is time and the similarity that transcends all times is that of a leader being a dreamer, who gazes much beyond the horizon and tries to achieve the goal

he had been aiming for all through the ages. Thus, leadership is definitely an important key to the castle of organisational success and will remain so in the next coming decades and centuries together.

*Leaders of today have inherited the tradition from foundations laid in the past, tried to rebuild and restructure the organisations as per needs of the present, and now the future leaders have a daunting task to carry the legacy of the past forward, blend it with present, remould the organisations and adorn the future as per requirements of the dawning eras and help realise their dreams for betterment of the individual and organisation by creating mini democracies within democracy!!*

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