

The Indian Mindset Offers Probable Global Solutions to the new-age Management

Prachee Doval-Naithani*

Abstract

The Indian mindset which has been explored through the ages via both the etic and the emic approaches, holds immense intrigue even for the Indian mind. A journey along the previous line of study exposed a novel insight for the new-age global management. The veracity of the Indian mindset contains the seeds for the germination of an adaptive outlook which seems to be the probable solution to handling the conflicting diversity of our present global-village and its melting-pot syndrome. The Indian cultural receptivity to new experiences, tendency to amalgamate and assimilate even the most inconsistent of ideas and practices lend it an almost amphibious character. The resilient Indian ways of dealing with dichotomies and the disposition to survive anomic conditions make for a salient model, a prototypical solution the world can perhaps borrow and emulate.

Keyword: Indian mindset, Complexity, Discrepancy, Inconsistency, Plurality, Adaptability

Introduction

Indian cultural receptivity to new experiences has its origin in the oldest of the scriptures and philosophical texts, Rig Veda that prescribed, 'Let noble thoughts come to us from all directions' (1.89.9). Diverse new experiences arising out of invasions and immigrations, alien rules, and more recent Western and global cultural influences, combined

with a rich spiritual-philosophical heritage, created a complex plurality in Indian thoughts and behaviour, which was subjected to a "synthesizing tendency" of the Indian mind (Radhakrishnan and Moore, 1954). Not all of them, however, could be integrated. They were enfolded and encompassed (Dumont, 1970), and were allowed to coexist as inconsistent and contradictory thoughts, feelings, and action orientations within an overarching hierarchical mindset (Sinha and Pandey, 2007). The trend still continues. The new does not replace the old, nor does it cause an inevitable dissonance or discomfort in the minds of Indians (Bharati, 1985).

'India is an ancient state but a modern civilisation' (Cohen, 2001 as quoted by Overgaard). India is a diverse country with deep rooted traditions, a deep rooted culture and religion that lives alongside one of the fastest growing economies in the world (Overgaard, 2010). It is now emerging as a major player in the world economy. The growth rate of the Indian economy has increased from a dismal 3%–3.5% in the 1970s to 6%–7% in the 1990s. With a middle class in the range of 250–300 million people and the economic reform process well under way, India has begun to attract increasing interest from foreign investors. International firms are drawn to India by the prospect of dealing in a market which offers a vast untapped potential (Kumar, 2004). Clearly India, the land of snake-charmers and rope-walkers, has come a long way since its chauvinistic pseudo-etic projection by the British who came as colonizers with the 'white man's burden' to civilize the pagans who ironically had only riches to yield, not only in the form of material wealth and abundance of natural resources, but also a treasury of scientific

* Prachee Doval-Naithani Assistant Professor, German Language, Literature and Culture & Cross-Cultural Management
Amity School of Foreign Languages, Amity University, Noida, India.
Email: pracheedn@gmail.com

knowledge and philosophical thought. During recent years, Indian concepts have acquired a new prominence at the global level. Its roots go back to 1960s, when several Indian spiritual movements (SISMs) acquired a worldwide acceptance and presence. TM (Transcendental Meditation), ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness), Brahma-Kumaris, SRF (self-realisation fellowship), Art of Living, etc. are a few illustrations. Many new ideas are emerging and Indian cultural ideas and concepts are finding wide following in the West. Yoga in its many variant forms has become very popular. Ideas influenced by or with origin in Indian thought have influenced life of nations, individuals and organisations. The reason of this 'new age' phenomena is ascribed by Shubash Sharma to lie in the intellectual vacuum in the West that has been filled by some of the Eastern ideas. Now the time is right for a new transcendental revolution viz. transcendental management with roots in Indians ethos and its manifestations in terms of Indian culture, Indian concepts and Indian ideas (Sharma, 2005).

Studies Exploring the Indian Mindset

While people from the West were drawn to India with whatever varying interests and the Indian concepts garnering acceptance at the global level, there was a reverse trend of the 'Lure of the West' infested in the ambitious, upwardly mobile middle-class Indians. Post the world-wars the brain-drain wave of the educated, professional people from India, usually for better pay or living-conditions is an evidence of such a leaning coupled with an interesting phenomena taking place within the Indian cultural context. Western ideas were having tremendous intellectual support among the Indian intellectuals, to the extent that some intellectuals were even discounting country's intellectual and spiritual heritage. India mind became colonized even though the country became free. Post the 1990s, the process of globalisation which did not alone spell technological advancement in bounds and leaps for mankind but also established a necessity for a never-like-before interdependence among people of various nations. And this coming together of people was not limited to the virtual world, it involved the transaction of man-power as well as intellect which may materialize via the World Wide Web but had to actualize in the real, physical world of our habitation. This also involved a movement of technology workers away from home-land to far-away lands, initiating the process of emigration,

which in turn triggers a creation of a creed, the diaspora.

The nature of the Indian identity is significant for those who live in India. But it is also important for the very large Indian diaspora across the world. They see no contradiction between being loyal citizens of the country in which they are settled and where they are socially and politically integrated, and still retaining a sense of affiliation with India and Indians (Sen, 2005).

A major transformation in environment necessitates a shift in individual and collective paradigm as the old ways of explaining reality tend to become dysfunctional. The old construct of reality does not allow us to comprehend and incorporate the changes and the demands of the emergent environment let alone being responsive to change (Srivastava, 2007) hence the innovation of new or adaptable constructs to understand the new environment and reality becomes imperative. Internalizing the new constructs, be they absolutely novel or fluctuating, requires a transformation or transferal in the mindset.

Generically, the mindset concept has had a long history in the fields of cognitive psychology and, more recently, organisation theory, where scholars have focused on the question of how people and organisations make sense of the world with which they interact. The basic research findings are summarized thus: As human beings are limited in their ability to absorb and process information, they are constantly challenged by the complexity, ambiguity, and dynamism of the information environment around them. They address this challenge through a process of filtration. They are selective in what they absorb and biased in how they interpret it. The term mindset refers to these cognitive filters. Mindsets are a product of human histories and evolve through an iterative process. The current mindset guides the collection and interpretation of new information. To the extent that this new information is consistent with the current mind-set, it reinforces that mindset. From time to time, however, new information appears that is truly novel and inconsistent with the existing mindset. When this happens, either the new information is rejected or a change in the mindset occurs. The likelihood that the mindsets will undergo a change depends largely on how explicitly self-conscious people are of their current mind-sets: the more hidden and subconscious the cognitive filters, the greater the likelihood of rigidity (Gupta and Govindarajan, 2002).

The Attributes of the Indian Mindset

India as a land of snake-charmers and rope-walkers, having stepped out of its sobriquet, has not only witnessed numerous political annexations in its history, but also as many cultural invasions and amalgamations, which have shaped the mindset of the present-day India and the Indians. To add to this, there is the constant interface of the society with the various ever-evolving phenomena of the modern world. The Indian mindset bears the imprints of its ancient cultures, Vedic civilisation, Muslim rule, Mughal subjugation and assimilation, British colonial rule, nationalism and the struggle for independence, industrialisation, Western erudition, sovereign existence, modernisation, globalisation and liberalisation, IT revolution, universal connectivity and adaptability and the still newer trends of our day. This is the complexity that constitutes Indian cultural reality of today. The realisation, that this plural veracity casts the Indian mindset, leaves no room for reservation that such a mindset would be intricate in its animation and complex to comprehend.

According to a review by D. Sinha (1988) the values and behaviour which are frequently attributed to Indians, include fatalism - believing in 'fate' being the ultimate governing principal in life; passivity - allowing things and events to take their own course; dependency - seeking tutelage of the powerful; paranoid reaction - over-reacting emotionally; narcissism - displaying chauvinism and obsession with self; insecurity and anxiety - fearing and distrusting authority; authoritarianism - being assertive with socially and economically weaker people; submission - willingly downplaying to powerful people; indifference to contradictions i.e. lack of rationality - propagating high morals but taking an illegitimate course when the ideal does not serve the purpose and so on.

Lannoy(1971) observed that Indians follow a non-sequential logic whereby actions are judged for their own sake rather than for the effects that they produce (i.e., nishakam karma). Such a reason emanates from the philosophy of 'karmanayevadhikaraste ma phalesukadacana' - i.e. one only has a right to the work and not to the fruit thereof - which originates from a highly regarded scripture, the Bhagavad Gita. Also the Indians do not separate the actual and the ideal. While Nakamura reported that Indians engage in fantasizing that is 'free, boundless, and extravagant, and often goes to extreme' and that when it comes to acting on their fantasies, they are very passive (Nakamura, 1964).

Studies of Indian culture and behaviour yield inconsistent and contradictory findings. A review of such studies (D. Sinha and Tripathi, 1994) recorded the 'co-existence of contradictions' pertaining to personality, mythological role models (e.g. villains possess laudable virtues and heroes have incredible weaknesses), socialization, cooperative and competitive behaviour, spiritualism and elaborate treaties on the art of love making in Kamasutra and serenity inside temples with explicit erotic displays on their outer walls and so on. D. Sinha and Tripathi (1994) quoted Kapp, observing "...the paradoxical co-existence in one culture system i.e. India of contradictory value orientations and actual behaviour pattern." They conducted study in which majority of respondents endorsed alternative that were not quite consistent for e.g., the respondents felt that they should chose their career according to their own inclination and also go by the advice of parents or friends, should seek their own happiness and also care for others' happiness at the cost of their own, should aspire to be successful and also compromise their success to be helpful to others, should cooperate and also compete, should be independent and also be dependent, should solve problems on their own and also look for guidance and support from others etc. It seems that the respondents were trying to strike a balance between opposing ways of dealing with various day to day issues. Such a phenomenon is also likely to occur in organisational behaviour. Virmani and Guptan studied a variety of Indian organisations that were found to adopt most of the Western management practices of planning (including human resource planning) and yet took cultural detours to get work done. Both traditional and Western management systems exist side by side in the same organisation (Sinha and Kanungo, 1997).

Spirituality is built into the Indian psyche (Roland, 1988), although animal impulses and material strivings are very much a part of life. Human beings tend to live through their untamed impulses and then transcend them by rising on a moral scale that leads to a transformed, stable, healthy, composed and detached mindset that can maintain a balance between the person and the environment, between body and mind, between the states of mind and so on. Striving for perfection through spiritual pursuits is an individual endeavour, essentially individualistic in nature that has to follow one's natural temperament and stations in life (Paranjpe, 1988).

J. B. P. Sinha and Kumar (2004) express how Bhawuk (2003) very succinctly described the way the conflicting demands from contrasting dispositions and orientations are held together in Hindu thought by quoting from one of the philosophical texts, Upanisads. He quotes that wise people of India could partition the world in opposites, then put them together into one whole, and then again partition them. People who have a worldview that can deal with such a system of logic and concepts are likely to choose different problems to study, define problems differently, and then use different methodology to study those problems. And how Paranjpe(1988) highlights that the Hindu method is experiential - the method of differentiating, integrating, differentiating and integrating again requires fine-grained logic that is cultivated through discursive dialogues by those who have acquired the capability through introspection, yogic exercises and meditation. Kumar (2004) concludes that this mode of thinking is rooted in the fundamental principles of Brahmanical idealism which is marked by the unison with the 'supreme power' in nature and the attainment of 'nirvana'. Thus, according to the ancient Indian worldview, people seek to attain the unattainable, and embed their search for the perfect solution in a highly moral approach to problem solving. Indeed, there is some evidence to suggest that Indian managers possess a strong moral orientation (England et al., 1974) and that Indian negotiators often seek to take the high moral ground (Cohen, 1997) which often lacks pragmatism.

Indians have been strangely reported to possess a process of thinking which is idealistic in the extreme. There is a tendency among the Indians, divested in general of the concept of a perceptible objective order, not to differentiate too sharply between the actual and the ideal or between fact and imagination or fantasy (Nakamura, 1964), attributed as a penchant for the choice of absolute in thought and behaviour by Moddie (1968), which Kumar (1999) describes so aptly as rooted in the fundamental principles of 'Brahmanical idealism'. The conception of Brahmanical idealism underscores the importance of uncovering the ultimate reality, no matter how difficult this might be and represents an introverted form of thinking (wishful thinking) that may be divorced from empirical reality to an excessively high degree. 'Anarchical individualism' is another trait that Kumar defines as laying primacy on attaining the desired ideal through rigid adherence to absolutist forms of interpersonal behaviour (Kumar, 2004).

Besides this, the Indians are said to possess both an 'independent' as well as an 'interdependent self' (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). The 'independent self' is associated with a desire to pursue individualistic goals whereas the 'interdependent self' is always concerned with fulfilling the expectations of others. The 'other' is highly evident in the consciousness of the 'interdependent self' and this leads to a preoccupation with fulfilling the obligations of significant others (Higgins, 1987). They have strong hierarchical orientation, and yet have reverence for persons with high integrity, altruism and superior human qualities (Roland, 1988). Which of the contradictory or incongruent thoughts and actions are invoked depends on the particular context. Kumar also exposes other peculiar traits of Indians which include placing a premium on context sensitivity and the balancing disposition. Contrary to Westerners, they have radar-like sensitivity to the specificities of a situation and the long-range implications of their response to it (Roland, 1988; J. B. P. Sinha and Kanungo, 1997). They balance their responses by avoiding extremes in action and thought or by incorporating even seemingly opposite ideas in a complex way. Contexts are specified in terms of place (desh), time (kaal) and person (paatra). Public places such as a job evoke different norms and values to private settings such as a family. A crisis-like situation allows people to deviate from the code of conduct or to put in extra-ordinary performance. Personally related friends, family members and relatives are trusted and favoured while strangers (out-group members) are distanced, mistrusted and discriminated against (J. B. P. Sinha and Kumar, 2004).

Although India has traditionally been characterized as a collectivist society (Hofstede, 1980) in which the family is central, Indians have an individualistic streak which is most evident in interaction with out-group members (Derné, 2000; Kakar, 1981; Sinha, 2000). Indians have found it difficult to form in-groups beyond the extended family and the caste community, although it needs to be said that even within the extended family and the caste, cooperation may not always be easily forthcoming (Roland, 1990). Indeed, as Nandy (1980) notes: 'The difficulty the Indian society has always faced in managing large scale organisations is an offshoot of the Brahmanical world view, and its strong emphasis on unconditional anarchic individualism. In 'anarchical individualism', individuals undoubtedly act out their personal views, but find it difficult to engage in mutually coordinated action to achieve shared goals (Kumar, 2004).

Although previous studies have indicated that Indians were found to be collectivists (Hofstede, 1980; 1985) and Sinha and Kanungo (1997) noted that Indians sometimes take major decisions like leaving career-development to go back to their family home and take care of their parents thereby exhibiting a strong sense of duty and the need for collectivism. But as identified, the results were not convincing. Rather amusingly, a survey of senior managers belonging to joint families showed that the want for building and maintaining social relationships with peers and seniors comes only at fifth degree of importance, out of 12 (Chatterjee and Pearson, 2000). This goes in conflict with the popular perception of India as a collectivist society (Hofstede, 1980).

This complexity in recognizing the behaviour of Indians as collectivist or individualist has already been identified (Kanungo, 1990; Sinha et al., 2001). Sinha argues that Indians exhibit both collectivist and individualist behaviour patterns depending on their intentions. Their study found that Indians displayed a duality in this respect as well, with the most accepted behaviour of Indians being a blend of collectivist and individualist behaviour and intention, while purely collectivist behaviour was the second most popular. It was established that individuals behave collectively sometimes, just to realize their individual goals and personal needs. Purely individualistic behaviour may not be welcome in the Indian society which pushes individuals to mix behaviour adaptation (Sinha et al., 2001). This is generally attributed to socio-economic conditions which compel individuals to work in collectivist ways in order to achieve individual goals. As and when such conditions improve, individualistic behaviour is expected to rise (Sinha et al., 2002).

The process of globalisation which triggered technological advancement and established inter-dependence among people of various nations, also involved the transaction of man-power as well as intellect, owing to which Indian managers exhibit a secondary mode of behaviour that has been acquired from the importation of western management practices, besides a primary mode of behaviour that is traditional in character (Sinha and Kanungo, 1997). Thus, while the primary mode of behaviour reflects the prevalence of traditional Hindu values such as collectivism and high power distance, the secondary mode reflects the inculcation of values such as individualism and pragmatism. Whether the Indians choose to exhibit a primary or a secondary form of

behaviour depends again on the context of the situation (Kumar, 2004).

Hofstede (1980) postulated a bipolar dimension of collectivism-individualism on which Indian culture was found to be inclined more towards the collectivist end. J.B.P. Sinha and Verma, 1987; Triandis, 1995; Triandis and Bhawuk, 1997; Verma, 1999; Verma and Triandis, 1998) substantiated this position. However, D. Sinha and Tripathi (1994) reported that Indians are both collectivists and individualists at the same time and, according to a recent study (J.B.P. Sinha, Sinha, Verma, and Sinha, 2001), they combine both orientations in such a complex way that the bipolarity of individualism and collectivism remains wanting for an explanation.

A recent study Exploration of the Indian Mindset (J. B. P. Sinha et al., 2010) recognized duplicity to be the dominant feature of the Indian mindset. Duplicity according to the study meant that people profess to believe and prefer what they consider to be desirable, but tend to behave in contrary ways due to realistic compulsions. The desirables are honesty, keeping promises, believing in science, working diligently, and having peace of mind, but the compulsions are to remain close to corrupt and powerful persons for personal gains, bribe if necessary, take advantage of friends, and wilfully forget promises and that the compulsions override the desirables.

This study also postulated by quoting from other researches that there is some evidence (Boucher, Peng, Shi, and Wang, 2009; Choi, and Choi, 2002; Peng and Nisbett, 1999) that East Asians too hold the belief that the reality is full of contradictions requiring them to compromise in which both sides of the contradiction are retained. The source for holding contradictory ideas is often traced to Taoism (Peng and Nisbett, 1999). Indian source of discrepant thoughts and behaviour is traced to the cultural cognitive style of welcoming new and alien ideas, adding them to the old ones rather than replacing the old by the new, thereby retaining an amalgam of diverse, discrepant, and even contradictory beliefs and action orientations, and reorganizing them in varied combinations in order to act to various contextual demands. Thus, Indians do compromise, but they also balance one extreme thought or behaviour by its opposite that may be equally extreme (Sinha and Kanungo, 1997). They also use one set of beliefs and action orientation as means to realize subsequently the opposite. Collectivistic

behaviour is many-a-times used to achieve individualistic goals and vice versa (Sinha et al., 2002).

Through the study a combination of negative and positive factors developed out of the respondents' perception of people's behaviour denoted self-serving calculative behaviour that is opportunistic in yielding to and appeasing powerful persons and exploiting the weak and the innocent ones, hiding intention, turning materialists from spiritualists, and working hard only for rewards. A more positive alignment of behaviour suggested that people tend to achieve high positive goals not only by working diligently, availing of challenging opportunities, and remaining optimist even in adverse situations, but also by making sacrifices, accommodating others, rallying around a dedicated leader, and helping those in distress. Indians tend to think and behave in discrepant ways (Sinha et al., 2009).

There was sufficient evidence obtained through the study to show that a person is likely to shift to a more positive behaviour when he realizes that the disabling situation has changed into an enabling one. The study also established that Indians display high context sensitivity in judging time and place, sensing others' mindset, and watching for opportunities. Judging means a time sense in knowing when to keep silent and when to say what, when to delay action and when to rush, remaining alert to opportunities and start working right on time to exploit them. Judging also involves distinguishing genuine friends from opportunists. Sensing includes what others think and expect, what they mean and intend in their behaviour, and what future prospect the work place holds. Watching involves waiting patiently for a resourceful person to get into a good mood before asking him for a favour, having a knack to figure out who can be useful in future, as well as waiting for the right moment to strike back at the adversaries.

The study stretched beyond the exercise of simply mapping social values by first assuming that high and low levels of development constitute enabling and disabling contexts (respectively), and then reporting that enabling contexts encouraged people to set high and positive goals and realize them by integrating task and people needs while the disabling contexts induced them to profess to believe in desirables but practice the opposite by way of engaging in calculative behaviour that served their self-interest. A support for the finding is drawn from an

old theory of Merton (Adler, Laufer, and Merton, 2000; Merton, 1938) suggesting that anomic societal conditions press people to adopt ways that are socially undesirable.

This study brought to fore, in the most vivid manner, the complex Indian mindset with its positive and negative traits and also established the incredible adaptability of the Indian people to both favourable and unfavourable conditions.

And the most recent study, Jugaad as systematic risk and disruptive innovation in India, by Birtchnell (2011) recognizes a phenomenon, a very indigenously Indian trend of using manipulation and clout for achieving one's goals. Jugaad is the latest trend in management and business reports of India's awakening. The term refers to the widespread practice in rural India of jury-rigging and customizing vehicles, using only available resources and know-how, thus heralding a new chapter in the emergence of the Indian mindset.

The literature concerning the Indian Mindset reviewed thus far strongly indicates that the Indian mindset displays a high degree of adaptability along with duplicity and yet is demonstrative of a peculiar rootedness which is its remarkable feature. It has a great potential for, assimilation, integration, and innovation; and is ever-evolving.

Discussion

The significance of the mindset as both the object and harbinger of change in societies and social organisations cannot be understated. The mindset is a reflection of a person's primary and secondary socialisation. As culture provides the framework within which our lives become meaningful (Kasper, 2001), it plays a definitive role in the process of socialisation. Kumar states that culture is the lens through which members of a culture perceive the external world. Although this insight is by no means novel, there has been insufficient emphasis given to the role played by mental frames in shaping how individuals from different cultures perceive and respond to the external reality. The tendency has been to view culture as behaviour, as opposed to viewing culture as a meaning system. Cultural context has a powerful impact in delineating the boundaries of negotiation theory (Kumar, 2004) which can be ascribed to other managerial theories and social behaviour as well.

We live in a knowledge economy. The core assets of a modern business enterprise aren't its buildings, machinery and real estate, but the intelligence, understanding, skills and experience of its employees. Harnessing the capabilities and commitment of knowledge workers is arguably the central managerial challenge of our time (Manville and Ober, 2003). Understanding the nature of cultural diversity and accepting the existence of varying mindsets would certainly be advantageous to such an objective.

On managing cultural differences, in the boundaryless world, people have to see the local to international standards and incorporate the perfect managerial theories (Harris and Moran, 2007) which in the times of an EQ-rationale, may be transposed into developing a local sensitivity and incorporating the most humane managerial theories, which would make the quest for perfect, utopian theories redundant.

A.K. Ramanujan, in his informal essay 'Is there an Indian way of thinking?' after a lot of deliberation, expounds that, 'there is no single Indian way of thinking: there are great and little traditions, ancient and modern, rural and urban, classical and folk - ways in which Indians live, think and behave.' He further explicates that each language, caste and religion has its special world view. So, under the apparent diversity, there is really a unity of viewpoint, a single supersystem. But he claims that there is an Indian way, and it imprints and patterns all things that enter the continent; it is inescapable and it is bigger than all of us (Ramanujan, 1989). One simply has to look at the shape that Buddhism, Islam and Christianity have taken in India, to validate this fact.

The Indian mindset which has been explored through the ages via both the etic and the emic approaches, holds immense intrigue for the outsider and also for the indigenous Indian mind. This journey along the previous line of study exposed a novel insight for the new-age global management that the world can - despite some discrepant beliefs, preferences and action orientations of the Indian mindset - look towards the 'all-embracing', 'all-accepting', 'ever - adapting' Indian mindset, to cope with the diversity that has been thrown together into the melting-pot.

Conclusion

Indians across time have lent support to A. K. Ramanujan's proclamation that: India never changes:

under the veneer of the modern, Indians still think like the Vedas... Indians have no philosophy, only religion, no positive sciences, not even a psychology; in India, matter is subordinated to spirit, rational thought to feeling, intuition... 'Inconsistency' is not a matter of inadequate education or lack of logical rigour. They (Indians) may be using a different 'logic' altogether. Some thinkers believe that such logic is an earlier stage of 'cultural evolution' and the Indians have not developed a notion of 'data', of 'objective facts' (Ramanujan, 1989).

Kissinger's explanation that cultures which escaped the early impact of Newtonian thinking have retained the essentially pre-Newtonian view that the world is almost completely internal to the observer... empirical reality has a much different significance for many of the new countries than for the West, because in a certain sense they never went through the process of discovering it (Said, 1978). On the contrary, Zimmer praises the Indians for not being hung up on an objectivity that distinguishes self from non-self, interior from exterior.

Sheryl Daniels speaks of a 'tool-box' of ideas that Indians carry about and from which they use one or another without much show of logic; anything goes into their 'bricolage' (Levi Strauss, 1962). The trend still continues. The new does not replace the old, nor does it cause an inevitable dissonance or discomfort in the minds of Indians (Bharati, 1985). Indians, according to Carl Jung, "do not mind seemingly intolerable contradictions" (quoted by D. Sinha and Tripathi, 1994). And Ramanujan (1989) further elucidates that, "When Indians learn, quite expertly, modern science, business, or technology, they 'compartmentalize' these interests... the new ways of thought and behaviour do not replace, but live along with the old 'religious' ways." Indians are "capable of living simultaneously and effortlessly on two mutually opposed planes" and "can make quantum leap from one epoch to another without showing any strain" (Varma, 2004).

This veracity of the plural Indian mindset contains the seeds for the germination of an adaptive outlook which seems to be the probable solution to handling the conflicting diversity of our present global-village and its melting-pot syndrome. The Indian cultural receptivity to new experiences, tendency to amalgamate and assimilate even the most inconsistent of ideas and practices lend it an almost amphibious character. The resilient Indian ways of dealing with dichotomies and the disposition to survive

the anomie make for a salient model, a prototypical solution the world can look up to.

To draw an analogy one could quote what Beatty and Takahashi state regarding a language that ‘Something gets lost in the translation’. What often gets lost is the subtlety of the message or the fact that the concepts in one language are alien to the other. Even long explanations are not sufficient to get the original message across (Beatty and Takahashi, 2009). What is said here of translation in the sphere of language could easily be extended to ‘interpretation of the mindset’ in the context of culture, as one culture has practices absolutely alien to that of the other and to find one’s culture normative and the other’s a shock, is the way all humans cognize. ‘Mindset’ and ‘the behaviour it causes’ are outcomes of one’s socio-cultural learning and are not easily displaced by secondary influences in response to a new socio-cultural milieu. A very magnanimous acceptance of the ways and behaviour of the others seems like the only imaginable response to realizing a truly global mind-set. The Indian-mindset with its ‘without much ado’ synthesizing, encompassing, enfolding and integrating ways appears to be the probable answer to learning this way of acceptance and thereby developing the much desired intercultural competencies for the present day culturally diverse, global work-teams. It is time the world turned towards India for availing global solutions.

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