CHAPTER - IV

THE SUPERORDINATE GOAL
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The Superordinate Goals are those higher order objectives which an organisation keeps before itself for determining the course of its activities. It acts as the central determinant for the operations of a Company. The Superordinate Goal is perhaps the most important dimension of organisational effectiveness because it provides an unshakeable belief in the ultimate objective towards which a Company may decide to strive. The Superordinate Goal would represent a set of core values and beliefs which the organisation nurses. The Superordinate Goal should go beyond such factors as profit, return on investment and similar economic or financial measures/parameters. This is not to say that these performance indicators are not important, but to indicate that the Superordinate Goal to be adopted by a Company should have a much higher level, and that the achievement of satisfactory performance indicators should be regarded as pointers towards the achievement of the Superordinate Goal. It is obvious that the Superordinate Goal chosen by an organisation will have a great bearing on the interaction between the Company and its environment, including the competitive environment.
The Superordinate Goal will also have to be chosen after very carefully considering the intrinsic strengths and weaknesses of a Company, and the threats and opportunities which the environment presents to itself. Of course, in the early stages of an organisation, especially if its beginnings are small in the sense of having been started by one or only a few entrepreneurs with limited resources at their command, the very survival in the marketplace becomes its first objective. In this regard, one may not be able to perceive the existence of "Superordinate Goal" in the early stages of an organisation.

Could we then say that "Superordinate Goal" develops over a period as a culmination of the "natural" process of evolution? If this premise is accepted, it follows as a corollary that every organisation—small or big, production-based or service-based, private or public—will eventually have a "Superordinate Goal". This Superordinate Goal may not necessarily be articulated in so many words but it would be existing in an unwritten or even unexpressed form. Without realising, the personnel involved in the running of the organisation should be having the Superordinate Goal hidden in the subconscious. Is this premise sound?
Another aspect that needs to be examined is whether one stumbles on a "Superordinate Goal" or it is matter of deliberate choice based on a logical "scanning" of the environmental factors, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of one's organisation vis-a-vis those of the competitors in the prevailing mix of opportunities and threats?

Lastly, one needs to address oneself to the query: whether the adaptation of a Superordinate Goal is essential for ensuring outstanding success. Looked at from another angle, does the adaptation of a "Superordinate Goal" necessarily lead to the achievement of outstanding success and excellence?

The "Nature" of Superordinate Goal:

In the context of the present research work on the success of the two leading paint companies, the researcher found it necessary to examine as to whether the articulation of a Superordinate Goal is subject to the limitations of the forces within which the industry has been operating and is required-expected to operate. The macroenvironmental forces are needed to be understood for appreciating the choice of a particular "Superordinate Goal" by an organisation.
The character of the paint business and paint industry in India is such that adaptation of certain goals as Superordinate Goals becomes meaningless. This is clear when one examines the technological environment and the economic environment prevailing about four decades back and today. With limited spending power at his command, an average consumer had paints as the last priority on his list. With limited, and that too a highly selective industrial growth obtaining four decades back, what type of "Superordinate Goal" could an organisation keep before itself?

IV-a Superordinate Goal of Asian Paints (India) Limited:

It would be appropriate to examine some material already available on this aspect:

"C.H. Choksey's business leadership is characterised by a sharply focussed understanding of his mission as the promoter, developer and builder of an Indian paint company which was at a time when the market for Indian paints was at a dead end. To fully understand this, it is important to remember that the paint market was wholly dominated by multinationals in which Indian paint companies were looked down upon. In fact, Choksey gets quite emotional,
but never angry, when he talks about a prime factor contributing to his success i.e. his entry and outstanding achievement in the rural market. He attributes his action to the fact that since he could not possibly compete with the loose cartel of the multinationals in the metropolitan-urban market then prevalent in the paint market, he had no option but to build-up his base in the small urban and rural market. He talks about the days when as a businessman in the paints trade, he felt that no real efforts were being made by the multinationals in either promoting quality or serving the large mass of the small urban centres and rural markets which had to look to the metro-urban markets for meeting their requirements. It is this sense of mission which made him view the market for paint in rural India as a challenge as well as an opportunity.

"In the initial period, he experienced considerable resistance to his effort in building up a totally new marketing structure which was addressed to the requirements of the rural society, particularly because it was viewed as a threat by the multinational paint companies which had always counted on this 'secondary sales' volume of the business as a part of the distribution and sales of their metro-urban wholesaler or dealer to the rural shopkeeper."
Choksey says enigmatically that he went to the rural market because he found a hostile climate in the metropolitan market, both from the multinational manufacturers of paint as well as the Indian dealers, who had long-standing relationships with them, often marked by a near-servile attitude. However, the way he organised this marketing effort by building up a totally new distribution structure based on much smaller unit size of sales, smaller packs and a servicing arrangement which ensured that the rural dealer or shopkeeper had access to Asian Paints supplies, leads one to believe that he possesses the mind of an outstanding strategist. The market hostility was certainly a contributing factor but there was distinctly a sense of mission in Choksey's pathbreaking effort in establishing Asian Paints as an Indian paint company, serving the market in its own rights. The striking thing is his complete lack of animus, notwithstanding the hostility and entry barriers that he experienced initially. This is primarily because of the sense of fulfilment he derives from overtaking the established leaders and establishing Asian Paints as an outstanding industry leader in its own right, based on a managerial philosophy inspired by missionary vision" (emphasis researcher's). (Ref: 1)

Ref: 1 Achieving Managerial Excellence- S.K.Bhattacharyya Publishers: Macmillan India Limited. Pg. 36-37
Is, then, a "Sense of Mission" synonymous with "Superordinate Goal". Or, is the "Sense of Mission" a pre-requisite for defining one's Superordinate Goal?

This researcher's discussions with the various senior people working in Asian Paints (India) Limited brought out the perceptions and opinions of these "partners in progress". The researcher's discussions lead him to believe that a "sense of mission" is not absolutely essential in the process of adoption of Superordinate Goal either by the single leader of the Company or the top management team. Some of the senior people took the view that in the rough and tumble of business, the Superordinate Goal can not be decided solely upon what even the leader considers to be his "Mission". This is so probably because one's perception of "Mission" is not unlikely to be coloured by "non-business" considerations. Even then, these senior people were of the belief that a sense of mission does act as a strong motivating force in the pursuance of the Superordinate Goal. Moreover, in the opinion of the persons interviewed, the Sense of Mission acts as a cementing force to bring out a coherent effort of the management team.
What has been Asian Paints (India) Limited's Superordinate Goal? Reference here is made to the study made by S.K. Bhattacharyya:

"In the case of Asian Paints, the Superordinate Goal is clearly one of ensuring the desired level and quality of dealer service, and providing continued availability of the right product mix of the right quantity at the right time on the dealer shelf. In fact, Choksey's identification of this as an organisational goal beyond profit, market share, return on investment etc. comes out clearly as the central assumption in Asian Paints' organisational purpose. One can see how over the years Choksey's drive to achieve this mission or purpose has invariably been reflected in his actions. It has guided the total organisational effort and determined how individual action as well as the managerial processes and systems are geared towards ensuring the availability of desired products in the desired shades in the desired packages at the desired locations at the required time. It was Choksey's genius which saw that a paint company which manufacturers many shades and varieties of products in many packages and distributes them over many locations could not possibly do so without computerisation of their branch operations to generate the required sales planning.
He also saw that such sales and logistics planning at the locational level had to be linked to the production planning system. In dealing with the initial faltering experiences in operationalising the computer-based planning and logistics system, it was Choksey, rather than the technical experts, who demonstrated his faith in such a system because he could see that only computerisation would ensure that the required planning and distribution would provide the effective and feasible response to the organisational requirements. It is for this reason that he persisted in his efforts to streamline the system almost for three years, and provided managerial as well as his personal top management level support, notwithstanding the feelings of doubts within the organisation.

"The author's discussions with dealers indicated how the company is constantly assessing the requirements of the dealers and ensuring the availability of the required products at the right time. In fact, several dealers mentioned that Asian Paints was probably the only paint company which was able to service about 80 to 90% of their orders on the same day of the order being placed, and ensure that the remaining 10 to 20% was made available on the day that they promised it would be supplied. Given the enormous permutations and combinations of colours,
shades and packs that are possible, one can begin to understand and appreciate what servicing of 80 to 90% of a dealer order on the same day means in terms of organisational planning, logistics and coordination effort. Given the clarity of superordinate goal, Asian Paints is demonstrating that it must, and can, be done." (Ref: 2)

The foregoing thus leads to the conclusion that for Asian Paints (India) Limited "Dealer Servicing" was adopted as the Superordinate Goal. In his discussions with senior level management personnel with a view to ascertaining their own perception, certain interesting angles came to the researcher's notice. In at least one case, it was clear that "Market Leadership" and not "Dealer Servicing" was perceived to be the organisation's Superordinate Goal. On probing with this particular person, it was revealed that achieving leading position among all the paint manufacturing companies in the country was the dominant thought in the mind of many in the corporate senior team of managers. According to them, the route of Dealer Servicing was followed for leading to the goal of market leadership. Moreover, all of these senior management level personnel give full credit to Mr. C.H. Choksey for identifying this one single factor only on the

Ref: 2  Achieving Managerial Excellence - S.K. Bhattacharyya
Publishers: Macmillan India Limited. Pg. 50-51
basis of which Asian Paints could hope to meet all the initial indifference and in fact opposition to itself. There was a "vacuum" in the Indian paint market at that point of time and Mr. C.H. Choksey's genius lay in pinpointing this vacuum - viz., the critical dependence of the non-urban consumer on the metro-urban dealer for meeting his (the former's) paint needs. Those persons who share this view propound that dealer servicing is always an on-going process and will have to be continued for all time to come. Moreover, according to these personnel, the concept of dealer servicing is not as tangible as the concept of market leadership. In terms of its motivational angle too, Market Leadership looks more appealing to people and more forceful. Its quantification is much more readily seen than the Dealer Servicing.

Another significant line of thinking came out during the researcher's discussions. The adaptation of Dealer Servicing as the Superordinate Goal appears to some people as giving unduly greater importance to only one of the many business activities viz., marketing. While the senior people who subscribe to this view candidly admit the great role Marketing has to play in any paint manufacturing company's operations, and further they have themselves witnessed the fine tuning the Marketing
function has achieved in Asian Paints, they feel at the same time that adaptation of dealer servicing as Superordinate Goal shifts the focus of company's operations in a very subtle, unconscious manner. According to these people, market leadership and excellence is a multi-faceted phenomenon where every functional area makes its own significant contribution.

The researcher's opinion is that this dichotomy is more imaginary than real. Adaptation of Market Leadership as the Superordinate Goal would make Dealer Servicing as a policy adopted towards achieving this goal. On the other hand, when Dealer Servicing is given the position of Superordinate Goal, achieving Market Leadership becomes a secondary, or at most, a concomitant goal. It goes without saying, however, at least in the paint trade that achieving leadership in dealer servicing is almost the same as achieving market leadership considering the fact that the decorative paint sector is far bigger than the industrial paint sector, and the decorative paints are sold to the ultimate consumer only through dealers.

The issue can be put in proper perspective by viewing dealer servicing as only the penultimate step in "customer servicing". There is ample evidence on hand that the entire business philosophy of M/s Asian Paints(India)Limited
is highly customer oriented and the paramount importance the Company gives to Dealer Servicing is only for achieving the ultimate goal, the Superordinate Goal of Excellent Customer Servicing. This view is supported by the fact that when Mr. C.H. Choksey decided to go rural in those early days, he had only the ultimate i.e. the final, customer in view. For instance, it was the final customer who got starved due to the lack of good quality paint in the required quantities. He could not get this from the local dealer. The Company got into the act the moment they witnessed this helplessness of the customer. It was only to keep the final consumer properly serviced that proper servicing of the dealer became a matter of course for Asian. This becomes obvious when one considers that more than the customer, it is the dealer who is the more easily identifiable and definable entity. Moreover, since at least in the paint trade, there is no "exclusivity" in dealership i.e. no dealer can generally be prevented or forbidden from dealing in competitors' products, keeping track of his requirements becomes more important. A dealer is the "influencer" in the buying decision of a consumer. The customer-oriented philosophy of the Company is strikingly reflected in the "Letter to the Shareholder" which Mr. C.H. Choksey addresses in the Annual Report of the Company. "I believe that we are basically a people
oriented company. Our people have together employed in a critical and pragmatic manner technology and tools of management in the service of the customer. Our product development, improvement in processing, investments in new layout, faster and better machines, larger and more uptodate central as also upcountry warehouses are all aimed at giving better value to the consumer. Thus while competition in paint bazar is keen and if anything has become keener still in recent times, the common cause that we have made with the consumer gives us an edge and secures us the foundations for a sustained growth" (emphasis of the researcher). (Ref: 3)

The foregoing is a clear pointer to the Company's Superordinate Goal of Customer Satisfaction or Customer Servicing as the lodestar for Company's operations.

"....... Besides strengthening our capacity base this policy of dispersing our facilities at different locations will also help us in offering better and timely service to our customers"(emphasis of the researcher).(Ref:4)


The element of "Service to Customer" appears to be the main theme guiding Asian Paints operations, while taking care of other equally important aspects of cost control and profitability of the operations.

It appears at the same time that "institution building" has been the cornerstone of Asian Paints' business philosophy. What this means to the Company is putting the organisation in the centrepeice of any decision making process. To quote a very senior manager: "... Thus, every action is evaluated in terms of how it helps strengthening the organisation further to face future challenges. Therefore, growth and profits become intermediate objectives instrumental to building a healthier organisation. The above philosophy has remained virtually unchanged since the very inception of the organisation. It has resulted in customer orientation, operational efficiency and ploughing back profits to manage growth. Growth is seen as necessary for the good of the organisation as also of the people who constitute it." (emphasis of the researcher).
(Ref: 5)

Ref: 5 ASIAN PAINTS on their Market Leadership.
A presentation at the Seminar on "TOWARDS EXCELLENCE: INDIAN CORPORATE EXPERIENCES" organised by IIM, Bangalore, August 24-26, 1987
IV-b **Superordinate Goal of M/s Goodlass Nerolac Paints Ltd.**

Goodlass Nerolac Paints Ltd, on the other hand, appears to be a Technology-Product driven Company. This aspect came out clearly through the discussions the researcher held with the senior management personnel and the top management. The researcher found that though M/s Goodlass Nerolac Paints Ltd may not have articulated it as such, the Superordinate Goal of that Company has clearly been one of being recognised as "Technology Leader" among the paint manufacturers. The dominant thinking appears to be that M/s Goodlass Nerolac Paints Ltd should command a high degree of acceptance by customers as the manufacturer of highest quality paints. Since individuals use very little quantities of paints for their personal use at any single instance of time and the technical specifications expected from such individual customers for their personal use of paints are few, if any, it followed logically, as far as Goodlass Nerolac Paints Ltd has been concerned, that supplies to industrial users of paints were given great importance. This is perfectly understandable. As a result of this orientation, M/s Goodlass Nerolac Paints Ltd seems to have concentrated on consolidating their position in the industrial paints sector. This was clearly a well-thought out strategy. Perhaps the roots of this strategy lay in the historical tie-up which the Company has.
As a result of adaptation of Technology Orientation, the Company made significant investments in modern, sophisticated manufacturing facilities which is an indication of the high degree of concern the company attaches to maintaining high levels of product quality.

IV-c Superordinate Goals as Shared Values:

In his discussions with the personnel of the two companies at various levels, the researcher tried to find out the level of "percolation"; i.e. the awareness of these personnel about the adaptation of Superordinate Goal. In the case of M/s Asian Paints India Limited, there appeared fairly widespread awareness of the fact that their's was a Company now regarded as an "Excellent" Company. The employees also looked conscious of the fact that they are part of the largest paint manufacturer in the country. It also came to the notice of the researcher that many of them were aware of the contribution of customer orientation in the overall growth of the Company. The employees seemed aware of the fact that unless the customers hold a Company in a favourable image, they will not go for the products made by the Company (on account of "quality evening effect"). Relatively few of the employees,
however, seemed fully conscious of the role played by the Dealer as an important link in the distribution network. This was probably on account of lack of proper understanding on the part of junior employees of the exact manner of distribution of paints.

Is a formal manifestation of Superordinate Goal mandatory? It is almost axiomatic that for a unified effort in the desired direction, the members who constitute the management team must be fully aware of the aims which the Company places before itself. This means that the person at the helm of the affairs must share his values with the members of the team. Moreover, the members of the top management must be in full harmony of the goals set by the Company. This logic should then percolate down the line through the various functional levels.

During the discussions with the personnel of the two companies, the researcher found that the awareness of the Company's "Superordinate Goal" was quite high in the case of Asian Paints (India) Limited. The reason for this high level of awareness is seen in the free flow of information that characterises this Company. The employees working in different departments seem to meeting each other quite frequently - both formally and informal settings. The
researcher observed, at the same time, that the Company's top management team and the senior managers do not believe in 'advertising' the Superordinate Goal. Rather, they believe that the best way in which the employees can be made aware of the Superordinate Goal is by expressing it through actions. The action ought to be in harmony with each other and never at cross purposes. This 'action orientation' seems to be the basic reason for the high degree of credibility enjoyed by the top management of the Company in regard to the adoption of Superordinate Goal. Though a good number of these persons could not articulate their perceptions in terms of the specific words "Superordinate Goal", they never-the-less appeared to be aware of what the Company's goal is. They were distinctly aware that they were part of the biggest paint company in the country and more importantly the aspect of business on which the Company lays great emphasis i.e. "keeping the supply lines full". At departmental meetings the employees are constantly given the message that fulfilling the customers' needs is an important consideration for the Company and that every employee must work towards it. The researcher, however, observed that this message was given not just as a "Public Relations" job or simply for the purpose of motivation. During the discussions with the employees of the Company (Asian Paints) it became evident
to the researcher that many employees perceived this as yet another way in which the "management takes people into confidence". Rather than coming to know of the Company's main aims and policies through outside sources, the employees would much appreciate if this information is given to them by their own superiors. This is what is happening at Asian Paints. The credibility of the Management in regard to their sincerity and determination in pursuing the chosen goal is manifestly evident to employees down the line. The employees are, further more, seen to be in harmony with the goal set by the Company.

At Goodlass Nerolac Paints Ltd, this awareness of the Company's "Superordinate Goal" looked rather hazy. While the general awareness that the Company's main area of strength is its image as manufacturer of "high quality paints" is widespread, the intensity with which the employees perceive this to be anything like the "Superordinate Goal" is very mild. The "feel" part of it seems to be somehow missing. Thus, while very formal manifestation or pronouncement of "Superordinate Goal" is evident at neither of the Companies, the undercurrent of awareness is much higher at M/s Asian Paints (India) Limited.
Is the "background" of Company a factor?

When a Company adopts a certain goal as its "Superordinate Goal", the choice itself is decided to a certain extent by the Company's own areas of strength. In the actual usage of paint, the consumer does not readily come to know the quality differences among the products available to him. From the viewpoint of paint manufacturer, this situation presents certain difficulties in regard to offering to the customer a "Unique Sales Proposition". The image that the customer holds about the Company thus has great importance. The Company has, on its part, to bolster this image. Goodlass Nerolac Paints Ltd. has had the advantage of "international" image, it has had ties with their British principal and they had the initial acceptance by the Indian consumers. The case of Asian Paints was appreciably different. It had no such initial advantage; actually, it was at a definite handicap in having to face competition from the companies having foreign ties. It thus perhaps had per-force to choose the other route to growth i.e. to explore the non-urban, rural market. To make success of the route, M/s Asian Paints had to take the decision of dealer development almost as a pre-requisite for customer-base development. To their full credit, M/s Asian Paints (India) Limited made a complete
success of it, so much so that other companies find it difficult even today to dislodge even a small share of Asian Paints' market. The researcher thus finds the conclusion inescapable that the adaptation of a particular "Superordinate Goal" depends not so much upon the type of the industry one is in but more on the individual, characteristic strengths of the Company.

IV-d Market Segmentation as a consequence of the chosen Superordinate Goal:

With the adaptation of two distinct Superordinate Goals by the two companies, the markets which they would serve effectively got separated almost automatically. Orientation towards "Product Features", "High Quality of Paints" and emphasis on technical aspects meant that M/s Goodlass Nerolac Paints Ltd. would concentrate on industrial customers. They would thus represent "large unit size of transaction- small number" situation. Dealing with industrial consumers is usually done by the manufacturer direct. Thus the very adaptation of the Superordinate Goal of Product Quality precluded certain markets and certain marketing channels to an extent. It however, needs to be understood in this connection that no major paint manufacturing company will be able to rely exclusively on only one of the two market segments. It
is only a matter of emphasis. Goodlass Nerolac Paints Ltd., while concentrating on industrial paints sector, also had to cater to the decorative paint market. On the other side, Asian Paints with a strong, unassailable presence in the decorative paints sector subsequently came into the industrial paints segment, and has of late acquired a good presence. Catering to both the segments with equal emphasis would perhaps be a very tall order at least in the initial and consolidation stage of a company. In the maturity stage, the Companies would start going into those other areas also where thus far they did not concentrate. This seems to be happening to M/s Goodlass Nerolac Paints Ltd in regard to decorative paints sector and to M/s Asian Paints (India) Limited in regard to the industrial paints sector.

In the context of the adaptation of Superordinate Goals by the two companies, an interesting factor has come to the attention of the researcher. This pertains to the perception of the 'Quality'. The ways in which the two paints manufacturers have looked at this aspect presents a fascinating scenario. From the discussions with the technical and non-technical personnel of the two companies, the researcher has come to the conclusion that at M/s Goodlass Nerolac Paints Ltd, "Quality" has traditionally
been looked upon as superior product features. This standpoint does have its advantages, provided it gets interwoven with customers' specific requirements. While high "Quality" of product features is undeniably a desirable attribute, it by itself is not a panacea to a wider cross-section of consumers. What truly assumes great importance is the "performance requirements" rather than "product feature requirements". It thus leads to the conclusion that only high quality of product features may not necessarily lead to customer satisfaction. In the case of paints, the actual performance of paints depends not only upon product features by themselves but upon product features - application technology combination. Paint manufacturers seldom have full or even adequate control over the application process. As a result, even with proper control over the product features, the actual field performance of paints will show variation depending upon the care taken during application. Each customer's requirements too would vary considerably. It appears to the researcher that M/s Goodlass Nerolac Paints look to "Quality" aspects predominantly from the viewpoint of "product features". A shift from this "product features" orientation to "product performance" orientation would perhaps be in order. It is no intention of the researcher to indicate that presently it is not being done, but only to point out that a definitive shift in emphasis would be desirable.
Asian Paints (India) Limited have defined their perception of quality in terms of "batch to batch consistency". What this means is that while paint manufacturing process, being a batch operation, leads to some variation in properties from one batch to another, such variations should be kept within as narrow a margin as possible. The customers are then assured of getting "consistent" supplies from the paint manufacturer. M/s Asian Paints further defined this "consistency" in terms of some easily understandable and relevant factors from the customers' view point. An obvious characteristic is "colour" and a great deal of customer satisfaction depends upon it. By all counts, this understanding of quality is truly ingenious. From the discussions with dealers, painters and customers it became evident to the researcher that pursuance of this concept of quality has been one of the cornerstones of Asian Paints' phenomenal success in the paint industry.

The paint market is buyers' market. What then would induce a customer to initially go in for a product and then, having used the product once, go for a repeat purchase? The buying behaviour is different in the case of industrial paint users and decorative paint users. Customer development in the case of industrial paints
takes place on one-to-one basis i.e. between the manufacturer and the user direct through dialogues, consultations and trials. The decision to buy is technology driven, and products are made to individual specifications. The adaptation of "high product quality" as the Superordinate Goal seems to be the logical choice. The decision to cater to the rural market calls for a different approach and this is what Asian Paints seems to have adapted. The customers' requirements are different. Their expectations from the product are different. The number of transactions is high but the unit size of transaction is small. Product features in terms of specifications do not carry much meaning to the rural, individual consumer of paints. To him, the one attribute which he can easily verify is batch-to-batch consistency mainly in respect of colour and just a couple of other attributes (consistency in hiding power, gloss etc.). The success of Asian Paints in the non-urban, rural marketpalce is in good measure due to this proper appreciation of customers' requirements and rigorous conformance to these requirements.

IV-e The Role of Marketing Intermediaries:

The operative part of the Superordinate Goal also finds expression in the dealings of the Company with the marketing intermediaries. Goodlass Nerolac Paints Ltd
has traditionally concentrated on industrial paints where there is direct liaison between the manufacturer and the user. There is little to do for any marketing intermediary such as a dealer. The approach which Goodlass Nerolac Paints has come to develop vis-a-vis the dealers is seemingly due to the subtle influence of their Superordinate Goal. Though as a paint company Goodlass Nerolac Paints makes products of wide range for the individual decorative paints consumer also, the approach is not totally geared to meeting all the needs of an average consumer, especially in respect of the ready availability of the desired shade in the required pack size. This is understandable, considering the logistics of supplying a large number of products in a variety of shades in different packings. Through the discussions with the dealers, it became apparent to the researcher that while the average consumer views Goodlass' quality in high esteem, he feels compelled to shift to competitors' products on account of the sheer availability factor.

On the other hand, Asian Paints (India) Limited has achieved a high level of product availability. Coupled with the other factor of quality assurance in terms of batch-to-batch consistency, the customers' and dealers' natural inclination seems to be favourable to Asian Paints'
products. Perhaps this was inescapable considering the very nature of paint business. It needs to be noted that the top management team of Asian Paints had very clear perceptions of what they meant by "excellent dealer servicing". The critical parameters were ready availability of the required product in the full sense of the term (to include pack size) together with the necessary assurance of batch-to-batch consistency. The onus of meeting the customers' requirements lay primarily on the Company itself through the agency of the middlemen, in this case the dealers. It is noteworthy that the "excellent dealer servicing" was achieved simultaneously with good control over the monetary transactions between the Company and the dealers. The payment terms for the dealers have been quite "tough" in terms of the great emphasis Asian Paints top management gave to timely payments by the dealers. In the long history of the Company, no attempts seem to have been made by the management to "placate" the dealers or to give them unduly favourable terms on selective basis. On their part the dealers get adequate returns on their investment on account of high mobility of the goods i.e. by the quick turnover. A good number of dealers were appreciative of the efforts taken by Asian Paints sales and marketing personnel to complete and settle the accounts in regard to the various schemes in an expeditious manner.
IV-f Reflection of Superordinate Goals in Chairman's speech and Directors' Report to shareholders:

A very pleasing part of each year's Annual Report of Asian Paints is the letter which the Chairman of the Board of Directors Mr. C.H. Choksey has been addressing to the Shareholders. Besides establishing a one-to-one contact with the shareholders, Mr. C.H. Choksey has been giving expression to his thinking on the corporate goal and strategies, through this letter to shareholders. The Superordinate Goal adopted by Asian Paints has been reflected through this letter a good number of times. During the course of this research, the researcher saw evidence of the impact of this letter on Asian Paints' employees. Perhaps the reason of the impact lies in the fact that the employees could see the actual practice of the message of the letter, in their day-to-day operations. It is of course true that merely a letter of this type is no reflection of the inner thinking of the person who writes it or an assurance of success. However, in the case of Asian Paints, this letter to shareholders has indeed gone a long way in creating a sense of purpose in the minds of the employees mainly because the person writing this letter and his top management team have been seen to be practising what was contained in the letter.
In the case of this Company, the letter to shareholders has never been viewed as a mere cosmetic appendage or an empty rhetoric. It has carried a great deal of sincerity and credibility. The Superordinate Goal of Asian Paints has also found expression in the Directors' Report, though in a more formal manner.

In the case of Goodlass Nerolac Paints Ltd the approach adopted is seen to be more conservative. The shareholders are addressed in a formal manner and the "personal touch", so evident in the case of the Annual Reports of Asian Paints, is difficult to perceive. Perhaps this conservative set up of the Annual Report has to do with the general operative style of the Company and its historical background. It is not the intention of the researcher to categories either approach as "correct" and the other "wrong". It just can not be so since both the approaches are justifiable and understandable in their respective contexts. It has, however, to be pointed out that the corporate philosophies and the shape of the things to come are amply evident to anyone who reads the Annual Report of Asian Paints, and further the reader feels himself nearer to the Company in the case of Asian Paints.
IV-g  Is the Superordinate Goal adopted by a Company irreplaceable or unmodifiable?

The researcher tried to arrive at an answer to this question through probing the top management team. At least in one case, the goal of becoming the Market Leader was perceived to be having the highest priority. A couple of other interviewees articulated their thoughts on this point by mentioning the words "Becoming the Number One Company in India" or "Achieving Market Leadership". This question assumes a great significance in the case of Asian Paints India Limited. They achieved market leadership a long time ago and throughout more than the last two decades they have not only maintained this leadership but have consolidated it. Today they have reached the position where they are beyond "striking distance" of the immediate next challenger. They have established almost 100% lead in sales turnover over their immediate competitor. The market leadership thus appears to be in no risk in the foreseeable future in the normal circumstances. Hence "achieving Market Leadership" can no longer be, if it really ever was, their Superordinate Goal. They have now only to maintain their leadership. During his close interactions with the top management personnel, the researcher carried the distinct impression that the policy makers at Asian Paints do not consider this to be the only important objective. They
would, of course, be quite protective towards their stature as the "Largest", "Biggest" and the "Most well-known" paint company. They think, however, that this stature and achievement have been the consequence of pursuing the higher-level goals, viz., the Superordinate Goals articulated as Excellent Dealer Servicing or Excellent Customer Servicing. They also seem to hold the view that mere "Maintaining Market Leadership" has a negative or, at best, a passive connotation to it. It signifies a static situation guided more by reactive forces rather than by pro-active forces. Merely maintaining market leadership has the angle of complacency inherent in it, as per the view held by the members of the top management team. They thus feel that Maintaining Market Leadership would merely be one of the many objectives. As one senior manager put it "we now have to excel ourselves" at all times to come i.e. "hereafter we will be competing with ourselves". The dealer service level, which is already at an enviable 80-85% representing a clear 20% lead over the nearest rival, can be taken further. This can be their "Superordinate Goal" hereafter. Asian Paints has achieved an unassailable market leadership in decorative paints sector. Hence, achieving market leadership in the industrial paints sector through the route of Technology Excellence can also be their next Superordinate Goal.
Or, as "dealer servicing" was in the case of decorative paints, achieving "Technology Excellence" can well be the "Superordinate Goal" with the market leadership in the industrial paints coming as a concomitant.

IV-h Conclusion:

The significant truth that clearly comes out of these thought processes is that setting up of a Superordinate Goal is not a one time action. It is actually a process with a new Superordinate Goal taking the place of the old. Besides, Excellence is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. It can not be kept confined, in the long run to only one or two aspects of any business.

However, different industries may have to adopt different Superordinate Goals. In fact even within the same industry, different companies will have to adopt different Superordinate Goals in keeping with their own perceptions, strengths and outlook. While adaptation of a Superordinate Goal is not mandatory for ensuring "success" - since there can be many different connotations to the very term "success" - it is also not necessary that when an organisation adopts a Superordinate Goal even in a formal way it will necessarily be launched on the road to success. However, it is a matter of observation that outstandingly successful companies do have an identified Superordinate Goal to which all other goals are either secondary or only pointers to the ultimate.

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