Adaptation and Assimilation: The Global Context

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I. INTRODUCTION

VARIOUS enthusiasts and critics have defined Globalization and its nature. Anthony Giddens a noted sociologist believes that the contrary forces of globalization create opportunities for both individual and community. Giddens belief appears strongly in support of Globalization and its intimate relation with the worldwide migration and diasporic communities of the world.

Globalization has nurtured cosmopolitan outlook whose byproduct emerges in the form of "Global identity" which almost every individual of a nation has acquired. Global identity in other words is the identity gained at the Global or World level in terms of www.http.in. viz davis.smith@yahoo.com, kher.aditya@gmail.com. An individual whether he is an entrepreneur, a businessman an employee of a multinational company, a student or even a homemaker world wide web has connected all the nations of the world through face book, tweeter, chats, mails blogs and so on. The forces of globalization have led to the fluidity of nation borders due to which the world has shrinked and has become a common place for everyone. Globalization has empowered the Indian philosophy of "Vasudhaiv Kutumbkam". It has redefined the concept of "Motherland" in an entirely different perspective. T.S Eliot foresees this new concept of nation long ago as he observes

"A man's destination is not his destiny

Every country is a home to one man

And exile to another. Where a man dies bravely

At one with his destiny, that soil is his.

Let his village remember [TO THE INDIAN WHO DIED IN AFRICA]

Globalization to some extent is synonymous to Renaissance in its remarkable revolutionary nature accompanying a vibrant series of changes in the industrial sectors, demands and thereby bringing reforms in the education system.

"Globalization is the system of interaction among the countries of the world in order to develop the global economy. Globalization refers to the integration of economics and societies al over the world. Globalization involves technological economical political and cultural exchange made possible largely by advances in communication transportation and infrastructure." [Hubpages]

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Above concept incorporates various terminologies viz." system of interaction" "integration" "cultural exchange" are all supposed to be closely associated with Communication and interpersonal skills or peoples's skill or Soft skills. Fluidity of national borders have in recent years led to establish a system of worldwide interaction, socio-cultural integration , in developmental issues and worldwide cultural exchange.

Globalization has manifested itself in almost each and every field. It has increased the migration and mobility of citizens of one nation to other countries of the world; in other words Global placements which involves the hiring of cheap labour by the established employers in the developed nations of the world.

"Globalization involves the shifting of population across domestic and international lines as a result of the intensifying economic, social and cultural exchanges within different societies. At present there are over 185-200 million transnational migrants from every region in the world with the United States as one of the leading receiving countries in the northern hemisphere. It is important to consider socioeconomic, political, and demographic realities of mass migration and its link to asymmetrical relations of power while making explicit its roots in colonialism and imperialism." [CEE]

In India the dawn of global placements (displacements) is considered during the British Raj. Dr.Santosh Sareen in his paper entitled "A Home Everywhere: "The consciousness of Diasporic Belonging", points out that there have been four major movements involving Indian migrants

1. The indentured labour built for the British empire
2. The seekers who migrated West in search of security freedom and identity
3. The aspirants, who migrated west in search of opportunities and prosperity
4. The re-migrators who migrated from where they arrived i.e from India to Uganda, USA

Above observation justifies the roots of global placements in Colonialism and Imperialism?

Global placements involve two basic processes namely ADAPTATION and ASSIMILATION of a young aspirant stepping on a foreign land.

1.1 Adaptation

involves a series of processes which truly allow a young aspirant to feel at home justifying Darwin's theory "Survival of the fittest" . They include:

1.1.1 Group Exchange and Student Exchange Program

Student exchange program facilitates students in Global placements. It may be of two kind's trade off and no trade

off programs. The exchange program may be of six to ten months whose main aim is to make the student learn how to live in a foreign country. It endeavors to learn the language and culture of a host country. In some exchange programs students are expected to attend classes at the local university and they are given marks on the basis of their performance. They are also expected to give detailed report on the exchange program in their country. It is a unique experience for the students as they get a chance to adapt themselves with a new country, new culture, which further facilitates them in global placements in future.

1.1.2   Global Human Resource Management

The skilled manpower is the biggest investment or capital which a global HRM can offer to a multinational company. HRM focuses on the hunt for a successful employee basically on two factors firstly a tendency to lead the organization and longer stay with the organization. Secondly employees with great potential which when properly nurtured is capable of giving returns to the company.

1.1.3   Global Recruitment Process

It is one of the most effective medium which facilitates in the global placements and provides an adaptive medium to cope with the global challenges. Global recruitment process focuses on:

Candidates to be more successful with lower support Developing Competency models Understanding the cross cultural barriers and reasons which can motivate a particular candidate belonging to a particular culture.

Interview Techniques for Global placements i.e Behavior Event Interviewing and Targeted Interviewing Techniques which effectively identify the capabilities a particular candidate can bring for an organization. This is helpful for cross cultural candidates to acquire global placements.

1.1.4   Global Placements and English Language Teaching

With the advent of globalization English language has gained a wide popularity of global language. It has been accepted world wide as the global language due to its versatile features and a capability to assimilate words from majority of languages throughout the world whether it is Arabic, French, Spanish, German, or any other. The roots of globalization are strongly interlinked with Colonial power and forces of Imperialism is also one of the reasons for English language to attain the global status. However development of English language as a strategy to overcome cross cultural barriers in global placements is an entirely different issue which does not involve mere speaking or writing skills.

According to CEE the main aim of the English educators is to equip students with the knowledge of global literacy and the critical awareness that how globalization defines and positions their language, symbols, identities, community and future. Therefore it is the requirement of English educators to envision the subject English within the context of global mass mediations, multimodal communities, migratory population and transnational economy. It is obvious that interaction of various communities with variant socio-economic, political background, and cultural status takes place in the Global atmosphere. The main concern of English language in globalization is with cultural interpretations, competing ideologies, and struggle between various frames for identity.

Global interactions change the interpretations of a particular frame which in turn changes the underlying beliefs and values. This phenomena may have positive as well as negative aspects related to a particular frame. For example the policy of economic liberalization at the global frame was a profitable decision to foster economic globalization of the nation to and open Indian markets for multinational corps but at the nationwide frame it was strongly opposed by many as it ruined the cottage industries and local markets. However the critical study of these issues is strongly concerned with the global phenomena of migration as it involves the mobility of population across various cultural borders and international lines.

According to Suarez-Orozco and Sattin (2007) Global issues such as child labor, global warming, Forest conservation, wild life protection must be dealt in the classroom for preparing students to have a critical view and become active global citizens.

CEE observes that critical enquiries into globalization are arising through new technologies and gadgets. Advanced technologies have made the cross cultural barriers and language problem a lesser important issue due to multi format, multi modal synchronous and asynchronous data interchange platforms as web, broadband etc. New technologies facilitate interaction at a wide access. Tools such as "Resource description framework schemas RDFS and "Web Ontology Language" OWL are banking for the computer generated exchange of knowledge, language, resources, which will further encourage the database creation and management through a global community effecting the voices and culture all over the world.

Cross cultural barriers again play a crucial role in the above context as every cultural frame will have its own way of dealing, appropriating, and communicating with the new technology as every culture has its own ethno-cultural frame. Thus different levels of understanding and behavioral patterns may act as major barriers in the smooth flow of global communication.

English language teaching and English educators are required to create newer manifestations in developing a communicative approach towards the global language in order to overcome the cross cultural barriers among various global communities

1.1.5   English Language Teaching and Soft Skills

A combination of the global language and soft skills can act as an effective mode of adaptation to the

various global communities striving to gain a global identity. Now the question arises that what are soft skills? How they are closely related to communication skills? and What role this blend can play in global adaptation?

"Soft skills are behavioral competencies, also known as interpersonal skills, or people's skills, they involve proficiencies, such as communication skills, conflict resolution, and negotiations, personal effectiveness, creative problem solving, team building, and leadership."

" Soft skills is a sociological term relating to a person's "EQ"(Emotional Intelligence Quotient), the cluster of personality traits, social graces, communication, language, personal habits, friendliness, optimism that characterize relationship with other people. Soft skills comprehend hard skills which are the occupational requirements of a job and many other activities" [Soft skills, Wikipedia]

Communication establishes harmony among varied frames in a global community. Man is a social animal and a society can never be imagined without interaction.

Communication plays a leading role in business correspondence as all business dealings include face to face interaction. Apart from this business letters, meetings, seminars, presentations and various communication channels play a crucial role in the smooth functioning of an organization. Organizations usually invest fractions of their time, money, and energy in enhancing the interpersonal skills of their employees through screening and training.

Soft skills rather have a long term effect as compared to the occupational skills in the corporate world as they develop business relations. there are over sixty soft skills that need to be acquired by an efficient employee as well as employer. On the other hand placement procedure or global recruitments hunt for candidates proficient in soft skills. Different aspects of business include sales, marketing, finance, public relations, which demand for trained employees in people's skills.

"Increasingly over the last two decades it has been recognized that when IT professionals acquire soft skills, better relationships are developed between IT and other business units within the enterprise fostering alignment. A key element of IT professionals building these relationships is their ability to communicate, it has been suggested that communication is a measurable and improvable type of intelligence. CQ[Communication quotient] [Wikipedia] Merging of cultural linguistic and ethnic frames redefine globalization. The global economies are suffering form a severe crisis human capital proficient in interpersonal skills with underlying reasons as lack of cultural awareness to deal with cross cultural barriers and lack of experience to manage the complex processes over long distances. The complexity increases when the needs, goals and challenges of a company clashes with the changing landscape of the employees.

An excerpt from the Harvard Management Update of Harvard Business School defines certain steps to be taken to meet the global challenges as :

1. To develop a clearer understanding of the challenges of managing people across borders
2. To instill in new global managers an awareness and appreciation for vast differences among the culture in which they do business
3. To give global managers the tools and support they need to succeed

"Managing in a global environment means you manage people who are separated not only by time and distance but also by cultural, social and language differences"

[S.Devarajan, MD Cisco India Bangalore]

Mary Teagarden, a professor of global strategy at Thunderbird, The Garvin School of International Management in Phoenix, emphasizes on embracing differences among global cultures and taking advantages of them to build cultural values. Teagarden has identified a number of key characteristics likely to be possessed by successful global managers which include :

1. A belief that differences matter : means understanding that how people think work, eat, and interact in a foreign place; which in turn is very important to build strategy for managing cross border people.
2. Openness to new ideas: Teagarden favors cross border mobility of managers gain rich experiences in varied geographical landscapes. According to her the integration of international managers play a crucial role in developing global expertise.

"Moving US based personnel overseas is one thing but what about bringing some of the Chinese or Indian managers back here or Europe or South America and plugging them into the mix?" asks Teagarden. This cross fertilization facilitates to bring about flexibility in the thinking of global managers and helps them to appreciate that how incorporating different perspectives is good business and good management.

3. Cognitive Complexity: It is a complex process to create and maintain a balance between the consistent corporate practices and regional uniqueness. It includes respecting the cultural differences and simultaneously seizing unique advantage of each market. This requires an awareness of culture in the midst of dynamic changes as well as independent or unbiased thinking in unfamiliar surroundings. The global companies should immerse their new managers slowly in their assignments. Teagarden suggests that companies commence a new managers global assignments by having him work on a virtual team-that is managing an overseas project while being stationed at one's own country.

By allowing people learn to work together digitally companies provide an opportunity for managers to hone

the skills they will need to draw on when they are on the ground in a foreign country.

Soft skills and its perfect blending with Communication skills in global language thus yields a cultural mind shift .

II. ASSIMILATION

Assimilation is the next crucial step in the global placements procedure. It includes employment of various strategies to attract good global and young talents and framing assimilation plans in the initial six months of the job. It involves:

1. A warm welcome into the new group for anchoring the loyalty of new aspirants to the new company.
2. Special programs targeted to meet the functional needs
3. Overcoming cross cultural barriers to develop global employees
4. Global leadership selection and retention
5. Consulting HR professionals for support
6. Use of web content by HR professionals
7. Change Management basically related to cross cultural barriers, geographical changes. It involves collection and analysis of data on work culture, employee climate survey, action learning by assigning unsolved business problems, live projects and e strategy mapper

III. CONCLUSION

Adaptation and Assimilation being the two biological phenomena facilitate an individual's survival not only in the biological world but at the global level as well. It involves all the basic operations which an individual performs at the biological levels viz, change management, overcoming barriers and most important inventions and devising new strategies to cope with the changing world. Changes are irresistible therefore it is and always be the tendency of a human to meet the changes and accept its challenges as Charles Darwin propounded "Survival of the fittest"

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