



WORKING CONFERENCE ON  
**Authority, Organisation, Strategies,  
and Politics of Relatedness**  
March 14-20, 2011



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# **Authority, Organisation, Strategies, and Politics of Relatedness (AOSPOR)**

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AOSPOR is offered as an accelerated learning experience. The primary purpose is developing capabilities to respond to management and leadership challenges in organisations. "Working conferences" are designed for harvesting insights and developing skills that cannot be learnt from reading or listening to lectures. The processes in this 'temporary learning institution' are similar to those we are familiar within our own and other organisations. These being available for exploration and reflection makes the conference experience valuable in mobilising authority from personal and organisational roles for transformations.

The turbulent social, political, and economic environment of the present times is characterised by systemic crises. As role-holders in open systems, we live and work amidst enormous uncertainties, numerous changes, and complex risks and challenges. While functioning in roles as members of groups and in organisations, we need to understand the logic of organisational life, embeddedness of relationships to social, political, and economic environments, and evaluate the appropriateness of alternative strategies.

This 'temporary learning institution' offers unique opportunities to understand and explore authority relations, organisational relationships, and strategic relatedness between organisational parts and wholes. How persons, groups, and organisations develop and use dynamic latent capabilities for effective functioning in intra-group and inter-group interfaces can make all the difference between sustainable performance and stalled growth.

Participants will have opportunities to develop strategic thinking about management processes in groups and organisations. Together with conference staff, participating members can experientially understand 'politics of relatedness' and leadership phenomena through exercise of authority and its delegation; examine and develop their own capacities to lead; diagnose problems of organisational functioning in a variety of settings; and learn to work through problems of resistance to change. Benefits to organisations include increased capacity to lead and to manage in rapidly changing and complex environments.

## **For Whom?**

This working conference is for anyone interested in developing a deeper understanding of managerial and leadership processes in organisations. The concern is with 'management' as a process, rather than as a collective noun. There is no requirement of any particular previous experience or knowledge. Willingness to learn from one's experience of participation in the events and processes of the conference is expected.

Participants may come from professions, business, finance, politics, diplomacy, government and local authorities, NGOs, health services, social care, education, consultancy, justice systems, religious orders, agenda-based activisms, and environmental organisations. This working conference is offered for managers, leaders, entrepreneurs, administrators, activists, educators, researchers, consultants, clinicians, service providers, professional and technical workers for deepening their understanding of professional working in a variety of contexts.

## **Reflections of Some Previous AOSPOR Participants...**

"So much more of it made sense when I returned to my role in my organisation"

(Divisional Chief Executive, ITC Limited)

"I learnt in 7 days what one may not even in a lifetime..."

(Secretary, Antarnad Foundation)

"A rich learning experience about leadership and the exercise of authority in an institutional setting"

(Chief Executive, Multinational Business Firm, Singapore)

"Very insightful experience...a must at least once in one's life"

(Consultant and Executive Coach, Mumbai)

"Unbelievable that I learnt so much in so short a time ...and impossible to share with one who hasn't experienced it"

(Entrepreneur, Ahmedabad)

"One of my most valuable learning experiences ever..."

(HR Director, Bangalore)

"Wonderful opportunity to experience and understand unconscious processes in the functioning of groups and teams"

(Minority Community Leader, Nagpur)

"This conference has made a huge difference to my perspectives... it has provided me new lenses besides increasing the power of my old ones"

(Educator and Social Worker, North India)

## **Learning Aims**

- To provide a 'temporary learning institution' where members study the exercise of authority, evolution of organisational logic, and the discovery and invention of strategies from their lived experience in roles within the conference institution.
- To enable the study of intra-group and inter-group dynamics and institutional relations that develop within the conference as an organisation and understand connections of organisations to their social, political, and economic environments.

- To facilitate opportunities for exploring the foundational processes of linking, connecting, relating, and networking as members of work groups concerned with influencing others and being influenced in the course of formulating and implementing strategies.
- To discover the underlying group, organisational, and social dynamics and the interplay between tradition and change, stability and innovation, creativity and harmony that may, at times, be beyond immediate awareness and to formulate “working hypotheses” about processes beyond awareness.
- To reflect on insights and learning that arise from the perspective of building bridges with organisational roles to which members return after the working conference with a view to apply roles taken up within the conference to one's own organisations and networks.

### Primary Task

Primary Task is the one that describes the nature and core purpose of an organisation. The Primary Task of this working conference is to explore the lived experience of roles through interpersonal, intra-group, inter-group, and institutional relations that develop and shape the possibilities of transformation, pursuit of strategies, and politics of relatedness within the organisational life *of this conference as an institution*.

### What Makes This Working Conference Unique?

This working conference has as its theme 'Authority, Organisation, Strategies, and Politics of Relatedness.' The conference provides a structured context of different systems and sub-systems in which to explore the dynamics of power, leadership, authority, change, creativity, innovation, and transformation as they arise and unfold during the conference.

Participants experience and understand how they influence or are influenced by others and the ensuing consequences—intended and unintended, overt and covert. Thereby, they develop skills and sharpen insights into how strategies take shape from how groups function; how phenomena such as alliance and coalition formation affects understanding of the group by the group and shapes motives and powerbases; how competition, rivalry, and exploration of what lies beyond immediate awareness unravels 'pictures of relatedness' that may remain hidden in everyday interaction.

The lived experience of a working conference is vividly different from simulations or management games because there is no contrivance or manipulation towards possibilities pre-conceived by the staff. The role of the staff is to understand and share from their roles what they hypothesise may be happening in the conference institution. The staff do not assume any monopoly of the truth. The staff creates learning opportunities by providing boundaries and consultations to various events.

Experiences which are personal, and takeaway learning that is private, may differ from one participant to another. In this sense, participants have responsibility for their own learning. To integrate the learning and help transfer this to organisational roles and contexts, appropriate events are built into the conference design to aid this transfer. Participants take part in a number of pre-designed events such as small study group, large study group, praxis group, application group, review group, and harmony sensing matrix. They have opportunities to cope with different tasks, to be in different roles, and to explore the extent and limits of their personal authority. The personal and group experiences of the participants provide the materials studied in the conference. A prospectus containing more details will be provided to participating members accepted to the conference. The prospectus will have the event and session structure describing the primary tasks of the different events. A package of recommended readings will be provided before the conference begins.

### Concepts Fundamental to the Conference

Authority is the source of choices we make (or do not make), actions we take (or do not take), people we relate with, directions we give ourselves, and roles we take up.

Organisations are structures of convenience designed to contain systems and processes. It is through organisations that roles enmesh and collectively engage with valued tasks with reference to boundaries of task, technology, time, space, sentience, and understanding.

Strategies may be regarded as grand designs and patterns we create, discover or influence through our thinking, feeling, and actions—consciously and unconsciously. The working conference provides spaces in which strategies may be formulated and tested in intra-group and inter-group interactions and in the institution as a whole.

Understanding the politics of relatedness ('relatedness' connotes togetherness as a group or other collectivity beyond relationships) enables us to function more effectively in complex systems where there are several stakeholders trying to influence each other. The notion of relatedness was developed by Pierre Turquet as an institutional stepping-stone to portray the behavioural characteristic of cementing which groups exhibit beyond inter-personal relationships. 'Politics of relatedness' arises from how organisational boundary conditions such as task, technology, time, space, sentience, and understanding enable linkages within and regulate flows of resources across such boundaries.

The Tavistock method of studying group relations which inspires the conference originated in 1957 from the work of Wilfred Bion. This has institutionally evolved further in India since 1973.

### Conference Director

Ajeet N. Mathur, Ph.D.

Professor in Strategic Management and International Business

Business Policy Area, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, and

Affiliate Life Member, Indian Psychoanalytical Society

### Conference Staff

The Conference Staff will be invited from among the following: Sanjay Doctor, Kaushik Gopal, M Linda Hunt, Ruthellen Josselson, Jacintha Kumarswamy, Susan Long, Ajeet N. Mathur, Hüseyin Özdemir, Kaushik Roy, Mona Trivedi, and Philomena Vincent.

## Venue, Dates, And Accommodation

Venue: WelcomGroup Hotel Fortune Park Galaxy, Vapi.

Vapi is located near the Arabian seashore mid-way between

Mumbai and Ahmedabad. The Conference will begin on **Monday, March 14, 2011 at 2 p.m.** in an Opening Plenary and end **at 1.00 p.m. on Sunday, March 20, 2011** followed by lunch.



## Practical Arrangements

The maximum places available are limited to 36 on a first-come-first-included basis. We advise that you send your nominations with fees early to avoid disappointment. If places are available, nominations may be accepted until **February 11, 2011 16:00 Indian Standard Time**. Every nomination will be acknowledged when received. Post-nomination withdrawals seeking refund of fee would be possible only until February 10, 2011. All remaining available places, if any, would be offered the following day. Nominations received without fees are not considered.

## Fee

India and other SAARC countries: Rs. 80,000 per participant. All other countries: \$2500 per participant.

The fee, payable in advance, includes conference fee, charges for reading materials, and room (on single occupancy basis) and board from March 14, 2011 (noon) until March 20, 2011 (6 nights).

Fee can be paid through Electronic fund transfer. The details are:

1. For credit to Savings Bank A/c No.032010100040460, IIM, Ahmedabad Axis Bank, Vastrapur Branch (RTGS Code: UTIB0000032)
2. Name of Remitter: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please mention the name of the sponsoring organization)
3. Purpose of Remittance: AOSPOR 2011
4. IIMA Permanent Account Number (PAN): AAATI1247F

Fee is also payable by Bankers' Cheque/Demand Draft in favour of 'Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad' payable at Ahmedabad. Nomination forms together with fee are to be sent to:

**Cherian Mathew**

**Pre-Conference Administrator (AOSPOR 2011)**

**Indian Institute of Management, Vastrapur, Ahmedabad 380 015**

**Phone: +91 79 6632 4078, Fax: +91 79 2630 0352**

**Email: cherian@iimahd.ernet.in**

## Discounts

**Early Bird Discount:** Nominations received with payments on or before January 14, 2011 will be entitled to an early bird discount of 10%.

**Group Discount:** Any organisation sponsoring five or more participants will be entitled to a discount of 10% on total fee payable. Sponsors should pay the full fee along with the nomination forms. Applicable discounts will be given on completion of the programme. The last date to avail group discount is January 14, 2011.

Organisations can avail themselves of both the discounts subject to a maximum overall discount of 15%.

A limited number of bursaries are available in cases where neither the member nor the organisation are able to pay a full fee. Bursary applications should reach the pre-conference administrator by January 31, 2011. Decisions on bursaries will be made after that.

## Income-tax Exemption

The Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, holds income-tax exemption certificate No. ACIT/TDS Circle/IIM/2010-11 dated 23/04/2010 under section 197 of the I.T. Act, 1961, issued by Assistant Commissioner of Income Tax, TDS Circle, Ahmedabad, which is valid up to March 31, 2011. Therefore, tax on professional fee paid need not be deducted at source.

## Alumni Association

Participants become members of the IIMA Alumni Association on completion of the programme. The alumni enjoy certain benefits with regard to the Institute's publications, facilities, and activities.

## Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA)

IIMA was set up by the Government of India in collaboration with the Government of Gujarat and Indian industry as an autonomous institution in 1961. The Institute provides education, training, consulting, and research facilities in management.

The Institute conducts the following major programmes:

- Two-Year Post-Graduate Programme in Management (equivalent to MBA)
- Two-Year Post-Graduate Programme in Agri-business Management (equivalent to MBA)
- Fellow Programme in Management (equivalent to Ph.D.)
- One-year Post-Graduate Programme in Management for Executives (PGPX, equivalent to MBA)
- Management Development Programmes (MDPs) for industry, business, agricultural and rural sectors, and public systems covering education, health, transport, and population. In the last 49 years, over 45,500 managers have participated in various MDPs.
- Faculty Development Programme for teachers in universities and colleges.

The Institute has over 90 faculty members working in the following management areas and sectors:

Disciplinary Areas • Business Policy • Communications • Economics • Finance and Accounting • Marketing • Production and Quantitative Methods • Organizational Behaviour • Personnel and Industrial Relations

INTERDISCIPLINARY CENTRES AND GROUPS • Centre for Innovation, Incubation, and Entrepreneurship • Centre for Infrastructure Policy and Regulation • Centre for Management in Agriculture • Centre for Management of Health Services • Centre for Retailing • Computer and Information Systems Group • Faculty Development Centre • Gender Resource Centre • IIMA-Idea Telecom Centre of Excellence • Insurance Research Centre • Public Systems Group • Ravi J. Matthai Centre for Educational Innovation.