

## Cross Cultural Sensitivity The perfect camouflage



\* Ms. Varsha Goyal

\* Research Scholar, Bhagwant University, Ajmer

### ABSTRACT

*Cross-cultural management is a phenomena having greater impact in global business practice. With ever increasing scope of globalization, managers need to live with more than one culture. Due to its concentration on outsourced and offshore software and Information Technology (IT) enabled services, the Indian IT industry developed to a large level; its' operation extends across different cultures, i.e. regional, national, trans-national and global.*

*In IT sector maximum work processes through virtual/online interaction and this require Cross Cultural Sensitization. IT professionals need to work in multidisciplinary teams which require problem solving abilities, negotiation skills, and a capability to understand the needs of local and global customers, other stakeholders and project colleagues which require Cross Cultural Sensitization.*

*When dealing with people, we need to take care that we are not dealing with creatures of logic, we are dealing with creatures of emotion, creatures bristling with prejudices and motivated by pride and vanity. Emotions, prejudices and pride are the products of the Individual's culture and if the cultures of team members vary, the task of managing such people becomes more complex.*

*This paper focuses on the study of the Perception Level of the Women IT Personnel at different hierarchy for Cross Culture Sensitivity Skill and also to study whether they require Training in Cross Culture Sensitivity skill or not.*

**Key words -** Cross Cultural sensitivity, Globalization, Cultural differences, Management of People and their Emotion.

With the growing significance of developing economies in the global business environment, Human Resource Management is facing increased difficulty in managing cross-border cultural relationships and this becomes acute when the economy is witnessing the inevitable phenomenon of change, which prominently manifests itself in expansion and growth, stretching across geographical and political barriers and frontiers.

To succeed within the increasingly global context of the work environment, today's IT professional needs to be equipped with both technical skills and a strong repertoire of "soft" skills. A person who is culturally sensitive is aware that there could be differences between their culture and another person's, and that these differences could affect their relationship and the way they communicate with each other. A culturally sensitive person would understand other countries' traditions and ways of life, or attempt to learn and

apply new understandings. The women have proved to excel in their multitasking abilities and collaborative team working and effective communication skills along with culture sensitivity so intrinsically they are suited to work in the ITES and IT sector. This ability makes women enjoy the bliss of career and family at the same time. The recent initiative of some ITES companies offering a four hour job schedule to beat the demand for experienced employee recruitment and taking a step further and encouraging middle aged educated English Speaking women to come into this sector.

Much cultural research has already been taken, until recently. Most of these studies have been based on western management philosophies and theories (Hofstede, 1980). Globalization is definitely narrowing the gender rift. With this realization has come a sweep of corporate policy measures like workforce diversity, career guidance for female employees, measures against sexual harassment etc. So now global companies real-

ized the need for setting up a congenial work atmosphere where men and women of all race and creeds can work hand in hand on the same platform. ( Debdatta Gupta & Subashree Basu Roy, 2007)

As the society is in a state of transition the societal culture is influencing the organizational culture significantly, so the organizations are becoming flexible to cope with changes in social, economic and cultural structure. HR practices in corporate world are becoming pro women. Crache facilities for children flexi timing, work from home and maternity leaves are some of the facilities extended to attract and retain competent women. IT companies and the ITES on an average employ 40% women. Kiran Mazumdar Shaw comments that special attributes of women such as compassion, sensitivity, multitasking and the inner strength to adapt to diverse cultures easily can overcome any biases held against them. ( Bani Kochar, 2008)

Marketing managers are better able to buy effectively and negotiate competently when they are culturally sensitive. For example, awareness of nonverbal language can help a negotiator respond appropriately in a cross-cultural business encounter (Lincoln, 2000). Global managers have realized that HRM strategies differ significantly across different countries with varying cross-cultural settings and that the strategies used to manage human resources in one country cannot be applied in another country (Budhwar & Debrah, 2001). The employee relations practices within the organizations in most developing nations are influenced by factors such as cultural values, religious beliefs, and caste/ethnic classification resulting in decreased organizational performance (Budhwar & Debrah, 2001).

Cultural sensitivity plays an important role in inter-organizational relationships across cultural boundaries. Given the increasingly dynamic global business environment, organizations need culturally skilled workers if they are to succeed in the international business arena (Earley & Peterson, 2004).

Globalization has increased the pressure on their employees to identify and adjust to the cultural differences when doing business (Kanungo, 2006).

Indian HR practices deeply embedded in its socio-

cultural aspect that's why the cross-cultural challenges are being faced by MNCs in India (Munuswamy, 2008).

Above studies reflect important barriers as cultural differences, assumptions, language, mistrust, different styles etc. Most of the cultural studies associated with western management were concerned with cultural differences encountered in non-western markets. India is one among the non-western markets for which the researcher wants to conduct a cross cultural study for the MNCs operating in India. There is very limited empirical research in the area of cross-cultural management in India. That's why researcher has taken the study which presents cross-cultural sensitivity of Indian Women Personnel in IT sectors in India as well as abroad who face cross cultural issues due to differences in national culture. Following considerations were taken:-

1. To what extent the Women IT professionals of different hierarchy perceive cross cultural sensitivity skill in their Job?
2. Do they require training for cross cultural sensitivity skill?

#### **Objectives of the Study:**

- To study the Perception Level of the Women IT Personnel of different hierarchy for Cross Culture Sensitivity Skill
- To study whether they require Training in Cross Culture Sensitivity skill.

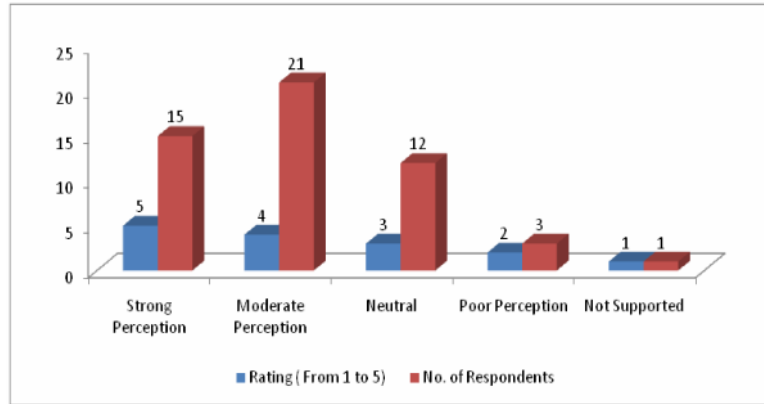
#### **Conceptualization:**

Cross cultural management is a process of transferring modern management of knowledge to a cross cultural environment. According to Earley & Mosakowski & Peterson (2004) Cultural Intelligence (CQ) refers to person's ability to observe, interpret and act upon unfamiliar and ambiguous social and cultural cues, and function effectively in a novel cultural setting. Successful cross cultural dyadic relationships require the development and nourishment of these intertwined cognitive, motivational and behavioral skills and capabilities through adequate managerial training.

Labahn and Harich (1997) define Sensitivity to national business culture as the organization's understanding of adaptation to its exchange partners domestic business practices as perceived by its partner.

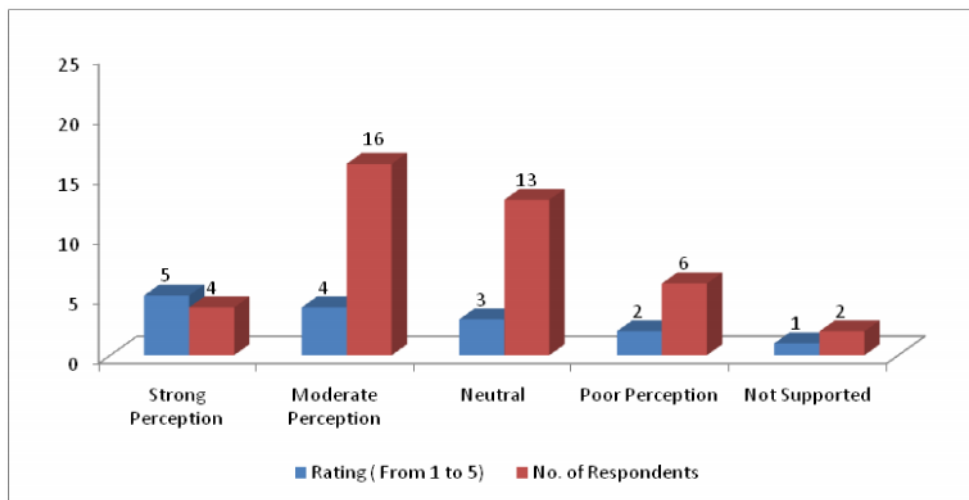
**Perception level of Superiors in IT Industry**

Attribute	X (No. of Respondents)	Rating	W (Marks For each Rating)	XW
Strong Perception	15	5	5	75
Moderate Perception	21	4	4	84
Neutral	12	3	3	36
Poor Perception	03	2	2	06
Not Supported	01	1	1	01
	52			202



**Perception Level of Subordinates in IT Industry:-**

Attribute Respondents)	X (No. of	Rating each Rating)	W (Marks For	XW
Strong Perception	4	5	5	20
Moderate Perception	16	4	4	64
Neutral Perception	13	3	3	39
Poor Perception	6	2	2	12
Not Supported	2	1	1	02
	41			137



Researchers define Cultural sensitivity as the awareness of cross cultural business practices and the ability to deal with and manage these differences (Johnson Cullen, Sakano & Takenouchi, 1996; Skarmeas, Katsikeas & Schlegelmilch, 2002)

Gertsen (1990) suggest that Cultural competence is the ability to function effectively in another culture and this competence is a function of cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions .Johnson and Apud (2006) also argue that a set of skills, knowledge and attributes determine cultural competence, which is influenced by Institutional ethnocentrism and "Cultural distance" in business context. Despite the varying terminology some common constructs perform together to develop cross cultural sensitivity skills and the knowledge repertoire needed to function effectively in foreign culture.

Finally Culture Sensitivity involves limiting the bias of one's own culture.

#### **Methodology:**

There were about 150 Indian Women IT Personnel's who were working in India as well as in different countries were surveyed. All the professionals were born in India and for the purpose of companies project they were sponsored to foreign countries. Convenient samples picked from the MNC's of different states of India and different European countries were administered for the study. Age of the participants ranges from 24 years to 40 years. Only Women were considered for the study. The qualifications of the respondents were graduates and post graduates in engineering/technology/management stream. All the participants belong to different culture.

#### **Research Tool and Measurement:**

Structured Questionnaire is the tool for the study. The open ended questions were conveyed to the respondents through emails and one on one. The women respondents were those who have worked in IT companies and have been working in IT companies. Initially, the questions were asked to get the background information like age, education, experience, designation, company etc. The important questions raised for the purpose of the study were on the perception of Women IT professionals towards cross culture sensitivity. Five point scale were used to measure the cross culture sensitivity of IT Marketing Personnel's.

#### **See Table 1**

$X = 202/52 = 3.884$  - The value shows moderate perception of Superiors on Cross Cultural Sensitivity Skills because the value is more towards moderate perception.

#### **See Table 2**

Weighted Average =  $XW/X = 137/41 = 3.341$  The value shows neutral perception of Subordinates on Cross cultural Sensitivity skills because the values is toward neutral perception.

#### **Inference:**

1. Perception of Superiors i.e. managers, director, senior software engineers are higher on cross cultural sensitivity skill then subordinates, it means managers or superiors have to face the challenges because of cross culture sensitization more than subordinates.
2. 46.66% Superiors require training for Cross Cultural Sensitivity Skill. 42% Subordinates require this training. It shows that for requirement of training superiors are more aware then subordinates.

## **REFERENCE**

- 1 Somalingam.A & DrShanthakumari.R . (2013). "Cross Cultural Management: An Empirical Study on Cultural Identity and Knowledge Management of Indian Software Engineers". Journal of International Research In Management & Technology, Vol II. www. abhinavjournal.com
- 2 Gupta Debdatta & Roy Basu Subashree. (2007). "Status of Women and Minority Workers Global HR Perspective" Global HRM, HRM Review The Icfai University Press
- 3 Kochar Bani. (2008). " The Indian Corporate Women" HRM Review The Icfai University Press
- 4 Bhatti Anant Preet (2009). "Cross Cultural Issues in HRM" Project undertaken in MBA
- 5 SharbariSaha & Dewpa Mukherjee Patra. (2008). "Cross Cultural Issues Intricacies and Ignorance". HRM Review of ICFAI
- 6 John M Shapiro, Julie L Ozanne & Bige Saatcioglu.(2007). "An Interpretive examination of the development of cultural sensitivity in International Business".Journal of International Business Studies.