Leadership for India Inc: Practical Concepts and Constructs
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Week - 10
Transformational Leadership Models - 2
Lecture - 48
Follower Leadership Model

Hi Friends. Welcome to the NPTEL course Leadership for India Inc: Practical Concepts and Constructs. We are in week 10, discussing Transformational Leadership Models, part 2. In this lecture, we will focus on Follower Leadership Model.

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The constructs discussed in the earlier lectures namely charismatic aligned leadership model and people oriented natural leadership are aimed at developing leadership in the organization. This lecture covers follower leadership. This construct focuses on grassroots or distributed leadership that brings out the best in organizational team members.

This lecture is a logical extension of the previous two lectures. Grassroots leadership is more than succession planning. It is making followers of leaders become leaders in their own, right. The conventional organization structures of few to lead and masses to follow

stymie distributor leadership. Five practices can provide flexibility in leadership journey. So, that there would be adequate opportunities for near as well as distant followers.

These 5 aspects are electivity, collectivism, collegium, rotation, and singularity. When leaders become pioneers who excel in creating new products and new businesses followers can become leaders carrying out strategy and execution. The construct of follower leadership is aimed at developing people naturally in a helpful organizational ecosystem. The 5 components mentioned above provide institutional support to translate the concepts in to reality. This is a brief summary of the lecture.
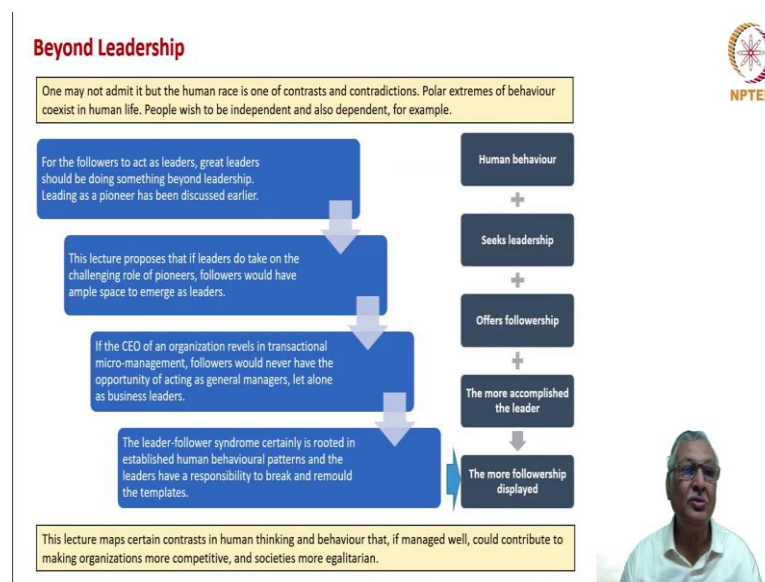
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Let us look at the details. One may not admit it, but the human race is one of contrasts and contradictions. Polar extremes of behaviour coexist in human life, people wish to be independent, but also want to be dependent. For the followers to act as leaders, great leaders should be doing something beyond leadership. Leading as the pioneer has been discussed earlier.

This lecture proposes that if leaders do take on the challenging role of pioneer's followers should have ample space to emerge as leaders. The point here is the challenge of creating space for the followers to move in and that is a leadership challenge which the leader alone can handle.

If the CEO of an organization revels in transactional micro-management followers would never have the opportunity of acting as general managers, let alone as business leaders. The leader follower syndrome certainly is rooted in established human behavioural patterns and the leaders have responsibility to break such moulds and create new templates.

Human behavior seeks leadership, but at the same time also complies with followership. The more accomplished the leader the more followership is displaced and that is where the challenge arises for the leader to bring the template voluntarily, progressively, and proactively. This lecture maps certain contrast in human thinking and behavior. If they are managed well, they could contribute to making organizations more competitive and societies more egalitarian.

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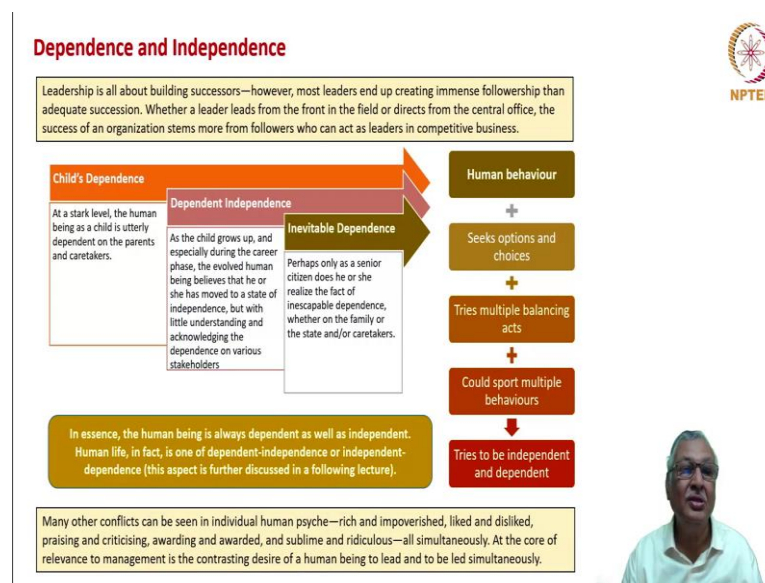
Let us look at this dependence and independence syndrome we all have. Leadership is all about building successes. However, most leaders end up creating immense followership than adequate succession whether the leader leads from the front in the field or direct from the central office, the success of an organization stems more from the followers who can act as leaders in competitive business.

Let us look at the human behavioural journey. Dependent independence, as the child grows up and especially during the career phase the evolved human being believes that he or she has moved to a state of independence, but such people have very little

understanding as to the dependence that exist with respect to various stakeholders this happens more particularly in the career phase.

Inevitable dependence, perhaps only as a senior citizen does an individual realize the fact of inescapable independence whether on the family or the state and or care takers. So, we can look at the human behaviour as one which is always seeking options and choices. It tries to balance multiple acts. It could sport multiple behaviors and essentially it tries to be independent and also dependent.

And this characteristic of dependent independence or independent dependence is a topic for our next lecture as well. But let us keep that flagged in our memory. Apart from this, many other conflicts can be seen in individual human psyche, rich and impoverished, liked and disliked, praising and criticizing, awarding and awarded, and sublime and ridiculous, all simultaneously. At the core of relevance to management is the contrasting desire of a human being to lead and also to be led simultaneously.

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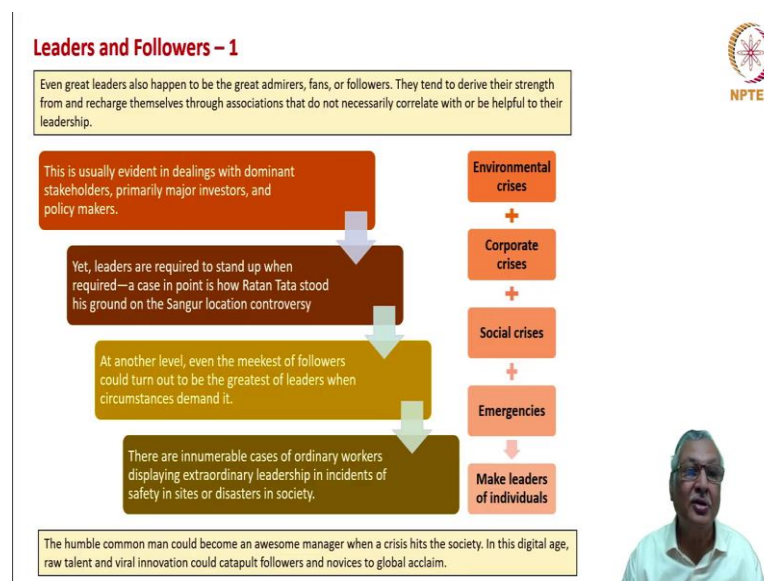
Let us look at the leader follower interactions and these spaces in greater detail. Let us understand that even great leaders also happen to be great admires fans or followers. They tend to derive their strength from and recharge themselves through associations that do not necessarily correlate with or be helpful to their leadership.

This is usually evident in dealings with the dominant stakeholders, primarily major investors and policy makers. Yet, leaders are required to stand up when required; a case in point is how Ratan Tata stood his ground on the Singur location controversy for the Nano car project.

At another level even the meekest of followers could turn out to be the greatest of leaders when circumstances demand it. There are innumerable cases of ordinary workers displaying extraordinary leadership in incidents of safety in sites or disasters in society. There could be environmental crisis, there could be corporate crisis, there could be social crisis, emergencies, all of these things make leaders of individuals.

The question we are posing to ourselves is, if crisis can turn an ordinary individual into an extraordinary leader. Why should not organizations as a matter of deliberate policy, as a matter of deliberate leadership model and also as a matter of deliberate leadership pathway make leader's out of individuals. This is the central point of this lecture.

The humble common man could become an awesome manager when a crisis hits the society. In this digital age, raw talent and viral innovation could catapult followers and novices to global acclaim. This phenomenon needs to be much more widespread and much more institutionalized in organizations.

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Another aspect, the human organization from chaos to orderliness and from survival growth has been governed by the singular concept of a few leaders and a mass of followers. Civilization has seen how just a few leaders with vastly varying characteristics could sway millions of people. You point to note here is that leaders can sway people in different national contexts and cultural contexts and they did not share the same characteristic cluster.

However, there are certain things which would be common to them which is that of charisma, that is one of principles, that is one of ethics, this is one of standing by what they preach. Abraham Lincoln led the USA through the civil war unifying the nation. India's independence through nonviolence was is achieved by Mahatma Gandhi.

South Africa's independence through the movement of Nelson Mandela. Inspiring service for the poor and the destitute as Mother Theresa did. For these great examples that we have, we also have on the negative side, leading the world into disastrous wars as Adolf Hitler did. In democratic as well as totalitarian states enormous store is laid and mass following as the essence of leadership.

As the industrial society took shape the organization model be it in any domain, politics, government, administration, education, religion, business, charity, art, and media, just to list a few became the most important structure that institutionalized the one leader and many follower's concept.

The way the organization structure is designed to be a pyramid whether by design or by default that has endured as the only way in which organizations can be structured which means also that the concept of one leader and many followers is institutionalized in the structural design of organizations and the cultural ramifications thereof.
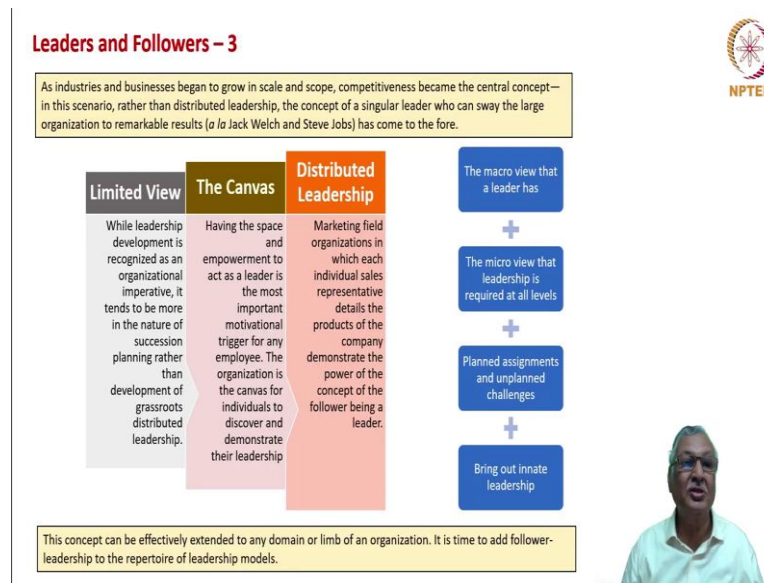
Let us look at another aspect. As industries and business began to grow in scale and scope competitiveness became the central concept. In this scenario, rather than distributed leadership, the concept of a singular leader who can sway the large organization to remarkable results.

For example, Jack Welch and Steve Jobs has come to the fore. So, the limited view of leadership development is that it is necessary as an organizational imperative, but is viewed more as a succession planning drive rather than development of grass roots distributed leadership.

The canvas for leadership development; however, is very vast and very wide. Providing the space and empowerment acts for generating leadership in the followers. And to do that the organization itself is the canvas for individuals to discover and demonstrate their leadership that opportunity has to be provided by the leadership policies and the leadership model itself.

We have seen earlier and we will see now again the distributed leadership is very much there in even in the current organization structures, marketing field organizations in which each individual sales representative details, the products of the company demonstrate the power of the concept of the follower being a leader.

Similarly, in nursing status the nurses, who manages the entire infusion pump having 4 to 6 injectables coming into the body and also the bed side patient requirements and also monitoring the past, present, and future requirements of the patient is distributed leadership.

The macro view that a leader has, the micro view that leadership is required to have at all levels, planned assignments and unplanned challenges, together they bring out innate leadership of an individual. This concept can be effectively extended to any domain or any limb of an organization. It is therefore, time to add follower leadership to the repertoire of leadership models.

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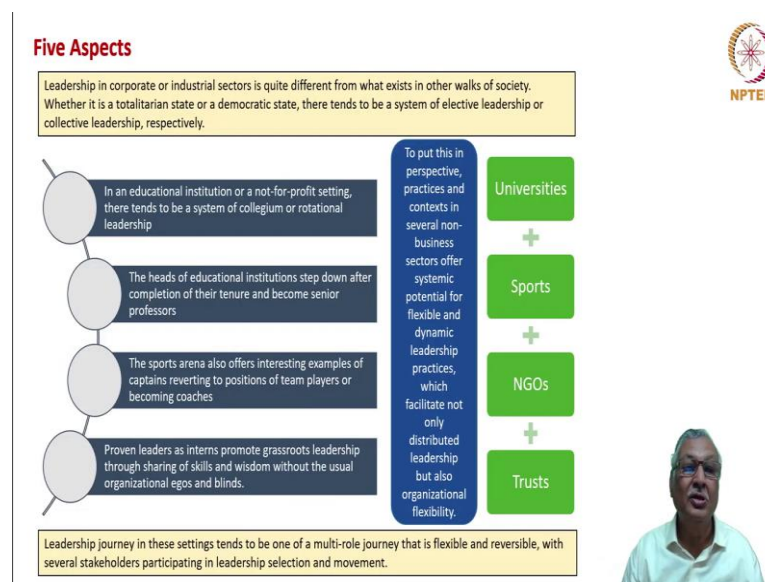
I talked about five aspects. Let us look at what are those five aspects. Leadership in corporate or industrial sectors is quite different from what exists in other walks of society. Whether it is a totalitarian state or a democratic state, there tends to be a system of elective leadership or collective leadership respectively.

But in an educational institution or a not for profit setting there tends to be a system of collegium or rotational leadership. The heads of educational institutions typically step down after completion of their tenure and becomes senior professors. This sports arena also offers very interesting examples of captains reverting to positions of team players or becoming coaches.

Proven leaders as interns promote grass roots leadership through sharing of skills and wisdom without the usual organizational egos and blinds. To put this in perspective, practices and contexts in several non-business sectors of a systemic potential for flexible and dynamic leadership practices which facilitate not only distributed leadership, but also organizational flexibility.

Universities, sports, NGOs, and trust offer certain follower leadership models or rotational leadership models, collegium leadership models which the business world must take note of. Leadership journey in these settings that I mentioned tends to be one of a multi role journey that is flexible and reversible with several stake holders participating in leadership selection and movement.

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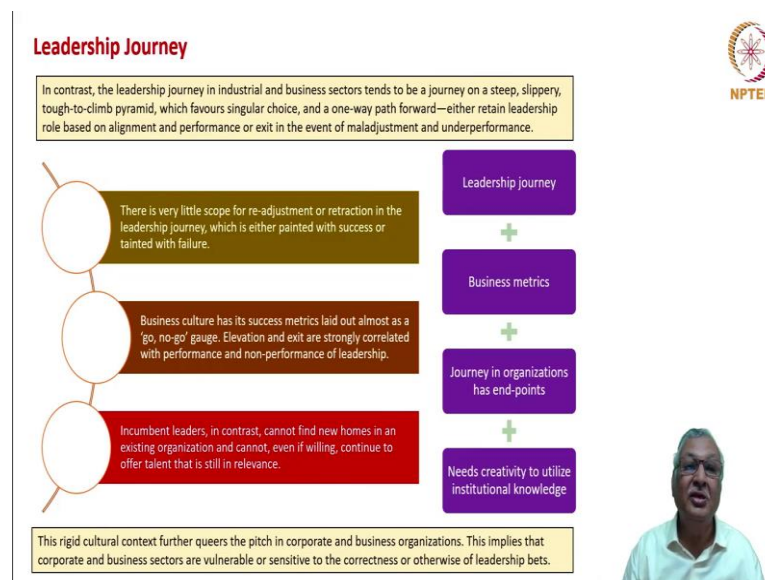
In contrast, the leadership journey in industrial and business sectors tends to be journey steep, slippery, tough to climb pyramid, which favors singular choice and only a one-way path forward, either retain leadership role as long as you can based on alignment and performance or exit in the event of maladjustment and under performance. Even if you have performed extremely well they also tend to be retirement policies which require that a leader must step down.

There is very little scope for readjustment of retraction in the leadership journey which is either painted with success or tainted with failure. Business culture has its success metric laid out almost as a go, no-go basis. Elevation and exit are strongly correlated with

performance and non-performance of leadership respectively. Incumbent leaders in contrast cannot find new homes in an existing organization and cannot even if willing continue to offer talent that is still in relevance.

That is leaders who are out there, but who are on the verge of moving out, cannot still have a home within the organization which they served for several years or decades. So, leadership journey which comprises business matrix has a journey with all end points. It needs creativity on the part of the organizational policies to utilize the institutional knowledge that is available with the leaders.

The rigid cultural context further queers the pitch in corporate and business organizations. This implies that corporate and business sectors are vulnerable or sensitive to correctness or other wise of leadership bets. It is very important to make the, right leadership bet in respect of corporations and businesses, because the whole structure of leadership development or leadership movement is so inflexible and rigid, there is no chance for a second correction.

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In order to correct this, I suggest five aspects which can provide flexibility in leadership journey, so that there would be adequate opportunities for near as well as distant followers. These are as I said in the beginning electivity, collectivism, collegium, rotation and singularity.

What is electivity? Electivity makes leadership stay on with purpose rather than as a take it or leave it with chance. This provides an opportunity for leaders to voluntarily step down and take up more appropriate positions and in the process make way for leaders.

There are people who announce years ahead that we would be stepping down on a particular date and that is to ensure that they have the space provided for follow on leaders, pretty early for people to think of leadership possibility and work towards that very diligently.

And this is an elective decision made by the leaders. Collectivism in leadership process goes beyond C-suite deliberations and involves the grassroots organization in planning and execution through think tanks, quality circles, discussion forums, town halls, idea events, special events and so on.

Collegium approach ensures through wider leadership bodies like executive or management councils that members irrespective of the hierarchy are enabled to participate in a framework of trust and respect.

The difference between collectivism and collegium is that collectivism is a more spontaneous method of having collective thoughts and deliberations, and there is no fixed institutional mechanism for collectivism. It could be random; it would be subject to modification.

Whereas, collegium is a more responsible and more responsive, but institutionalized way of having people come together in certain forums. So that they can offer their suggestions, monitor things as they happen and so on. Rotational system ensures that leadership is rotated amongst capable people like the way universities and scientific laboratories resort to.

As I mentioned earlier it is for cry in the industrial world. However, Infosys came close to that approach. Singularity ensures that the focus on the individual's responsibility and accountability is not ignored despite the emphasis on broader organizational stakeholder responsibility. It is important to understand how each of these would get implemented in practice, in mature and progressive organizations. Prior to that let us understand they follow a leadership model in terms of a graphic.

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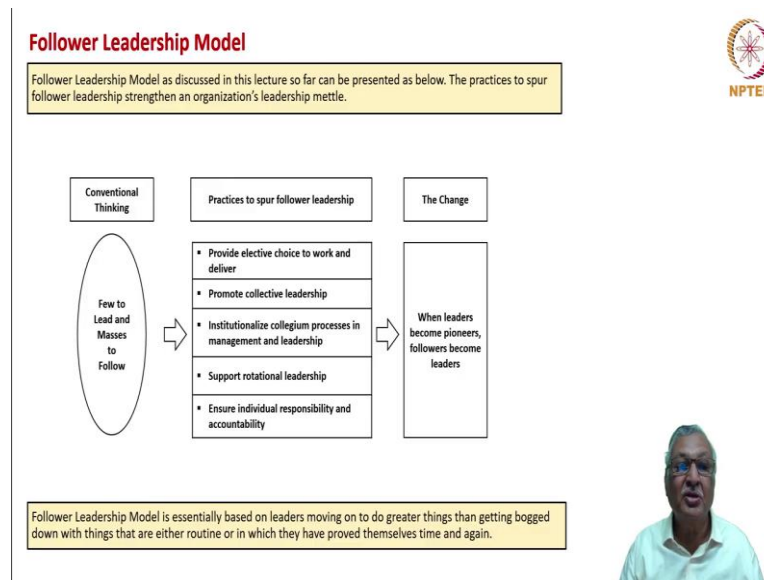
There are certain practices which spur follower leadership, that is provide elective choice to work and deliver, promote collective leadership, institutionalize collegium process in management and leadership, support rotational leadership, and ensure individual responsibility and accountability.

This ensure that the collective thinking in the conventional mode which is few to lead and masses to follow gets changed to a situation where leaders move on to greener and greater pastures by between pioneers and followers become leaders in their place.

Follower leadership model essentially is based on leaders moving to do things beyond what they have been doing till then and that provides this space for followers to move in. This looks like a very simple and doable concept.

But the greatest challenge lies in the leaders themselves for them to believe that what they have been doing so far is probably less than what they could do and they should pursue something completely different is a mindset challenge they would have. It is actually requiring the leaders to step out of their zones of comfort and that is a challenge even for accomplished leaders.
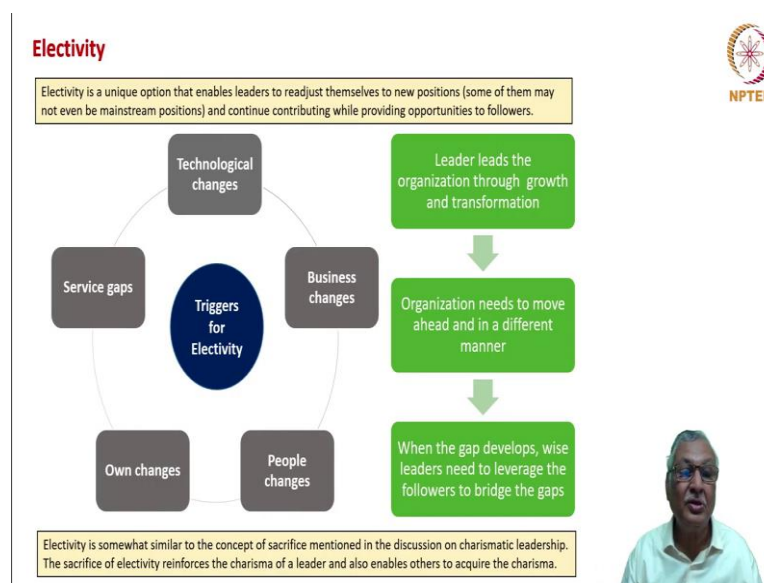
Let us look at each of these 5 factors in detail. Electivity is a unique option that enables leaders to readjust themselves to new positions. Some of them may not even be mainstream positions, and continue contributing while providing opportunities to the followers. The triggers for electivity are as follows technological changes, business changes, people changes, own changes, and survey gaps.

Whenever the leader is able to foresee these changes and therefore, some level of lack of fit in handling the changes or when the leader sees the followers have got better capabilities to handle these changes it is time to choose electivity as an option. The leader who leads the organization through growth and transformation also needs to make sure that the organization needs to move ahead and in different manner from time to time.

When the gap develops because of the changes that we have listed wise leaders need to leverage the followers to bridge the gaps. Electivity is somewhat similar to the concept sacrifice mentioned in the discussion on charismatic leadership. The sacrifice of electivity reinforces the charisma of a leader or also enables others to acquire the charisma.

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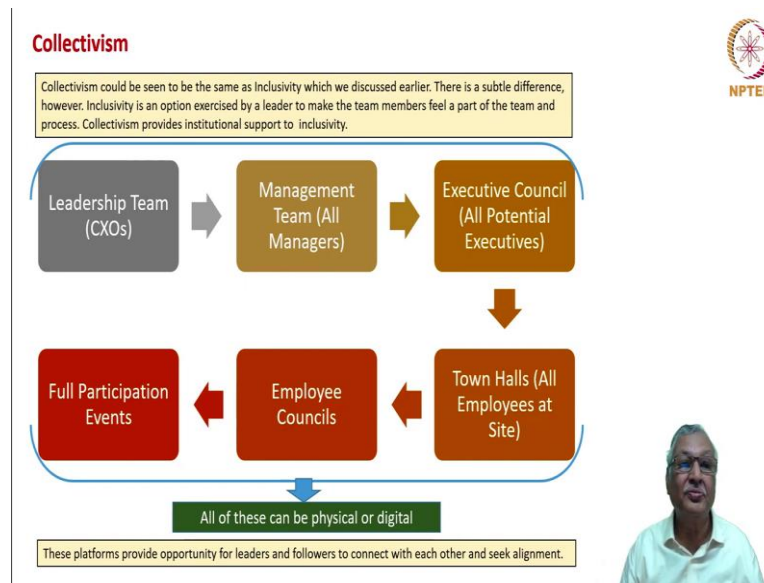
Let us look at collectivism. It could be seen to be the same as inclusively which we discussed earlier; however, there is a subtle difference. Inclusivity is an option exercised by a leader to make the team members feel a part of the team and process. Collectivism provides institutional support to inclusively. Inclusivity is a leadership style, but collectivism provides institutional support to inclusively.

Leadership team that is comprising CXOs to management team, all managers, to executive council, all potential executives, to town halls all employees at site. Then employee councils, full participation events, all of these things can be a physical or digital. These platforms provide opportunity for leaders and followers to connect with each other and seek alignment.

In this a few things could be more optional than the others. Typically, for an organization, leadership team, management team, and executive council will work somewhat like collegium structures. But others such as employee councils, town halls, and full participation events could be triggers of collectivism, forums of collectivism.
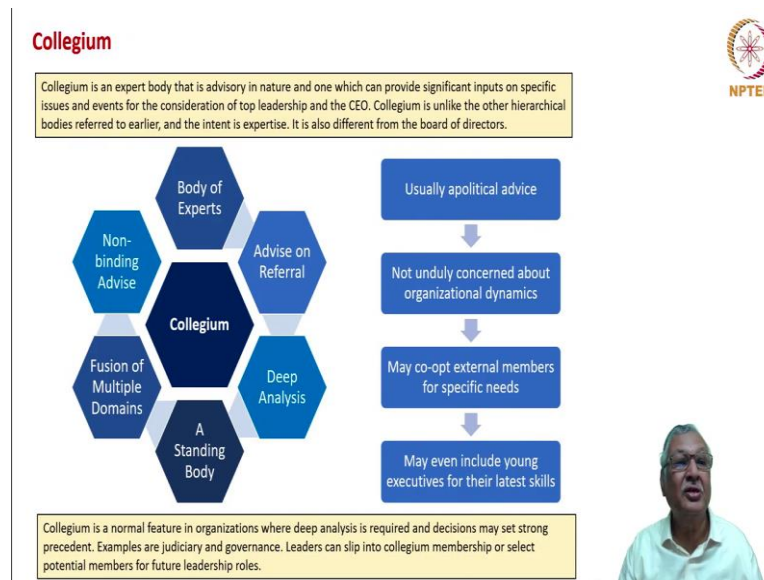
Let us look at Collegium. Collegium is an expert body that is advisory in nature and one which can provide significant inputs on specific issues and events for consideration of top leadership and the CEO. Collegium is unlike the other hierarchical bodies referred to earlier and the intent is expertise. It is also different from the board of directors.

You can constitute a collegium body of experts, you can advise on referral. You can have deep analysis conducted by a body of specialists. It could be a standing body as well ready to be called upon whenever required, monetary policy committee of the Reserve Bank of India is a collegium of experts internal as well as experts which will debate the macroeconomic and microeconomic trends and develops the monetary policy for the country every quarter.

Collegium involves fusion of multiple domains and it is non-binding in its advice. Usually, collegium gives non-political or apolitical advice. It is not concerned about organizational dynamics at all. It may coopt external members for specific needs and may even include young executives for the latest skills.

Collegium is a normal feature in organizations where deep analysis is required and decisions may set strong precedence examples, judiciary and governance. Leaders can slip into collegium membership or select potential members for future leadership roles. If a collegium body exists in an organization, leaders who have done their bit for the

growth of the organization can easily slip into the collegium roles and keep offering the expertise and advice to the new leadership.

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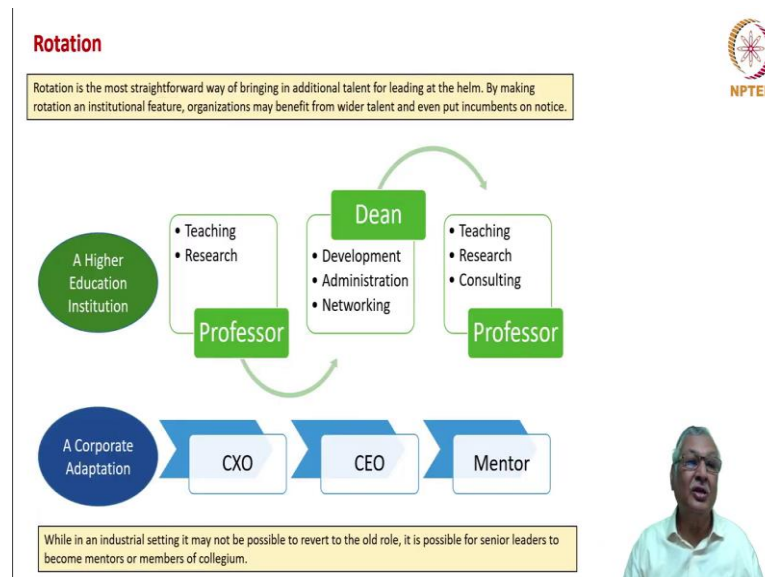
Another one is the rotational approach which is a very straightforward approach of bringing in additional talent for leading at the helm. By making rotation an institutional feature organization may benefit from wider talent and even put incumbents on notice. Let us look at the higher education institution example again. We have professors who teach and conduct research, then they can become deans.

They could be looking at development administration, networking, research, and so on. Then again after dean period is over they could revert as professors doing teaching, researching and consulting. How can we adopt that in a corporate environment? You could be a CXO who would move into CEO position and after the CEO position instead of going into a misty sunset you could as well become a mentor for the organization.

So, there is a corporate adaptation that is possible for rotation in an organization. While in an industrial sitting it may not be possible to revert to the old role. It is possible for senior leaders to become mentors or members of collegium. This is something which the industry needs to consider in much greater depth.

Normally what happens is that leaders who become extremely experienced and extremely important would move to other companies as directors rather than stay on in

the organizations, but collegium structure provides a way in which the expertise and the capabilities of the senior most leaders are retained in the organization.

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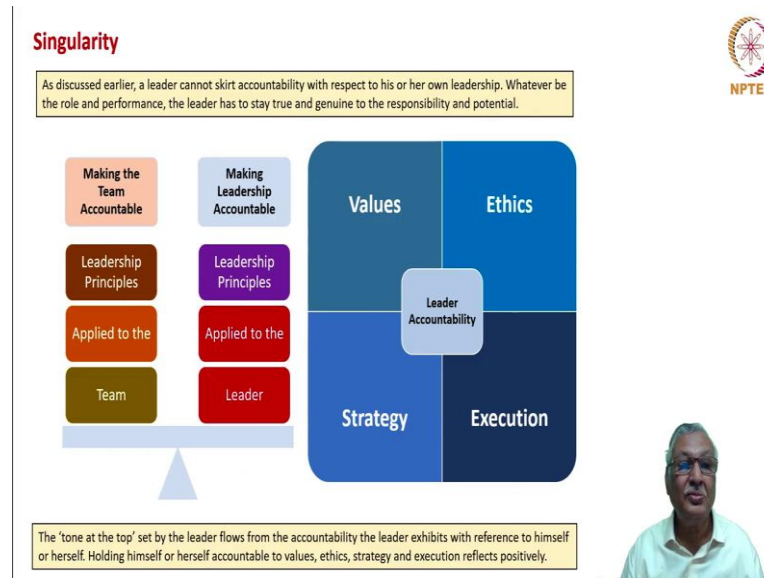
Let us look at singularity. As discussed earlier a leader cannot skirt accountability with respect to his or her own leadership. Whatever be the role and performance the leader has to stay true and genuine to the responsibility and potential of the leadership role. There are 3 aspects, one making the team accountable, two making leadership accountable, and defining the leader accountability in terms of key factors.

If you want to make the team accountable you must have very clear leadership principles which could be applied to the team. The team knows the criteria by which the team would be judge. Making leadership accountable means that here too we need leadership principles which get applied to the leader and to quote a few principles of leader accountability, values, ethics, strategy, and execution. The leader must be top class in respect of these four at least.

The tone at the top, set by the leader flows from the accountability the leader exhibits with reference to himself or herself, holding himself or herself accountable to values, ethics, strategy and execution reflects positively. As I said earlier, holding oneself accountable to the ESG leadership model also holds the leader accountable to higher level of value systems, higher level of governance systems in a company.

Leaders remain relevant. There are several examples we can see of great leaders returning to their companies and taking the companies forward. Instances of great leaders remaining relevant through the times abound. Erstwhile leaders return to active leadership arena and revived the fortunes of companies beyond expectations. The return of Steve Jobs to Apple is a profound example of companies rather than leaders needing to be the prodigal ones.

Steve Jobs returned and made a fundamental transformation in Apple. Michael Dell returned to Dell computers to help face competitive pressures. Larry Page returned to Google to fill the leadership vacuum. Steve Luczo return to Seagate technology to re-grow the company. A G Lafley was called upon to provide revival leadership to Procter and Gamble for on its growth journey.

Larry Ellison had to come back to Oracle for a renewed hands on role and fill a vacuum. Howard Schultz returned to Starbucks to turn around the company. Narayana Murthy came back to Infosys to stabilize leadership and transition. In several other cases, leaders joined other companies to turn them around after their retirement. Examples are Ed Whitaker, who retired as CEO of AT&T to join GM as its CEO. John Chen who joined CEO of ailing Blackberry to turn it around and chart a new course.

We also must take appropriate leadership bets the boards always think. Given the nature of leadership journey, leadership selections in corporate sector tend to be futuristic bets which are as critical as bets taken on technologies, products and markets. Some organizations take what may be seen to be incredible and adventures bets, but they succeed enormously.

The completely unbelievable turnaround and growth of Fiat and Chrysler under Sergio Marchionne or the dramatic transformation of GE under Jack Welch are striking examples of how leadership bets can pay off. On the other hand, there are examples of bets going awry too. Many companies, therefore, plan calibrated multi-year transitions that are less of speculative bets and more of orderly leadership steps.

The move of Jeff Immelt into Jack Welch's role at GE and Andrew Witty into GSK's CEO role are examples of planned leadership transitions. In most cases, availability of leadership talent determines whether succession is through internal pathways or external talent pools. In some cases, however, the results may be mixed whatever be the path taken.

A principle reason is that elevation or induction of a singular leader through the calibrated selection process may trigger the exits of other contenders from the company, denying the new leader and the firm of the institutional knowledge embedded in the existing leaders who are exiting. These aspects were discussed in an earlier lecture as

part of the need to create a nurturing environment whereby the leaders develop roots not to the role, but to the company.

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Leaders need to be pioneers. The essence of this lecture is that when leaders keep taking on pioneering roles that is moving beyond the obvious, taking up something new in terms of product market spaces or business models they create vacuum in which the existing people could move in, because the existing business also is important. The emerging business is also important. These offer sufficient number of challenges for the aspirants to come and prove themselves.

Any society's destiny will be governed both by the leaders and the led. Yet, a review of the broad trends is suggestive of the underlying current for self-help and grassroots leadership as a viable developmental approach. Increasingly, the millennials and other sections of the population are realizing the importance of self-help and grassroots leadership. Self-directed, self-managed groups have also been touched upon in my earlier lecture.

Leaders therefore should not merely extrapolate the past thinking that being a leader is an extremely important task and without the leader nothing else can move. Leaders must start recognizing them. They should do something which others cannot do. And what others can do should better be left to the others that ensures equity and inclusivity in an organization.

At a society level, each citizen is today examining whether they should just be what the predecessors had been the earlier generations had been or they should use the new tools that are available and create a new chapter in history with collective action by the citizenry.

The solution to this does not lie in uncoordinated and often disruptive mass actions. The solution would be more in terms of updating and future-proofing the traditional leader and follower models.

Leadership is certainly charged with controlling the destiny of an organization with business performance serving as the key metric. A typical leader may be a strategist and implementer par excellence, but may not necessarily be a pioneer and every leader needs to be pioneer to create the follower leadership model. This requires the leaders to be visionary and consistently leverage technological innovation to provide new products and services for customers.

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When followers have this opportunity, they must have the gumption and the willingness to act as leaders. A leader who has the highest futuristic and innovative outlook would qualify to be a pioneer that is very clear. When, while visionaries often succeed even with established mature business models or modifications thereof, a pioneer would chart out into new products or new business on a first to market basis.

The more pioneers exist as leaders or as more leaders evolve into pioneers, the greater is the potential for continuous and sustainable business growth, providing opportunities for the followers to become leaders. When leaders push down strategic planning and operational execution to the hierarchy down below followers have the opportunity to become leaders progressively.

On a companion thought, when freedom of expression and execution are enabled at ground level. Followers become capable of exercising their innate faculties and expressing their capabilities in terms of thoughts as well as actions. The reason for good science and technology getting developed by young researchers as much as by experienced researches is related to the subtlety of the thinking that is there in the sublime scientific process.

They believe that free thinking must permeate great research and development laboratories. Therefore, leaders are enabled to be pioneers when followers assume leadership, not merely when leaders vacate their chairs for followers to move in. So, this is a two-way process. Both can help each other. The social responsibility activism being shown by the masses it is indicative of the earning for grassroots leadership.

Everybody wants to connect oneself on the social media platforms. It is a matter of self-expression. Self-publishing is a matter of self-expression. People want to share their thoughts when they blog or when they write essays when they post on the net, people want to express themselves. It is the kind of activism trying to be positive and share the ideas and action plans. Business and industry can thrive by converting the grassroots energy into accelerated performance by providing greater leadership avenues.
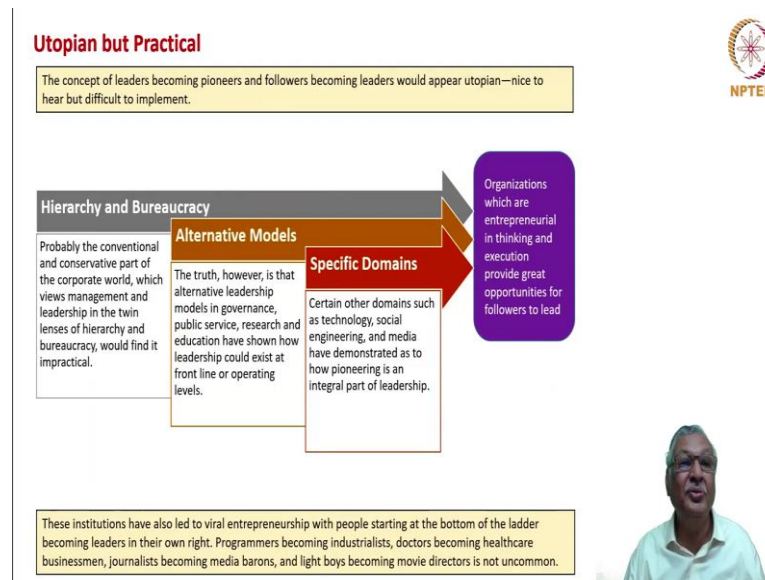
It may look utopian, but it is very practical. The concept of leaders becoming pioneers and followers becoming leaders would appear utopian as I said just now, but it is not only nice to hear, but it is also difficult to implement. What is making this movement from leadership to pioneering and followership leadership so difficult to achieve as an ongoing institutional process?

Number 1, hierarchy and bureaucracy: Organizations are designed around hierarchy and bureaucracy and people are unable to view management and leadership in any other prism than hierarchy and bureaucracy. There are alternative models, as I said in governance, public service, research and education, which demonstrate how leadership could exist at front line or operating levels as much as at top levels.

And there are specific domains such as technology, social engineering, and media which have demonstrated how pioneering can be an integral part of leadership. Organizations which are entrepreneurial in thinking and execution provide great opportunities for followers to lead. So, we can have viral entrepreneurship in the organizations, starting at the bottom of the ladder, becoming leaders in their own, right.

These institutions can have viral entrepreneurship in their culture with people starting at the bottom of the ladder, but becoming leaders in their own, right. There are enough examples of programmers becoming industrialist, doctors becoming health care businessmen, journalists becoming media baron, distributors becoming pharmaceutical

CEOs, and light boys becoming movie directors. These are not at all uncommon, these are real. Which means what? People have consistently tried to become pioneers all the time.

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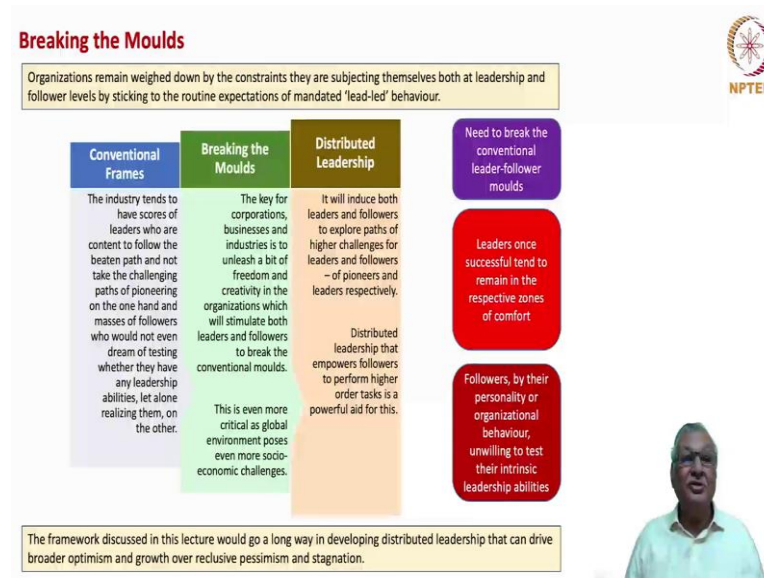
Organizations remain weighed down by the constraints they are subjecting themselves to both at this leadership level and the follower levels by sticking to the routine expectations of mandated lead and led behavior. This is what needs to be broken if you want follower leadership to happen in a great manner.

One conventional frames, the industry thinks of only a few leaders who should be followed whereas, we need to have a frame which breaks the mould and says that we would unleash the freedom and creativity in organization, so that the followers are stimulated to come up with their own ideas.

It is even more critical because global environment is posing even more socio economics challenges. And finally, we should try to find how distributed leadership can be institutionalized in organizations. And it empowers the followers to perform higher order tasks, which is a powerful aid for follower leadership.

So, the key question for leaders and a supportive question for the followers is the methodology to break the conventional leader follower models. Leaders even if they are successful should never remain in their zones of comfort. Followers by their personality

or organizational expectations may be trained to be complaint, but there should be never unwilling to test their intrinsic leadership capabilities.

If we have this concept of breaking the conventional leader follower moulds, and leaders moving into pioneering positions and followers moving into the conventional leadership positions, we will have distributed leadership all across the vertical hierarchy and there would be broad optimism and growth compared to reclusive pessimism and stagnation that would be there in bureaucratic and hierarchy bound organizations.

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Let me look at some examples that have happened in Indian industrial leadership journey. A M Naik, the famous iconic chairman of Larsen and Toubro. He is an Indian industrialist and the group chairman of Larsen and Toubro limited. Larsen and Toubro as we all know is an Indian engineering conglomerate which has got global competencies.

A M Naik joint L&T as an engineer and grew to become the Group CEO. L&T was established again by people who believed in people development. Two Danish engineers, Henning Holck-Larsen and Soren Kristian Toubro, they believed in India and they believed in people development and they established Larsen and Toubro.

In 1965, Naik joined L&T as a junior engineer after his graduation mechanical engineering from BVME, Gujarat. He became General Manager in 1986, and CEO and

MD in 1999. He became chairman in 2003 and moved into non-executive chairman position in 2017 as he inducted his successes CEO.

The company became a pioneer in graduate engineering scheme, it believed in engineering excellence, committed to developing people and was dedicated to building a new India. L&Ts people orientation and policies of internal development were supportive of A M Naik rising to the top based on performance and apex leadership traits.

MDs with whom he worked under saw in him the potential to become a pioneer. Naik pioneered the opportunity of building India's infrastructure and diversifying into defence and nuclear sectors. So, he demonstrated a huge potential by moving into leadership spaces as they become available and the leaders with whom he worked were also progressive enough to provide those kinds of spaces spotting the talent all the way.

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Let us look at another example. S N Subrahmanyan he is the CEO and MD of Larsen and Toubro currently. He took over from A M Naik on 1 July 2017. He is also the vice chairman of a few L&T companies. And he was also instrumental in the acquisition of Indian IT Company Mindtree in March 2019. He commenced journey with L&T as project planning engineer in 1984, after graduating in civil engineering from REC, Kurukshetra.

His major contribution was that he established L&T as one of the largest construction majors globally, began driving digitization aggressively in recent years. He became a board member and vice chairman in subsidiaries and associates besides being MD and CEO of L&T from July 2007. How did this happen? It happened because L&T was a consistently and continuously growing organization.

There were enough contributions to be made by executives like SNS to contribute to the growth of the company. There was the ability to take forward the legacy, ability to globalize and ability to grow into digital and mobility, newer opportunities.

SNS growth and elevation reflects L&T philosophy of providing ample opportunities to individuals to perform and grow the company into different verticals with global standing. Followers continue to be pioneers at L&T.

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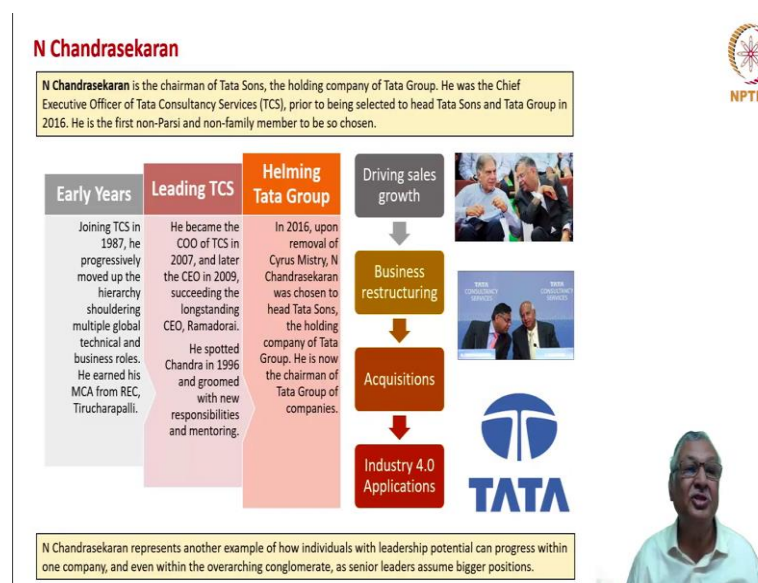
Another example N Chandrasekaran. He is the current chairman of Tata Sons the holding company of Tata Group. He was the chief executive officer of Tata Consultancy Services, prior to being selected to head Tata Sons and Tata Group in 2016. He is the first non-Parsi and non-family member to be so chosen.

In this early years, he joined TCS in 1987 and progressively moved up the hierarchy shouldering multiple global technical and business roles. He earned his MCA from REC, Tirucharapalli. He became the COO of TCS in 2007, and later the CEO in 2009. He

succeeded the long standing CEO, Ramadorai. Ramadorai, spotted Chandra in 1996 and groomed with new responsibilities and mentoring. And because of the performance he has shown at TCS and also the broad mindset he displayed, he was chosen to head Tata Sons after the removal of Cyrus Mistry.

He is now the chairmen of several Tata Group companies. Driving sales growth, business restructuring, acquisitions, industry 4.0 applications, characterize his stint at TCS and position him as a differentiated person. N Chandrashekaran represents another example of how individuals with leadership potential can progress within one company and even within one overarching conglomerate, as senior leaders assume bigger positions.

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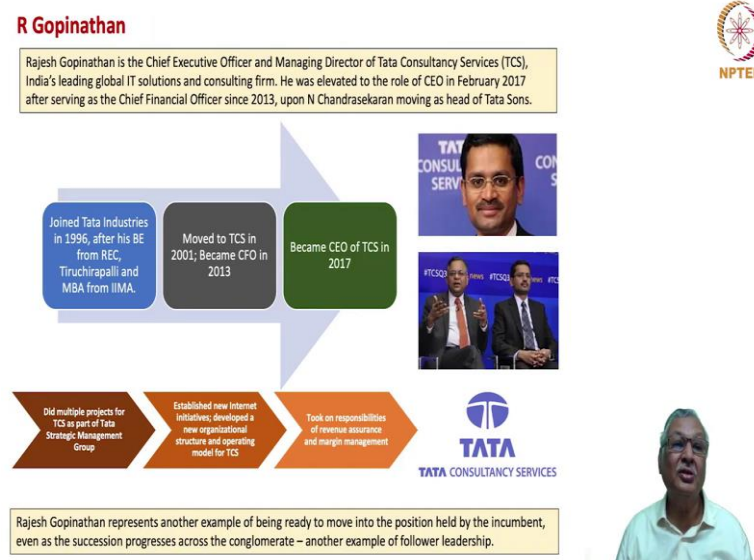
R Gopinathan, he is the current Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Tata Consultancy Services. He moved into the position of CEO after the Chandrashekaran moved as head of Tata Sons. Gopinathan himself was this chief financial officer since 2013 until his elevation as the CEO in 2017.

He joined Tata industries in 1996, another group company after his BE from Regional Engineering College, Tiruchirapalli and MBA from IIM, Ahmedabad. Moved to TCS in 2001; became the CFO in 2013 and became the CEO of TCS in 2017. Did multiple projects for TCS as part of Tata strategic management group. Established new internet initiatives, developed a new organizational structure and operating model for TCS.

Took on responsibilities of revenue assurance and margin management. Rajesh Gopinathan represents another example of being ready to move into the position held by the incumbent, even as the succession progresses across the conglomerate, another example of follower leadership.

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Girish Wagh, he is the president of commercial vehicle business of Tata Motors. He has been a one company man all through. He joined Tata Motors straight from the campus and grew progressively steadily and assuredly. Joined Tata Motors in 1992 and quickly got known as a creative engineer. He had mechanical engineering degree from Maharashtra Institute of Technology and MBA from SP Jain.

Girish Wagh played a crucial role in rolling out products like Tata Indica, Tata Nano and also headed Tata Ace LCV project. All of which showcased Tata motors capability to design Indian indigenous automobiles. In 2017, Girish was entrusted with business responsibility of leading the core commercial vehicle business as its president. He was spotted by Ratan Tata and Ravikant to design path breaking indigenous vehicles at Tata Motors.

A large organization it is felt generally would be slow to recognize and developed talent. However, the examples of L&T, TCS, and Tata Group point out that natural leadership development happens even in large organizations when leaders provide opportunities to

high performers. And leaders provided opportunities not necessarily only by retirement, but also becoming pioneers in newer areas of leadership.

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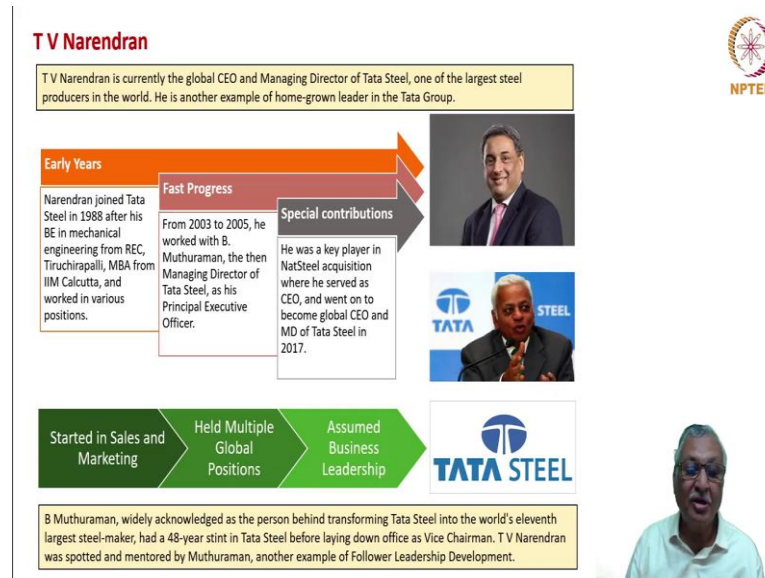
T V Naredran. T V Narendran is currently the global CEO and Managing Director of Tata Steel, one of the largest steel producers in the world. He is another example of homegrown leader in the Tata Group. In the early years, Narendran joined Tata Steel in 1998, after be in mechanical engineering from REC, Tiruchirapalli, MBA from IIM, Calcutta and worked in various positions. Thereafter he had very fast growth.

From 2003 to 2005, he worked with B Muthuraman, the then managing director of Tata Steel as his principal executive officer. I mentioned earlier the way to become leaders, I mentioned executive assistantship as one of the very methodical and important ways by which someone can appreciate the entire organizational value chain and contribute to leadership journey. He reflects that.

He was a key player in NatSteel acquisition where he served as CEO and went on to became global CEO and MD of Tata Steel 2017. He was handpicked by Muthuraman. Narendran started in sales and marketing, held multiple global positions and finally, assumed business leadership.

B Muthuraman widely acknowledged as the person behind transforming Tata Steel into world's 11th largest steel maker, had a 48-year stint in Tata Steel before laying down

office as vice chairman. T V Narendran was spotted and mentored by Muthuraman another example of follower leadership development or natural leadership development.

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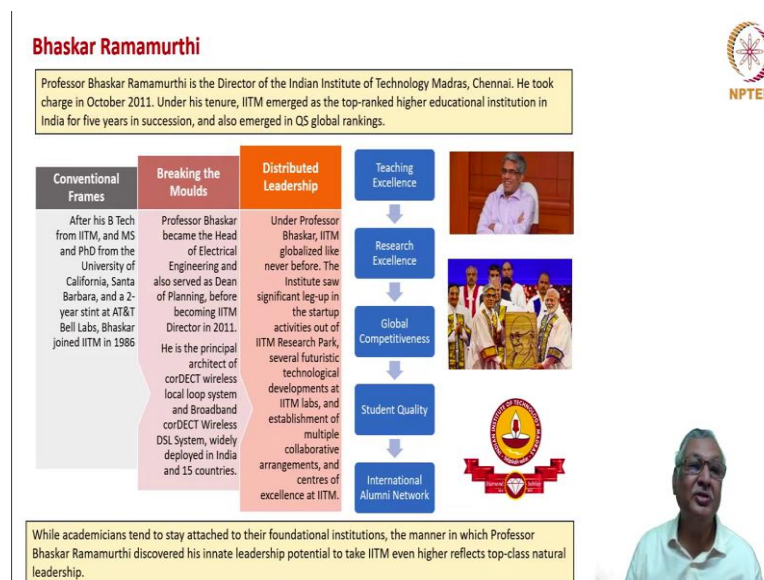
In academics we have great examples. Professor Bhaskar Ramamuthi is the director of the Indian Institute Technology Madras, Chennai. He took charge in October 2011, under his tenure IITM emerged as the top ranked higher educational institution in India for five years in succession and also emerged in QS global rankings.

The conventional frames were there of course, after is B.Tech from IIT Madras and MS and PhD from the University of California, the conventional frames of academic brilliance as can be seen. He did 2-year stint at AT&T Bell Labs. Thereafter, he joined IITM in 1986. He broke the moulds all the time.

Professor Bhaskar became the head of electrical engineering and also served as dean of planning before becoming IITM director in 2011. He was the principal architect of corDECT wireless local loop system and broad band corDECT wireless DSL system, widely deployed in India and 15 countries.

He practiced distributed leadership under Professor Bhaskar IITM globalized like never before. The institute saw significant leg-up in the start-up activities out of IITM Research Park, several futuristic technological developments at IITM labs, and establishment of multiple collaborative arrangements, and centres of excellence at IIT Madras.

Teaching excellence, research excellence, global competitiveness, student quality, and international alumni networks are the high points of IIT Madras has become what the institute has become; leading the country in terms of education rankings mainly because of these 5 factors. Teaching excellence, research excellence, global competitiveness, student quality, and international alumni network.

Professor Bhaskar's leadership has been responsible in a great manner for these 5 aspects of excellence to embed themselves and institutionalize themselves in IIT Madras institutional infrastructural and cultural ethos. While academicians tend to stay attached to their foundational institutions the manner in which Professor Bhaskar Ramamurthi discovered his innate leadership potential to take IITM even higher reflects top-class natural leadership.

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Sanjiv Puri, he is the Chairman and Managing Director of ITC effective May 13, 2019 and an ITC veteran he held multiple leadership responsibilities under the careful watch of the distinguished ITC leader Y C Deweshwar. He is an alumnus of the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur and Wharton School of Business. He joined ITC in 1986.

He held business leadership positions and also handled wide range of responsibilities in manufacturing, operations, information, and digital technology. Sanjiv Puri became the Chairman and Manager Director of ITC effective May 13, 2019. He was appointed as a

Director on the Board of ITC with effect from December 6, 2015 and as Chief Executive Officer from February 5, 2017.

From functional excellence through business leadership to business transformation Sanjiv Puri held a whole lot of positions. Every time the pioneering leader that Y C Deweshwar had a new activity to be done as a new initiative Sanjiv Puri stepped in to prove his leadership mettle that is how the follower leadership worked at ITC.

Conglomerates offer great competitive landscape. Conglomerates offer a great competitive landscape for potential leaders. When the ecosystem is reinforced with mentoring by a leader of the stature of Y C Deweshwar, and the high performance track record of the of the likes of Sanjiv Puri, natural leadership development and selection occurs and followers can become leaders.

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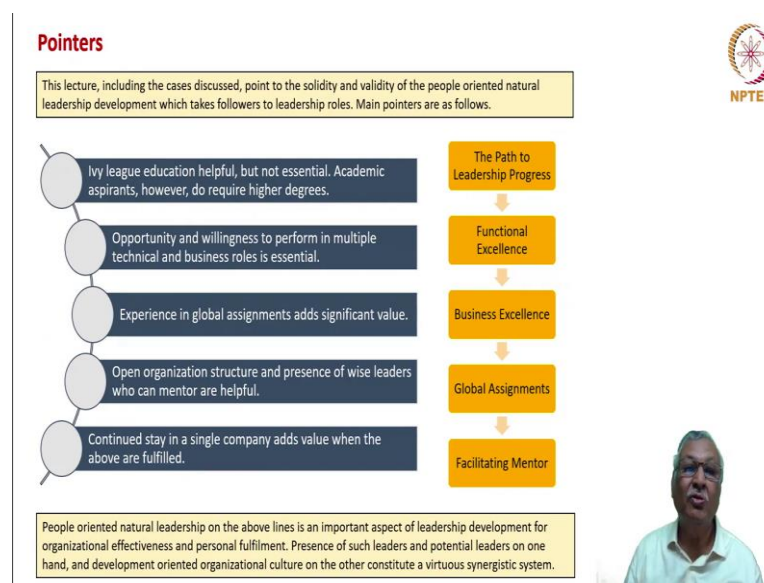
What do these examples and what does the discussion prior to the examples point out? There are several pointers. The solidity and validity of the people oriented natural leadership development which takes followers to leadership roles. Main pointers are as follows. Ivy league education is helpful, but not essential. Academic aspirants, however, do require higher degrees.

Opportunity and willingness to perform in multiple technical and business roles is essential. Experience in global assignments add significant value to the followers who

aspire to be leaders. Open organization structure and presence of wise leaders who can mentor are very helpful for the natural people leadership development and follower leadership development models. Continued stay in a single company adds value when the above are fulfilled.

Continued stay in a single company is not negative for leadership growth, leadership development, and leadership succession. In fact, when the above factors are executed in an organization through leadership thought and belief, continued stay in a single company, in fact, adds more value.

The path to leadership progress, covers functional excellence, business excellence, global assignments, and a facilitating mentor as we have seen through the several examples. People oriented natural leadership on the above lines is an important aspect of leadership development for organizational effectiveness and personal fulfillment. Presence of such leaders and potential leaders on one hand and development oriented organizational culture on the other constitute a virtual synergistic system.

Thank you.

So, as we have seen, people oriented leadership, natural leadership development, and follower leadership model are all intricately and seamlessly interconnected. Each synergizes the other, and the ultimate responsibility of a leader is to ensure that people oriented natural leadership development, which makes the followers the leaders and which inspires the leaders themselves to become pioneers is the bedrock of corporate perpetuity. We will meet in the next lecture.