HIERARCHY AND MODERN ORGANISATION : A PARADOX LEADING TO HUMAN WASTAGE

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The central hypothesis of the article is that the concept of hierarchy present in almost all modern organisations is a breeding ground for incompetence, that leads to human wastage in various ways. The concepts, hierarchy and modern organisation are examined to point out how these two cannot co-exist without producing enormous problems for the personnel of modern organisations. Insights derived from the science of psycho-dynamics are largely utilised to understand the possible reasons for the survival of hierarchy in modern organisations despite hierarchy's functionality. The article ends with an exploration of possible means for jettisoning hierarchy from modern organisations. Dr. Gouranga P. Chattopadhyay was formerly Professor of Organisation Behaviour, Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta; presently, he is a management consultant. Mr. Ashok Malhotra was formerly General Manager (HRD), Indian Oxygen Ltd., presently, he is a management consultant.

A DEFINITION OF ORGANISATION :

Modern organisations, such as houses of industry and commerce, academic institutions and hospitals, to name a few, are showing growing concern over 'human wastage'. This is true for not only India, but for other countries of the world as well. In order to understand the causes of the problems that lead to the phenomenon of wastage, the central hypothesis that this article proposes is that the concept of hierarchy present in almost all modern organisations is a breeding ground for incompetence that leads to human wastage in various ways. This is what is reflected in the title of this article.

Before taking up the hypothesis, let us briefly state what we understand by the term 'organisation'. An organisation is a network of planned relationships within a system for engaging with tasks. These relationships not only include those between people, but between all resources (namely, technology, money, territory, energy and so on) within a system. This also means that in planning an organisation, one has to also take into account the constraint of every resource, because those constraints would set the limit of organisational relationships. Putting it in another way, *an effective organisation is a tool that allows the inputs to be transformed into meaningful outputs with the least possible wastage.* An
organisation thus provides the blueprint to the people to relate to one another and to other resources, in order to engage in activities that contribute towards affective performance

of tasks. These tasks are designed in such a way that, together, they contribute towards the fulfillment of the system's long term objectives as well as short term goals.

Putting it in yet another way, a system is created or started in order to serve or achieve a set of objectives, since no one starts a system first and then looks for an objective. Once the objectives are set, tasks are designed to achieve or serve those. To perform the tasks, money, material, technology, space or territory, time and other resources are needed. But above all, people are needed to connect or relate these resources to one another. For this purpose, they also relate to one another through their activities. In order to define the boundary of various persons' activities in a system, roles are created. The organisation comes alive as people engage in activities in this network of roles.

Since organisations take their meaning from the objectives and tasks of the system, their nature and design vary or should vary, not only according to the nature of objectives and tasks that different systems have, but also when objectives and tasks of a system get modified or changed, if they have to be effective. This would immediately mean that with any kind of change in objectives and tasks, the activities of the role-holders in the organisation must necessarily change.

Changes in objectives may take place for various reasons embedded in the economic, political, legal and social environment in which the system operates. In all such situations, tasks would also have to be changed in keeping with the changes in the objectives. Tasks may also change without any change in the objectives due to the introduction of new technology or new product lines, which may also, simultaneously, lead to discarding the older technology and some of the existing lines of products. When tasks change, the activities of people that lead to task performance also change. Since some degree of skill is needed for any kind of activity that encompasses many kinds of resources, changes in tasks call for learning new skills and also, at times, jettisoning old skills. Further, since each role prescribes a set of activities that need certain kinds of skills, transfers and promotions, more often than not, also demand addition of skills for those who get transferred or promoted. Working competently in any role in a modern organisation, therefore, requires the personnel to be always prepared to learn new skills, which means changing their activity patterns.

The central hypothesis of this article holds that since the concept of hierarchy present in organisations breeds incompetence, it contributes towards human wastage in organisations. In order to test this hypothesis, let us begin by looking at the process called *hierarchy*.

THE MEANING OF HIERARCHY :
The term hierarchy is used in connection with many kinds of organisations. But the dictionary (Oxford, 1972) meaning of the word *hierarchy* refers to two kinds of organisations only. The first one is religious organisations. The word *hierarchy* came into

Latin from a Greek word which means a sacred ruler or the president of sacred rites, who is or was a high priest. In Latin it means the power or rule of episcopate. As an adjective the word *hierarchy* means having rule in holy things or among hole ones or one who has rule or authority in holy things. The word *hierarchy* more emphatically, takes us into the religious organisation. Apart from meaning rule or dominion in holy things, priestly rule or government and a system of ecclesiastical rule, it also means the divisions of angles.

The second kind of organisation that the dictionary refers to is the biological organisation consisting of species of plants and animals. The superiority of each order over the succeeding order in the first kind of organisation derives its sanction from the concept of a Supreme Being. The chief priest in most religions is perceived as having the ultimate authority to interpret the will of the Supreme Being. His superiority is based on this Supernatural Being and therefore "mere men" cannot question it. Neither can the succeeding orders of priests be questioned by their lower orders because they receive their authority from the unquestionable chief priest. Authority, thus, in hierarchy, as obtained in this kind of organisation, is unquestionable and always comes from the above, since it starts, as it were, Above All. When it is delegated to the succeeding orders, for each order, the authority of its superceding order also becomes unquestionable since it is delegated from the unquestionable source, which is mostly considered also as unknowable.

In ancient monarchy, the King's authority, likewise, was also perceived as unquestionable. In some situations, as in Japan earlier, the King, being considered as a descendent of the Supreme Being, was supposed to derive his authority from that Supreme Being. Therefore his authority, and that of those who wielded authority as his delegates, organised in a series of succeeding order of ranks, was also unquestionable. This notion of authority emanating from above which could not be questioned pervaded the entire feudal culture in all countries of the world.

THE HIERARCHIC ORDER OF SPECIES :

Let us, for a moment, take a look at the nature of hierarchic order that the biologists would have us. The hierarchy that they talk of is based on a continuum of simple to more complex, from an understanding of how over a very long period of time, more complex species have evolved from the less complex or simpler, types. If this fact is presented as a hierarchic order, then one is in someway also saying that there is a divine hand in this evolution. But then, a belief in divinity also means that all creatures are same in God's eyes. In that case, there can be no notion of superiority or inferiority, no notion of hierarchy among the orders. The only reason for calling such divisions in society as hierarchic seems to be that human beings project their internal picture of hierarchy, as has been argued later on and imagine difference as hierarchy. More pertinent to us is the notion that this hierarchy is based on evolution. To transfer such a notion to human

organisations, one has to phantasise the evolution of, say, managing directors from unskilled workers !

THE CONCEPT OF HIERARCHY IN INDIAN METACULTURE :

Let us now go back to the human organisations and spend some time in looking at the cultural scenario in the Indian subcontinent.

In this sub-continent (referred to as India henceforth), the religious and the secular hierarchies have run on the principle of unquestionable authority, as far as we know, from the time that the Sanskritic culture based societies (also known as *Aryan, Vedic-Upanishadic* and so on) consolidated themselves, dominating over the autochthonous tribes. In this culture, which got its strong foothold in India around 2,500 B.C., the notions of purity and pollution were added to strengthen the concept of hierarchy, the concept of unquestionable, and, therefore, to a great extent unknowable, concept of authority. A minority of the three Twice Born *varnas, Barahmins, Kshatriyas* and *Vaishyas,* ranked in that order, in terms of purity, dominated over the majority *varna*, the *Sudras*. Within each *varna* the casts or *jatis* were order in terms of purity, with pollution increasing as one went down this rank order, hitting the rock bottom where the castes were considered as untouchables because of their perceived highly polluted nature. In this dehumanishing and highly exploitative hierarchic system (this was hierarchic since the distribution of purity and pollution was considered as unquestionable because it was supposed to have been created by an unknowable Supreme Being) although the *Brahmins* were considered as the purest, they never had sufficient clout in themselves to keep the system going. Therefore, they always supported locally dominant *Kshatriya,* and at times, *Vaishya* castes. Since the *Brahmin's* support gave religious sanction to secular power, the locally dominant castes paid back the *Brahmins* by upholding their superior and purer status. In such a system, personal skill or competence had to place whatsoever when it came to the question of status based on one's birth. This hierarchic division present in the sub-continent of India is so strong that although Christianity is now nearly 2000 years old and Islam a little less older than that, when one talks of the Indian tradition, one seldom, if ever, takes into account these two traditions. Similarly, the Buddhist tradition too has been relegated to some kind of a museum which one seldom visits and Jainism has been firmly incorporated within the Sanskritic tradition, now known as Hinduism - a name derived from the term Hindu coined by Muslims (Arabs), for the earlier settlers in the valley of the River Indus. Sikhism was also sought to be incorporated into Hinduism till, in the recent years, the more militant sections of the Sikhs resurrected their separateness from the Hindus. A second reason for either ignoring these non-Hindu traditions or incorporating them within Hinduism is, perhaps, because all these other religions fundamentally challenge the notion of purity or pollution as the basis of an unalterable hierarchic order, though they also believe in the principle of hierarchy, since they too derive their religious sanctions from an unquestionable source. It is worthwhile noting

here also the fact that both among the Christians and the Moslems in India the notion of purity and pollution has, in many ways, been smuggled in, the eevidence of which is available in many research publications (Ahmad, 1973; Ram, 1987) and well known practices.

What we have stated in this section of the article is, briefly, that all over the world, and more so in India, organisations based on hierarchy is an old, historical reality. This kind of organisation admirably served the purpose of exploiting the majority by a powerful minority. Any benefits that went to the exploited majority were mostly to either monitor their rising disaffection or to keep them healthy enough to produce wealth for the well-being of the minority that dwelt in the upper echelons of the hierarchy.

In the case of individual families, the authority of the parents is also experienced as unquestionable in infancy and childhood. It is also often extended to adolescence and young adulthood. In the family also, therefore, a form of hierarchy is experienced, the essence of which is again unquestionable authority. This is reinforced to some extent in schools. For the infant and the child, the nature of this unquestionable authority is often experienced as unknowable because, quite often, what is passed off for adult logic appears as confusing and irrational, both justly so, and unjustly, due to the ignorance of the infant and the child about the world around them.

By the time a person reaches adulthood, this experience of hierarchy and authority becomes so much juxtaposed and internalised that most individuals seem to get out of touch with the reality of their personal authority as adult human beings.

ORGANISATION REVISITED :

This juxtaposition of hierarchy with the concept of authority is perhaps at the heart of the problem of human wastage referred to in the beginning of this article. In all likelihood, hierarchy is a relic of the archaic feudal system which has been quietly smuggled into such modern systems as capitalism and socialism. As argued earlier, the concept of hierarchy presumes a source of absolute (unquestionable and unlimited) authority. Can there be an absolute authority in modern work organisations ? Obviously not, though the traditional organisational approaches have sometimes phantasised such absolute authority with the "owners", from whom the process of delegation is supposed to originate. This is clearly absurd. Logically, the concept of absolute authority of "owners" should have been jettisoned with the acceptance of limited liability because one cannot possibly have limited liability and absolute authority at the same time. Further, ownership in most modern organisations is not a monolith and, in fact, the limits to the authority of different types of owners (like minority/majority shareholders, and partners) are fairly well laid out in Company Law. However, so strong is the myth of absolute authority of the owners that this distribution of authority is rarely reflected in actual practice. For example, one rarely comes across organisations which are managed by their boards. More often than not, the processes in Board deliberations centre around the chief

executive or the controlling "owner", with the other members either getting marginalised or becoming his echo or his counterpoints. The same process gets reflected in other facets of the functioning of the organisation. Departments and sections become one man systems with very little "co-holding" by the rest.

Let us now once again look at the other reality of modern organisations, briefly mentioned at the beginning of this article. No organisation is ever created without one or more goals and objectives.

So, we have objectives of organisations and then material, territory, time, people and tasks to fulfill the objectives. The activities of the people in all organisations are thus aimed at performing the tasks. In all such situations, therefore, what is generally known as an 'order' is in fact a communication regarding something to do with the tasks because the 'orders' are all about activities of people in the organisation that are relevant to tasks. A senior person gets his authority to make a communication (which is called an 'order') from several sources, including his subordinates. Let us look at this process closely.

When people apply for jobs and successfully enter an organisation, they sign some sort of a contract, usually in the shape of signing the duplicate of the appointment letter. Through signing this duplicate, they agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the employing organisation. In effect, they agree to put in cold storage a large amount of their personal authority, and delegate the right of use of that authority on their behalf by the chief executive of the organisation. For example, they delegate their authority to structure their time during working hours, they delegate their authority in terms of their location during working hours, they delegate their authority for deciding what is an appropriate compensation package for their work. In some systems, they also delegate their authority regarding precisely what they should wear during work and, in the armed forces, they even delegate the authority over their lives, in that they have to remain prepared to face certain death in some battle situations. All this personal authority is *delegated upwards* on joining the organisation. Later on, the chief executive *redelegates* this authority *downwards*. The nature of this authority going up and coming down is intimately related to the tasks and the resources. This is because, no authority of a person at the time of joining is delegated upwards, which has no relationship with the system's tasks and other resources. In any army, the personal authority to choose one's clothes is delegated upwards and one wears uniforms because the tasks require it. Since the nature of the tasks of the employees in an academic organisation does not require a uniform, the employees there retain the authority to choose their clothing. In the armed forces, the combatants delegate upwards their authority over their own lives when they join, and, therefore, a court martial can decide even to take a man's life away. Since no other organisation demands upward delegation of such authority from its personnel, at best the personnel can be sacked. What we are trying to highlight is that any 'order' is really a communication sacked. What we are trying to highlight is that any 'order' is really a communication based on the understanding of the kinds of activities that the personnel

must engage with to perform the system's tasks. But by calling such communications 'orders', by association, the image of a hierarchy is evoked where the delegation process starts at the top and authority cannot be questioned. This is partly a process of infantilisation *i.e.* the responses of the personnel resemble an Infant's response to its parents. Partly this is a spill over or carry over effect of the hierarchy of the powerful religious orders, monarchies and feudal systems of the past, of the historical background of modern society.

Distribution of authority in an organisation necessarily has to be on the basis of accountability for tasks and, logically cannot be on the basis of categorisation of people into hierarchical levels. The authority of the 'gatekeeper' has to necessarily rest with the gatekeeper, irrespective of his hierarchic level. In exercising his authority, he has to necessarily ignore the difference in the levels of people *vis-a-vis* on whom such authority is being exercised. In his eyes, an unskilled worker and the managing director are the same or at least, should be the same. Generally, this is recognised in the case of sensitive functions like security, storekeeping, accounting, safety and so on, and most organisations, build some systems and structures to ensure that holders of such critical and sensitive roles can exercise their authority. In our experience, even in these sensitive areas there are many exceptions. For example, while workers and junior staff in some factories are made to open their satchels' or tiffin boxes while they leave the premises, the cars of managers are given a salute by the security staff. Further, it is overlooked that some gatekeeping is necessary in almost every role, and the failure in exercising authority necessary to perform this gatekeeping function could cost dearly to the total system. For example, if a shopfloor supervisors fails in his gatekeeping role, the cost could be anything ranging from loss of production, quality, machine life to worker's safety. Similarly, every role would involve some negotiation across boundaries. The hierarchic structure overlooks this and places a unilateral right with people on the higher end of the hierarchic level to invade the boundaries of those at the lower levels. For example, it is generally assumed, (even if it be not so in black and white), that the authority of the subordinate also rests with his boss, and the boss at his own sweet will can withdraw the authority, presumably delegated by him to the subordinate, without any negotiation. In such a situation, it is well high impossible for the subordinate to exercise his task based authority, for the assumption is that the authority with him is not for task accomplishment, but arises out of the whims and fancies of his boss which can be withdrawn or overruled at any time. For instance, it is not unusual to find a senior manager from the head office visiting a branch, giving orders directly to a junior staff in the branch, without consulting the branch manager. Needless to say, in such situations, no real accountability can also rest with the subordinate. Consequently, management instead of being seen as a collectivity (of which one is a part), is seen as the hierarchic level above one's own.

The reality of modern work organisations is that each role is linked to multiple other roles in a complex network. A hierarchic ordering of these into a neat organisation chart is but an artificial imposition which rarely reflects the reality. On the other hand, it creates myths which become counterproductive to the exercise of task based authority and, hence, task accomplishment. The subordinates, in such situations, feels powerless and, behaviourally, often regresses to infantile manipulative behaviour, as one re-experiences one's infant days when one had learned to manipulate the all powerful elders in the family.

A myth which is often held is that subordinates are 'resources' to be deployed by the boss. Thus, it is not uncommon to find job descriptions with a last all encompassing statement like ".... and other tasks assigned from time to time". Quality clearly, this is a desperate and mostly ineffective attempt to somehow preserve the myth of absolute authority; that many organisations feel the need for doing so, is in itself revealing. It is not unlikely that a few decades from now, the concept of 'boss-subordinate' relationship would appear as shocking and appalling as the concept of slavery appears today. However, as of now, the cost of this myth goes often unexamined. For example, when the boss discovers that actually his authority is quite limited and quite questionable he feels cheated, and mostly deals with this feeling of being cheated with a variety of dysfunctional behaviour. As for example, his emphasis might shift from 'managing tasks' to 'controlling people'. Thus, what was originally intended as task based authority becomes a source of power for controlling people through mechanisms of reward and punishment. Similarly, the subordinates deal with their anger at being treated as more objects (resources) by regressing into infanitile behaviour, forgetting that they are adults. This is strongly reminiscent of the procrastinations of a child who feels that he has been ordered to do something illogical and unfair by his parents, who can satisfy their whims, because within the family they indeed have almost unlimited authority.

Another devastating consequence of the confusion between hierarchy and authority is the serious erosion which it creates in exercise of authority particularly *vis-a-vis* people who fall into higher strata of the hierarchic structure. "Don't you know who I am?" may be an exaggerated and dramatised description, but the phenomenon occurs much too frequently to be ignored. Thus, communication from higher levels to lower levels are 'commands' or 'instructions' but communication from lower to higher levels are mere 'requests' and 'suggestions', which need to be couched in acceptable or sufficiently safe language, even at the risk of losing their essence or downright distortion. Subordinates withholding disagreement or even creating a false impression of agreement (consciously) is far too frequent a sight. Here again, the process of communication, instead of being a task based exchange of information and views becomes a means of exercising control either directly or through manipulation or one of coping with anxiety about authority that has the potential of being destructive.

If the reality is that the so-called 'orders' are communications for effective task performance, then those can and should be questioned if a person from his own perspective either does not understand them or finds flaws in them. If they do not question, they become less than effective. They cease to act as humans though they are recruited as human beings. They tend to act as machines, which is not the reason for recruiting them. Or they act like obedient children, though they are recruited because they are adults. Further, since the senior level managers often reserve the right to withdraw the delegated authority, the juniors equally often hold in suspicion the motives of their seniors.

The fact of the personnel in a system acting as less than human beings by not questioning a communication that is called an 'order' gives rise to a peculiar culture. This is the culture of hiding one's incompetence. If one cannot question an order to get clarifications, one has to, at least partially, direct one's activities without using one's brains very much. In such situations, how does a person deal with situations where at the end of the cycle of a task, the results are less than what were expected ? An 'order' can be taken as something that cannot be questioned only when there is a further assumption that it must be a *correct directive* for task performance. In that case, any incorrectness or mistakes, have to be seen as that of the person who was 'ordered'. In order to save his neck, the person carrying out the 'order' has to, therefore, try to perpetually hide his incompetence. Given this scenario, where and how would people work on their actual incompetence (after all, no one is competent to the highest degree in any situation) in order to get rid of their incompetence and be more competent ?

If the culture of most systems in this way deters people from working on their incompetence, the longer a person works, the more traits of incompetence he or she accumulates. It is, therefore, no wonder that the Peter Principle of everyone being promoted to their level of incompetence continues to operate on a grand scale. Alternative interpretation of the Peter Principle is thus, since, over a time, most people get promoted while their incompetences accumulate, a time must come when they demonstrate incompetence in almost everything that they touch.

Since hierarchy, be definition, implies superiority or inferiority (it is no coincidence that often the term 'boss' and 'superior' are used interchangeably), people linked to each other in hierarchic setups end up acting out these assumptions. Thus, not many 'bosses' find it easy to acknowledge their inferiority *vis-a-vis* 'subordinates', particularly in task relevant areas. This creates the phantasy of an omniscient and omnipotent 'boss' both in his own mind, and also in the minds of 'subordinates'. Since, in reality, the 'boss' would have his own share of frailties, shortcomings and incompetences, any evidence of these becomes difficult to cope with. So there are 'bosses' who cannot own up their failures or, worse still, pass on the blame for their failures onto their 'subordinates'. Alternatively, there are 'bosses' who are so caught up with the guilt of being in 'this superior position' that they cannot really confront their 'subordinates' on their shortcomings and

incompetences. Simultaneously, one finds 'subordinates' who disown their own strengths so that they can legitimately operate with superior/inferior interfaces or become hypersensitive to the fraities and shortcomings of the so-called superiors. This is, as though, the discovery that the 'goods have feet of clay' becomes an escape from the more difficult task of confronting their own humanness.

All this has significant implications for the leadership process. Hierarchy binds the natural process of leadership and, quite often, the consequences are dysfunctional. To being with, in a hierarchic structure, leadership tends to be vested in positions rather than in people, creating a bit of choiceless situation for all concerned. Thus, the emotional link between the leader and his followers is not so much based on their direct experience of each other as on transference from the past. For example, since a subordinate has very little say in choosing his boss, his feelings towards the boss are more likely to be loaded with his experience with authority figures in the past, rather than on the experience of the person in the 'here and now'. Thus, no real emotional cathecting takes between the two.

The second implication is that leadership tends to get concentrated rather than become distributed. Given the complexities of work systems, it is almost impossible for any individual to effectively perform the leadership role in all situations. In the natural course, the leadership process would perhaps develop a multiplicity of leader-follower interfaces. However, by its very binding of the natural process, the hierarchic structure denies this possibility to emerge. Hierarchy demands dependency on the 'the boss'. When the top boss fails to provide appropriate leadership, in order to avoid a situation of failed dependency, the blame is dumped on a middle manager. It is not very uncommon to find turnover of middle managers because of this process.

Lastly, in this section, we would touch upon a point which is of crucial importance. No amount of delegated authority can take into consideration many exigencies of work life where a person has to use his or her imagination and experience to take decisions or change *in activities* to perform organisational tasks. In other words, the person has to use his or her *personal authority* to decide what to do in order that a task's requirements are fulfilled. Here the person derives personal authority from the task. A hierarchic structure, with predetermined use of authority, necessarily blocks the use of such personal authority derived from a task.

The hierarchic pattern of relatedness is often transferred to the environment as well. For instance, it is not uncommon to find a hierarchic equation getting established between the buyer and the seller, or the distributor and the salesperson. Further, customers tend to get classified along hierarchic lines. Thus, a customer who is seen at a high hierarchic status level can get away with anything, whereas the customer who is perceived as belonging to lower strata gets the wrong end of the stick. Consequently, the customer is either neglected or pampered, but rarely served in the spirit of the contract between him and the organisation. Further, in situations where the goods are available in limited quantities, the marketing managers, more often than not, behave as ration distribution

officers and lose their marketing skill. When such goods become available in large quantities, the nature of hierarchy is changed and the marketing manager takes the role of a supplicant.

Given the preoccupation in most spheres of our organised life with human wastage and destruction through incompetence, we believe that the time has come when we have to choose between retaining the archaic, feudal form of hierarchic structure that hides and harbours incompetence, and opting for new kinds of organisation structures that are run by task based communication which can be question, so that every member of the organisation has all the time to work on their incompetence as well. Only in such a culture, will education and training be restored to their proper place of honour, rather than be used as passports to employment and promotion, irrespective of the wisdom that a person acquires while going through the process of education and training.

THE PICTURE OF RELATEDNESS IN THE MIND AND
THE ACTUAL RELATIONSHIPS :

We have noted in the previous section of this article that the link between a leader and his followers (also the link between different levels of management) is not so much based on direct experience of each other while relating mostly through task relevant activities. These are quite often based on *transference* from the past. This issue will be elaborated in this section.

This kind of transference is a function of what Gordon Lawrence (1985) describes as the picture of relatedness that one holds in one's mind, largely beyond one's awareness. Let us follow this up with reference to authority. As argued earlier, an individual at the time of joining an organisation delegates some of his personal authority *upwards.* Later on, the chief executive *redelegates* this *authority downwards.* However, almost universally, people remain unaware of this initial process of upward delegation for which individual joining systems are themselves responsible. Authority then is phantasised as emanating from the top by virtue of a role-holder's designation or status, and to his (chief executive's) whims and fancies, rather than derived from a task.

The question that has to be examined is why do most people 'forget' (push into their unconscious part of psyche) this initial, obvious process of being responsible in the first place for delegating upwards numerous areas of their personal authority.

In this context, we would further like to draw the readers' attention to Miller's (1986) work on authority and power in the United Kingdom. He points out that managerial behaviour is not derived only from the fact of the personality of the person who occupies this role. "It occurs in the context of the social system" in which the organisation exists and from which the manager comes. As a result "many managements are likely to cling fatally long to patterns of the dependency culture. Many employees, too, will be reluctant to surrender their dependency". In other words, hierarchy will be adhered to despite its destructive aspect because the social system in which people are

born, educated and socialised emphasises dependency and hierarchy. However, Miller holds that in the U.K. certain changes in the society are "flattening hierarchy" and pushing work organisations towards creating structures and cultures that allow the personnel to take their personal authority for greater effectiveness in engaging with the organisational tasks.

In India, the first author's experience as an organisation consultant and the second author's experience as a manager and a consultant tend to show that hierarchy and dependency continue unabated in most organisations. Some social work organisations, however, have been able to create structures and cultures where their personnel take considerable authority to engage with tasks. These organisations seem to have been able to deal with the issues of transference within their systems by being forced to question the power and authority of vested interests in the social system they live and work in.

In order to understand how this kind of transference takes place from the social system to the work organisation, one has to begin one's exploration in that part of the social system where every individual begins his or her life *i.e.* the family and its relationship to the infant.

The answer to the question raised earlier about why most people 'forget' some of their experiences seems to lie in the universal phenomena of the experience of the body and the child. One never gets the opportunity for choosing to delegate one's personal authority to one's parents. One is born in a family and one's first experience of authority is that it emanates from the top and the early years, one has little chance of even successfully questioning it. So, the picture of relatedness between the child and its parents in the mind consists of unquestionable authority which is both a source of nurturance and punishment. This picture is unconsciously carried in the mind by adults and, as a result, they end up by believing that authority always starts at the top. So, right through life, people tend to preempt exploring what is a more appropriate authority relationship in terms of effectively engaging with tasks that have nothing to do with the interactions usually prevalent in families. A great man like Mahatma Gandhi had recognised this and coined the term *satyagraha* while organising resistance against the exploitation of the British imperialists. Fundamentally, he was asking people to get in touch with the reality that they could stop cooperating with the imperialists, if they so willed, regardless of their personal cost. The imperial power could jail them, beat them up or even hang them. But they did not have any authority to get them to cooperate in the process of exploitation. They received this authority from the Indians and it was for the Indians to withdraw it. Satyagraha literally means *"urge for truth"* and Mahatma Gandhi calling upon people to locate their own truth and act upon it.

Most people have difficulty in locating their own truth because the picture of relatedness obtained in their early years, as a reality or as a distorted perception of reality - distorted because the baby and the child have limited understanding of what happens in their adult environment - keeps impinging on the reality of their adult life. This distorts

people's perception of the external reality in later life. This picture of relatedness in the mind has many other aspects like how one perceives the man-woman relationship, peer group relationship, definitions of obedience and rebellion and a host of other social processes. We will not go into the details of those. For the purpose of this article, it is sufficient to note the nature of confusion that prevails in the area of personal authority and the individual's responsibility to explore why and how one has delegated much of one's authority to others. In the absence of such an exploration, usually the punitive aspect of authority that is experienced in the early years motivate people, largely consciously into relating to those who are seen as superior role-holders in the systems. Similarly, one's experience of nurturance by authority in the early years also raises many expectations that may not at all be appropriate in one's adult life in work situations.

The term 'unconscious' and any reference to the unconscious process manifested in individuals and groups, more often than not, put the readers' backs up because it is disturbing to know about the irrationalities and a second level of strong personal motivation operating beyond one's awareness in everyone's life. The impact of holding an unconscious (along with the conscious ones) picture of relatedness may thus be initially received by the readers, to put it mildly, in not too positive ways. Hence, we shall give here two examples of what happens due to the picture of relatedness held in the mind of individuals which is shared by many, and, as a result, how the consequent assumptions and their behaviour or action correlates become societal norms, societal assumptions. Once this happens, the probability of exploration becomes lower because people attribute the assumptions to something that is called the social reality. In effect, this is a process of projecting the individuals inner reality (of which the picture of relatedness is a constituent) onto the society, of having to hide from one's own self something that is painful by floating a comfortable phantasy and then taking it back as if it had originated in the society, and not within the individuals who form that society.

A telling example of this process is women's position in society. Every child experiences its mother as a great source of nurturance. This is highly idealised and, as a result, motherhood is deified, giving rise to mother goddess cults and a belief (which is mostly far from reality) that women as potential mothers and actual mothers are much respected in society. In actual practice, they are given second class treatment. This may be attributed to two reasons. One is the repressed rage of the infant and child towards the mother, during the occasions, when she did not satisfy the needs. The actual experiences of nurturance and at the same time of being disciplined by the mother (who cannot fulfill all the needs of a baby because she too is a human being with her limitations) remain repressed in the unconscious of the adult and the social assumptions are acted out.

The second reason is that *all* human beings are born of individual women and are totally dependent individually on a *woman* (the mother) for survival during very early infancy. Any situation of total dependency on some one for survival also generates the feeling of fear of that person. This is a period of life of everyone, when due to one's

mental immaturity, and also the intensity of the fear, these experiences, along with the feelings, get recorded in the unconscious. Gratitude for the help given is not simultaneously recorded because the infant has no sense of gratitude. This combination of helplessness, dependency and fear related to one's transactions with the mother, lead to later downgrading of women as defense against these feelings lying repressed in the unconscious (Winnicott, 1986).

A second example is the myth that many citizens of Britain held during the empire days, and some still hold. This is the belief that they were actually bringing justice and order to the colonies almost by virtue of being ordained by God to do so (see for example Bazalgette, 1984). This belief was floated in order to defend themselves from actually experiencing how the well-being and affluence, the so-called humanitarian values of the British were built upon wealth ruthlessly extracted from the natives of the colonies, who died by the thousands from bullets, hunger and disease. The British value chivalry and the welfare of the underdogs. But in their colonies, the British treated the natives in a manner worse than they treated their pets at home and history suggests there was no sense of chivalry when it came to treating native women in the colonies.

The situation described above points towards contradictions in terms of overt behaviour and the values upheld in society.

To diagnose the cause of these contradictions between values and behaviour we have used some insights from the science of psychodynamics and hypothesised that, in each situation, individuals have sought to deny some of their painful inner reality. In the first situation, the inner reality is a conflict between great love for the mother and the simultaneous anger towards her, evoked whenever the infant and the child felt neglected. Conflict also born out of the reality of helplessness and dependence on the mother and the related feeling of fear of the all powerful person on whom one had to depend for one's very life. These inner conflicts were coped with by phantasising weakness in women. This became a social myth, which individuals took back and firmly came to believe in. Similarly, in the second situation, the inner violence of the Europeans was projected onto the 'black' natives (and also on some 'white' natives, like in the case of Ireland, which was the first colony of England). The natives were phantasised as violent and disorderly and, then, this was acted out. This myth also helped in improving the living standards of the imperialists in their own country. In their own country, some of their own weaknesses were projected onto the Jews and the 'white Christians improved their well-being at the cost of the Jews, though they firmly believed that they valued some form of egalitarianism, *i.e.* equal life chance for all citizens and the safeguarding of human rights for all citizens.

By and large, in all these situations, the picture of relatedness that has been projected is that of the powerful authority figures (in the family) who lay down the behavioural norms for the rest, irrespective of how the others experience those norms. We will not go into further details of the pictures of relatedness that one holds in the

unconscious, and acts those out as a defence against getting in touch with painful inner realities. For the purpose of this articles, it is sufficient to note the nature of the confusion that prevails in the area of personal authority and the individual's responsibility to explore those. As is apparent, most people do not explore why they both deify women and simultaneously treat them as lesser human beings, how they justify exploiting and presecuting other people, how and why they delegate much of their own authority to others in their day to day life, particularly in work situations. In the absence of such exploration of the process of upward delegation of authority, their expectations from such authority figures reflect a mixture of their childhood experiences of both the nurturing and punitive behaviour of parental authority, reinforced by the behaviour of other significant elders. Obviously, since the nature of these expectations remains unexplored, much of the interactions in work situations run counter to effective task performance.

This is what creates a great confusion in the area of authority distribution. On the one hand, society is conscious of the individual's personal authority, which is sought to be safeguarded and so on. On the other hand, the common belief field in the mind seems to be that the source of all authority is at the top in every organisation. This can be easily seen by checking any organisation. The majority of people in any organisation believe that the head of the organisation has all the authority by virtue of his or her position and, that, this authority is delegated downwards through a perceived hierarch. Yet the reality is, as we have already mentioned, that in most organisations other than in families, people delegate a large amount of their personal authority *upwards* when they join. They agree to be placed in a position, to be appraised, to be promoted and demoted, transferred and even sacked, within the bounds of certain rules. Those rules are the boundaries of personal authority that they delegate upwards. The head of the organisation then *redelegates* those authorities *downwards* because it is not possible for a single individual or even a group of ten or twelve persons to use for any practical, task related purpose, all the authority that they receive through upward delegation. It is also to be noted that no individual ever delegates all his or her personal authority while joining a work organisation, but they certainly seem to behave much of the time as though they have done so.

Authority, particularly over people, then, in modern organisations does not *automatically* accrue to a position. It accrues to a position because everyone delegates it upwards. But this process of upward delegation is usually forgotten because people not only carry in their heads the picture of authority emanating from the top because of their earlier experience of parental authority, but also because the unquestionable authority of the religious head or the monarch still continues to influence other forms of social organisations *i.e.* an old feudal structure of authority is smuggled into modem, complex organisations.

FAMILY, RELIGION AND HIERARCHY :

It is possible that the nature of arguments presented so far in this article may create the impression that it is the family dynamics which is responsible for creating the myth of hierarchy in various other social systems. That, however, is not quite true. What we have sought to show is that the unconscious split carried by individuals is transferred to and reinforced by various social systems, and since the family is the first social system that an individual experiences, the result of the split, if we may use such a metaphor, blooms there at first for all individuals. By blooming, we mean reintrojection of the projection that stems from the split. This process of projection and reintrojection continues in later life too, so that a two-way process is established between the small groups and the larger systems. We will end this section with some examples from religion as a large system reinforcing the split and projection through reintrojection.

It seems that most religious leaders, be they the founders or later significant followers, had either intellectually understood this phenomenon. As a result, they had taken steps to try to thwart this process. However, people being what they are (in terms of their unconscious process), it looks as a though more often than not, religion has been reinterpreted over the centuries to confirm the reintrojection of the split and the projection that have given rise to the notion of hierarchy. It has subsequently been converted into various acceptable myths, seen in all the major religions of the world.

In Judaism (and Christianity to the extent that the Old Testament influences it), for instance, the God of Moses was one with whom it was possible to bargain and argue.

We are referring here to the efforts of Moses to save the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. In that situation, God was obviously not an unknowable entity whose acts were unquestionable. Further, the entire focus of early Judiasm to do away with idolatry, as Erich Fromm (1966) points out, was around trying to stop the projections of individuals of their inner splits on to external, visible, symbols. The end product of this effort is the declaration that the God of the Jews be nameless (hence He came to be known as the Nameless One) and He was to be described by not what He is, but what He is not.

In Islam, it is believed that before mankind was born, they made a covenant with God *(Ma 'hada)*. The logic of it, as it seems to us, is that since the covenant was made before mankind was born, it becomes a covenant with one's own self after one is born *i.e.* one has to live up to one's commitment made in the past, rather than submit to the will of an unquestionable and unknowable entity. To that extent, there certainly is a safeguard in Islam against projecting one's inner reality onto an unquestionable God.

Buddha seemed to have attempted to stop this kind of projection by refusing to talk about God at all. In Hindu philosophies, there seems to be clear understanding of this phenomenon of split and projection and attention has even been drawn to the phenomenon, as may be seen in Shankaracharya's notion of *soahang* or "He is I".

However, it seems that common people have changed many of the interpretations of the original religious texts and treatises over the centuries and created the image of a wilful, almost whimsical God who distributes rewards and sanctions punishments and even indulges in revenge, like neurotic human beings. Calvin's theory of predestination stands out as an example of this wilfulness. This image makes God's ways unknowable, or at least, beyond human understanding, hence unquestionable too. Religion, then, is used to reinforce the split within one both at an individual level, and also at other social systems' levels by incorporating many religious norms that buttress the idea of hierarchy. There is no evidence available to us that a substantial number of modern enterprises run by Jews, Moslems, Christians, Buddhists or Hindus have treated management as collectivity rather than as hierarchy.

MANAGEMENT AS A COLLECTIVITY :

As we have already mentioned, different levels of authority, vested in roles, will remain in the organisation structures even when there is no hierarchy. Such structures will make *de facto* that which remains *de jure,* albeit in the notion of a minority of managers only. This is that management as a group must experience itself as a collectivity in order to function effectively. This is because while the amount of authority will vary in terms of how much authority is redelegated to which role-holders by the chief executive (who will naturally wield maximum authority), responsibility cannot be delegated. Since every manager has some amount of responsibility, they mutually depend on each other for the completion of the throughput system that transforms inputs into outputs. This mutual dependency works both horizontally and vertically. Indeed, unless every manager could depend on a substantial number of others, they would not be able to concentrate on their part of the job without their anxiety going sky high. Most managers do recognise this mutual dependency and the notion of shared responsibility. However, the notion of hierarchy comes in the way of acknowledging and experiencing this collectivity openly.

As a result, the term 'management' is usually reserved for a group of seniormost managers, if not for the chief executive only, which converts the other managers into glorified supervisors. Every person holding the designation of a manager - from the assistant manager parens' axiomatic statements and monitoring their children's irrational stances born out of many feelings that they cannot articulate. This figure has never been altered (to one shown in *Figure 1,* for instance) by later transactional analysis who, keep repeating that even if the picture suggests a hierarchy, they do not mean it.

Figure 1

Behavioural scientists like, for instance, Hersey and Blanchard (1972) too reflect this hierarchic picture when they show the distribution of various types of activities by different levels of personnel in organisations as shown in *Figure 2*. This may well be presented, without suggesting hierarchy, as shown in *Figure 3*.

Figure 2   *Figure 3*

At the individual level, this picture of hierarchy is transferred to the self by splitting the mind from the body and phantasising the mind's superiority over the body, resulting in sickness of various kinds. This is inevitable because, time and energy are both limited, and if these are used up largely to exercise the mind, the body becomes passive and then decay sets in, making it a prey to ailments. We also know that when much energy is devoted to repression of traumatic experiences (which is an unconscious mental activity), numerous illnesses result that are known as psycho-somatic ailments.

In the *Sanskritic* tradition in the Indian subcontinent energy (*prakrity* or *shakti*) is attributed to three qualitative aspects or *gunas* (Yuktananda : 1989). These are sattya, rajas and tamas. *satwa, rajas* and *tamas*. *Satwa* is its expressive aspect since it pertains to a person's capacity to relate to one's inner world or self. *Rajas* is the dynamic aspect since it pertains to one's ability to relate to objects, both concrete and abstract, in the environment. *Tamas* is the inertness that blocks *Satwa* and *Rajas*.

To survive and grow, all individuals need all the three *gunas* to some extent. The need for *satwa* and *rajas* is obvious. Without the former, one remains ignorant of one's potentials and can never take the path of becoming mature. The latter gives meaning to maturity because maturity in isolation is, by definition, meaningless. However, there is a limit to self-knowledge. In psychoanalytic terms, the average individual is likely to go

insane if all internal, unconscious defenses are done away with. Similarly, there must also be a limit to every individual's capacity to relate to objects in the environment because the total energy available to an individual is not limitless. Therefore *tamas* too is necessary. However, what matters is the degree of each *guna* that comes into play and one's awareness of this dynamics so that one may effectively regulate one's activities resulting from the *guna* dynamics in the self. The movement towards this awareness is most likely the transcendence or the way to become what has been described as the ideal state of *trigunatita* (beyond the three *gunas*).

All the three *gunas*, therefore, have their value in human life and the absence of any one of these will lead to a lopsided movement that will hamper maturity and fulfillment of personal potentiality.

However, it also has become traditional to create a hierarchy of *gunas* by placing *satwa* at the top with *rajas* at the next level and *tamas* relegated to a despised third place. This tradition thus seems to reflect a split, this time within the mind itself. The somatic counterpart of this split is seen in perceiving some parts of the body as superior *(uttamanga)* and the rest inferior *(adhamanaga)*. This split results, among other things, in self devaluation, as the first author has sought to show elsewhere (Chattopadhyay, 1986).

These splits in the inner world of the people of the Indian subcontinent appear to be very strong, as is evidenced by certain beliefs and practices. For example, differences in India are mostly seen as levels of hierarchy of a nature that cannot be managed, but only controlled. The caste hierarchy among the Hindus, for instance, is based on a concept of purity and pollution. As a result, the less pure or the more polluted can only be kept at a distance through various kinds of taboos on inter-relationships to avoid 'contamination'. Although other religious communities even if they do not actually mention the notion of pollution, in many situations behave as if it is present. The impact of this kind of differentiation and building of images of hierarchy with unbridgeable gaps or impermeable boundaries is also present within families, which converts love, by and large, into instruments of negotiation or a yardstick for paying back obligations, with interest (Chattopadhyay, 1991).

A second way of exhibiting the internal split can be seen in the phenomenon that the first author has termed as the "invader in the mind" in Indian metaculture which leads to preoccupation with power rather than authority based on task *(Chattopadhyay, 1991)*.

This split and hierarchic picture within and between the mind and the body are then transferred to work situations where those who work with their hands are considered in some ways inferior to those who work with the mind.

The split and hierarchic picture transferred to organisations also create a split between the management and the 'others' which results in various kinds of organisational ailments. To heal this split and the consequent ailments such tools and techniques as MBO, semi-autonomous work groups, participative management, quality circle and similar exercises are undertaken. However, since the basic split and its consequent picture

of hierarchy between the mind and the body remain unexplored, the split between the management and the others remain to undermine systems despite a proliferation of expertise and experts.

At the societal level, the examples given in the section entitled "The picture of relatedness in the mind and actual relationships" also illustrate what this picture of split and hierarchy does to a society. The conscious picture of a nurturing mother and the unconscious picture of a depriving mother (and the consequent conscious love and unconscious rage) are coped with by creating a situation of inequality between man and woman. When this is transferred to any system, myths are floated to justify a hierarchy among human beings in which women are placed below men. Questioning the myths that reinforce this hierarchy strengthen the defenses, leading to such phenomena as broken marriages in the family as a system and various other counter-task processes in other kinds of systems *(see Chatterjee and Chattopadhyay, 1987, for instance)*. The difference between pale and dark skin is coped with the phantasy of hierarchy between 'whites' and 'blacks', so that they can heap blame on each other and avoid the pain of exploring some of their internal destructive processes. For the 'whites', most of their problems are phantasised as resolvable but for the presence of the 'blacks' in their midst. For the latter, but for the past 'white' imperialist domination, they would have lived happily for ever.

Further, at the societal level, this picture of hierarchy also seems to foster passivity by the majority, since the picture of hierarchy is always pyramidal with perceived unquestionable power at the top. This passivity leads to mismanagement of roles all round, because hyperactivity of various kinds by comparatively small groups of urban guerillas and other militants bent upon spewing indiscriminate murder and mayhem emerges in society to compensate for the passivity of the overwhelming majority (Lawrence, 1979 and 1981; Chatterjee and Chattopadhyay, 1988).

The picture of split and hierarchy is also carried beyond the boundaries of man-made systems. Human beings are split off from the rest of nature and the former are then pictured as superior to the rest of nature. The disastrous consequence is quite obvious today in terms of the sick natural environment that is distroying various forms of life, including human beings.

The close relationship between hierarchy and the resulting incompetence thus seems to be reflected at individual, group, and man-nature levels. The concept of hierarchy, therefore, seems to be a symptom of the split between levels of collectivity, which makes it a product, a rather malignant one, of phantasy born out of repressed infantile experience, rather than a reality 'out there' in the environment. It is then a projection of the inner world of human beings onto the external world of organisations and nature, which has been reintrojected. This split reduces systems of various kinds into fragments in the way that these are engaged with. As a result, the systems fall apart. Human beings become sick in the mind or in the body or in both, in situations where they could mobilise their system to fight trauma and infections; social, political and economic

institutions become dysfunctionsl; the entire environment of the earth begins to become polluted and destroyed.

The key to reversing this process seems to lie in treating the infant and the child with the dignity that any human being deserves. The starting point is perhaps in the realisation that parents are not gods *vis-a-vis* their children, but partners in continuing to preserve the species, which must relearn to integrate itself with the rest of nature as a system.

What we have, thus, tried to place before our readers is a case for thoroughly exploring the idea of hierarchy, since, in all likelihood, it is a relic of the archaic feudal system which has been quietly smuggled into such modern systems as capitalism and socialism. This juxtaposition of hierarchy as a religious-feudal notion with the politico-economic systems based on the interpretations of the philosophy of Marx is perhaps one of the reasons of so much violence in the communist countries. "From each according to his ability" seems to leave out the abilities to think, question and interpret for oneself how best the social order can be guided towards the ideal of "to each according to his need". The decision-making levels in the Party and in the State cease to remain as levels of authority that can be questioned in order to explore the possibility of change. These become levels of hierarchy which may not be questioned without retribution.

It we can jettison the notion of hierarchy and accept the idea of a collectivity in which people receive authority and power by virtue of greater understanding of the nature of the systems' tasks, by virtue of task related skills, then, perhaps, the phenomenon of human wastage can be tackled in a fresh and meaningful way. There will still be levels of authority, but the members of each level will have to work on their incompetence because in the absence of a notion of hierarchy, each person would know that his or her communication may be questioned in terms of task effectiveness.

CONCLUDING REMARKS : HIERARCHY AS A DEFENSE AGAINST ANXIETY :

We now return to our central hypothesis mentioned at the beginning of this article, which is that the concept of hierarchy present in almost all modern organisations ia a breeding ground of incompetence that leads to human wastage in various ways. In support of our hypothesis, we have tried to show how the imperatives of hierarchy are not merely different but in many ways counter-productive to the exercise of task based authority in modern organisations. Authority is necessary for managing any system. On the other hand, the basic thrust of hierarchy is control. The need for control broadly speaking would arise in two kinds of aituations.

a)   Situations which are exploitative in nature, particularly where a minority group wishes to exploit the majority, and

b)   Situations where one party is not mature enough to operate autonomously and hence needs to be controlled for its own survival and growth.

Clearly neither of these two situations should exist in modern organisations. Work organisations are supposed to be created for engagement with a meaningful, relevant task and not as a means of exploitation. Also, they are manned by mature adults and not children. However, it can be argued and rightly so, that though these situations are not supposed to exist, they *actually,* exist. Hence, the need for control and, consequently, hierarchy must remain.

Firstly, the *actuality* of their existence is a debtable point. We have already pointed out how myths and phantasies are floated and accepted in order to justify, in pyramidal formal organisations, authority being attributed to a minority of role-holders in a way that make them not accountable to their juniors, who actually delegate their personal authority upwards in the first place. To that extent this 'actual situation' is a creation of unconscious acting out of the picture of relatedness in the mind. Once this is done, hierarchy automatically emerges.

Secondly, even if a whole lot of adults phantasise themselves to be children it does not become a reality, no matter how widely the phantasy is held. So what can at best be argued is that the phantasy of situations requiring control are very widely held and, hence, any argument about hierarchy must necessarily take into account the existence of this widely held phantasy.

Since all these processes start, obviously, at the individual level at an early age, we have suggested elsewhere in this article, that intervention can start with the child rearing process. However, it is also obvious that this will be possible only when adults get enough knowledge and wisdom to realise the necessity to change their behaviour towards children. It is, in fact, one of the aims of articiles, such as this, to get the message across to the adult world to explore the roots of the above mentioned 'split' in their infancy, to

examine the validy or otherwise of our hypothesis and the arguments presented in these pages.

Related to this is the issue of dealing with the widely held phantasy mentioned earlier. There could be two possible choices - one, to perpetuate the phantasy and thereby reinforce it. The cost of doing so has already been elaborated at length in this paper. The other choice is to understand the anxieties which prepetuate this phantasy rather than remain its captives. Otherwise, we will have no real hope of acquiring the individual and collective maturity necessary for task engagement and wholesome living. The real question, therefore, is how do we liberate ourselves from these phantasies which generate the need to control others (and allow oneself to be controlled) and what can possibly be the price that one may have to pay for this ? The Hierarchy with all its limitations and dysfunctionalities helps in retaining a semblance of order. When differences become irreconciliable or conflicts unresolvable, hierarchy, as an arbitrary external source of authority, comes in handy. The problem of course, is not with the process of arbitration *per se* because arbitration involves vesting of authority by the concerned parties to the arbitrator; the problem lies in the assumption that the arbitrator has got his authority from his position of hierarchic level rather than from the parties involved in the conflict. In fact, the limitations of hierarchy in management of differences is becoming increasingly obvious. The growing problems of indiscipline in most Indian organisations is an evidence of it. Similarly, at a macro level, the rise in terrorism almost throughout the world is testimony to the fact that the world today cannot be managed through suppression and extraneous control. The supporters of hierarchy would argue that it is precisely the loss of control resulting from erosion of hierarchy which has led to this situation. This line of argument, however, misses out the central point itself, namely that the erosion that is talked about is inherent in the process itself. There is no way in which the myth of 'divine right to rule' can be retained, and if there is no divine right to rule, there can be no hierarchy.

This myth of divine right robs human beings of their divinity so that they operate from their animalness. In that mode, they either shake their tails and lick the master's boots or snarl and bite. To restore the divinity of human beings, there has to be a distribution of authority based on delegations made by different individuals either to another individual or to the collectivity. In contrast, hierarchy with its unavoidable consequence of fear of exploitation, prohibits such delegation to effectively take place and that too in a world which is becoming increasingly inter-dependent and whose future rests on the efficacy of this delegation. The problem, therefore, does not stem from the erosion of hierarchy but from our refusal to recognise, accept and welcome this erosion. In fact, by not doing so we are moving towards anarchy, no matter how strongly we may like to believe that hierarchy is helping us to remain interacted and orderly. Modern, theoretically sound, techniques such as MBO and self appraisal become non-starters in the face of hierarchy precisely because hierarchic organisations discourage independent,

creative thinking and, people who do not think independently and creativelymove towards becoming zombie-like creatures, albeit very polished.

Alternatively, it is quite possible (and some evidence for this exist in such experiments like semi-autonomous work groups in industry, for instance) to build non-hierarchic structures and processes for direction setting, prioritisation, boundary delineation, handling of grievances negotiation and conflict management *i.e.*, all the functions for which hierarchy is presumably required, where people can think through problems using their own authority and, consequently, feel responsible and accountable for implementing whatever they decide. Some of the most successful examples of this process come from some social work agencies, human service organisations, and citizen's committees which successfully engage with tasks with very limited resources, where government and industry fail.

What hierarchy actually deals with is the anxiety of chaos rather than chaos itself. The source of this anxiety is perhaps in what we record as 'insane' in ourselves and others. Given the fact that human beings are always dealing with contradictory pulls and pushes within themselves, they classify these multiple propensities into 'sane' and 'insane', depending upon their judgement of appropriateness of these propensities to their own survival and growth. Unfortunately, many such apparently 'sane' propensities like increasing profit, production and saving money manifest in forms, like adulterating food and medicines to *increase profit*, importing injurious to health pesticides to *increase crop production* and damaging the environment to *save money*, produce even with almost immediate effect, 'insane' destruction rather than contribute towards survival and growth. Similarly, the society for its survival and growth regards some propensities as 'sane' and some as 'insane'. At times, such distinction also may appear paradoxical; for instance, it is considered sane for a girl in India to marry according to her parent's choice, based mainly on economic and social status criteria, notwithstanding the growing number of insane dowry deaths.

The metaphor of hierarchy tries to deal with the reality of life, albeit in a manner which adds to the problem. The wisdom of distinguishing 'sane' from 'insane' instead of resting with the collectivity and the collective experience, gets lineaised. Since every individual, irrespective of where he or she belongs in his or her linear hierarchic stratification, has his or her own share or 'insanity', the collectivity gets burdened with the 'personal insanity' of the powers that be. Control and suppression are only consequences of this basic process. Ultimately, perhaps, the split between this 'sanity' and 'insanity' lies rooted in the split between life and death. As a result, for example, when some individuals risk their own lives in an 'insane' manner to save the collectivity, many of whom are even totally unknown to the risk takers, they are awarded, even posthumously, some of the 'highest honours' of the society. This places them high up in the societal hierarchy of some kind. Through doing that (placing humaneness, deny their capacity to deal with their anxiety and fear of death, so that they can feel safe in hugging

their narcissism as ordinary, 'sane', human, phenomena that need not be explored in order to cultivate more mature societalism.

Breaking away from the metaphor of hierarchy would obviously mean creating structures and fostering processes that would enable the collective wisdom to remain with the collectivity rather than get linearised. Equally or perhaps even more importantly, it would mean a basic shift in how we hold 'insanity' in ourselves and others. Every 'insanity' also has the seeds of a creative choice. Unless we can harness the creative potential of 'insanity' we could continue to use suppression and control as the only means of dealing with it. Denied of its means of socially acceptable expression, the bottled up creative energy associated with 'insanity' at some point bursts in an explosive manner. The oppressor then smugly says "I told you so" and increases the quantum of control, thus, reinforcing the condition for, albiet unintentionally, a more violently explosive situation. Even in situations where a search for creative deployment of 'insanity' fails to produce a feasible avenue, one could seek temporary solutions in creating infrastructures for discharging it without causing dysfunctionalities for the self and the system. But the search must continue. However, it is not possible to search relentlessly when hierarchy breathes down everyone's neck. For instance, instead of making fun of the many failures of decision making by committees, one has to search for structures that make committees more capable of arriving at effective decision. 'Insanity' is an integral part of human existence - it needs to be recognised, accepted, valued, creatively deployed or at least harmlessly discharged for the time being rather than sought to be suppressed. For example, the answer to some perceived 'insane' government orders and laws of the land relating to business enterprises does not lie in perpetuating more and more cipher Board of Directors. It lies in selecting more and more effective Board members and gearing the organisation to brief them adequately and on time, rather than just sending them the agenda papers a day before the Board meeting.

Hierarchy, as we see it, leads to Kaikeyi's way of dealing with primogeniture by involving the contextually non-task related authority of a husband and father roles in the *Ramayana;* it leads to Cain's way of dealing with proximogeniture by using the power of the first born over a sibling in the *Bible*.

Finally, one must not forget that formal hierarchies create conditions for informal hierarchies to emerge. And then even the hope nurtured through the phantasy of triumph of suppression and control evaporates as the law of the jungle enters civilisation where fangs and claws get replaced by weapons of mass destruction.

This, perhaps, then is the real paradox of the metaphor of hierarchy - it is the most insane way of handling "insanity".

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