

## **India as a Nation for Expats: Family Adjustment and other Issues and Challenges**

**P. Malathi Devi, Research Scholar, Assistant Professor**  
Osmania University, Aurora's PG College

Mail ID: [maluparne2002@gmail.com](mailto:maluparne2002@gmail.com), M No: 9885406565, 9100000208

**Prof. Mrs. K. Gnana Chandrika, Osmania University**  
Mail ID [kgchandrika@rediff.com](mailto:kgchandrika@rediff.com), M No: 9391068691

### **Abstract:**

Globalization has drastically impacted the world in which we live. This has led to number of people spending part of their lives living and working in abroad. In recent years India has also welcome expatriates from all over the world. The ever sprouting numbers of foreigners are drawn to the country's incredibly diverse landscape. This paper discusses the experiences of expatriates towards India as a nation for expats. The paper discusses the various family adjustment issues and challenges faced by expats in India. The expatriates experience has shown that social and economic adjustment is very easy in India, as it has very friendly and adjustable people. The public utilities are also rated as average but very affordable in India in metro cities of India. The culture of India is very different but is very interesting and loved by expatriates. Another notable issue arises in matters of spouse and children adjustment. But the work culture is very moderate. However, unclean environment is one of the challenges faced by expatriates in India.

**Keywords: Expatriates, Family Adjustment, Culture and Social Adjustment**

### **Introduction:**

An expat is a person temporarily or permanently residing in a country other than their home country. Commonly, the word often refers to professionals, skilled workers or artists living outside their native realm, either independently or sent abroad by their employers. However, expatriate is also used for retirees and others who have chosen to live in country other than their native country. However, the term expatriates is historical, but the issue of expatriate management and adjustment is still a problem to be concerned about. Since antiquity, people have gone for settlement in foreign countries, whether as diplomat, merchants or missionaries etc. India is the second most favored destination for expatriates that want to work in the emerging markets over the past few years, India's rapidly growing infrastructure, industry and service sectors have opened up its economy to greater foreign investments and multinational corporations. This development has led to numerous employment opportunities for foreign nationals working in skilled and specialized roles in the country. The sectors in India those attract the largest number of foreign professionals or the construction, engineering sector followed by telecommunications, IT and financial services.

As greater foreign funding has resulted in hiring of foreign expertise, India's living and working environments have also adapted to global cultural standards. This is particularly so in its tier – I metro Political cities where special economic zone, industrial and software parks as well as corporate centers have created conditions conducive to new jobs with an international profile

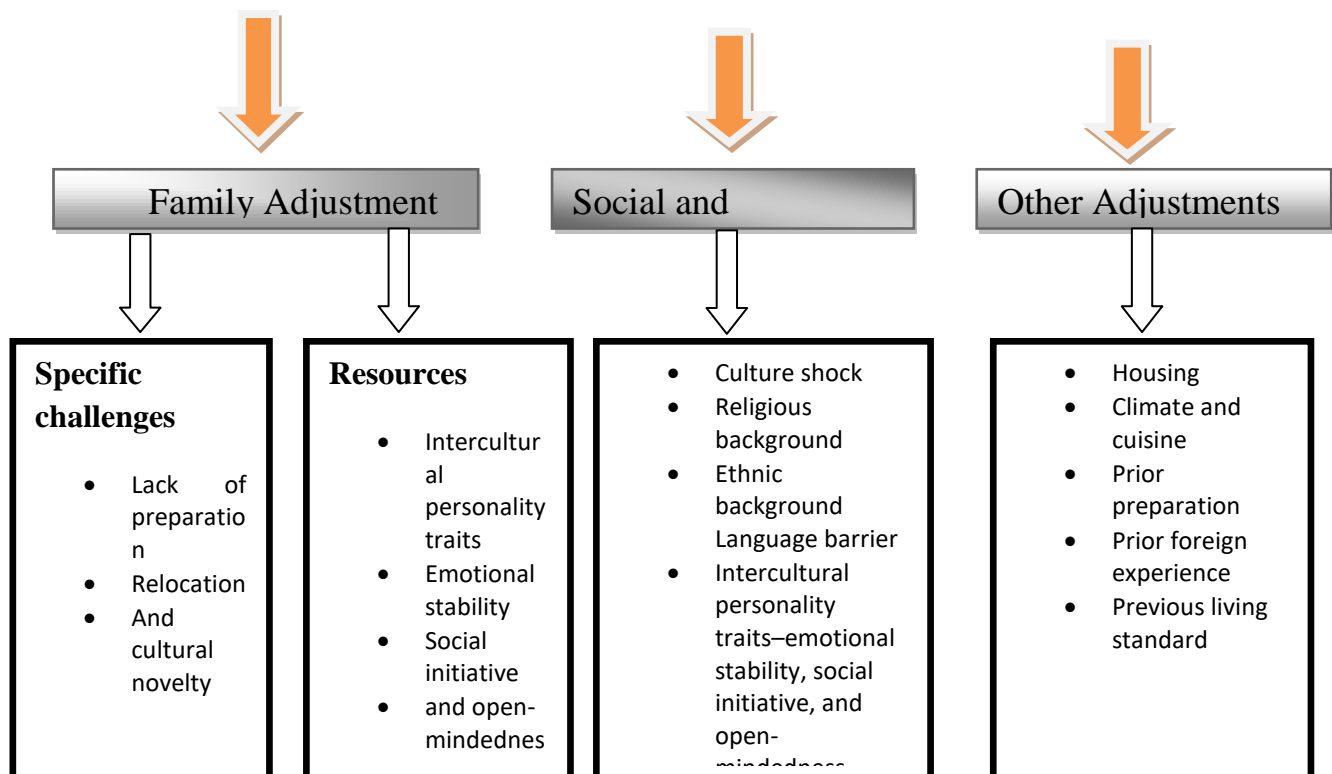
In the 19th century, migrations became easier by way of new modes of transport. People would more readily choose to live for more years in a foreign country. The United Nations estimated that 232 million people or 3.2 per cent of the world population lived outside their home country in the year 2013. The globalization is also reason for this incredible shift. It is the process of integration of the world community into a common social or economic

community. Globalization not only resulted in the movement of goods and services across borders but also, people moved across borders for better employment opportunities and hence better wages.

Expatriate adjustment refers to the degree to which expatriates are psychologically comfortable and familiar with different aspects of a foreign country environment. It can also be understood as the degree of ease or difficulty expatriates have with various issues, related to life and work abroad. The work adjustment, interaction adjustment and general adjustment and mainly family adjustment are four related but different dimensions of expatriate adjustment. Further, individual factors, job factors, organizational factors, positional factors and non-work factors are major determinants of expatriate adjustment. The failure of expatriates' adjustment may cause premature termination or return of expats. So, the present study attempts to determine various family adjustment issues and challenges faced by expats in India, which can help in managing expatriates in India.

India's expatriate community has a diversity of people. The region is popular with teachers, artists and spiritualists as well as CEOs and executives of international corporations. There are reportedly around 20000 to 30000 expatriates living in the exotic country of India, Many countries claim to welcome people from all walks of life and backgrounds, but expats in India really are a varied group. They come from all over the world to live, work and study here with significant numbers from Australia, the UK, USA, Canada, France, Germany and the Netherlands.

**EXPATRIATES ADJUSTMENTS**



**Review of literature:**

[J. Stewart Black](#), [Gregory K. Stephens](#)(1989), this study found that a favorable opinion about the overseas assignment by the spouse is positively related to the spouse's adjustment and the novelty of the foreign culture has a negative relationship with the spouse's adjustment.

Additionally, the adjustment of the spouse is highly correlated to the adjustment of the expatriate manager and the adjustment of the spouse and the expatriate are positively related to the expatriate's intention to stay in the overseas assignment.

SappinenJukka (1993) revealed that the level of adjustment of expatriates and expatriate success are positively correlated. The expatriates experience an adjustment process which is prejudiced by several antecedents, focusing on four different but interrelated adjustment processes. The study presents a wave curve hypothesis to explain the relationship between expatriate adjustment, expatriate work commitment and expatriate's decision to leave prematurely.

Shaffer, M., Harrison, D. & Gilley, K. (1999), this paper also expand the model to examine two individual factors (i.e., previous assignments and language fluency) and three positional factors (i.e., hierarchical level, functional area, and assignment vector) as moderators of adjustment determinants. Several significant moderating effects emerged, showing different patterns of adjustment for those with different amounts of previous expatriate experience and levels of host country language fluency.

Brynningsen Gitte (2009) discussed the strategies of managing expatriates on international assignments. The study found that if attention was not given to the process of managing expatriates on international assignments it may result in a vicious cycle. This confrontation towards international assignments is leading to fewer candidates for the international assignments. The vicious cycle may lead to shortage of leaders who have good understanding and experience of international arena.

Naithani P. &Jha A.N. (2009) framed an expatriate adjustment model based on the review of Literature of expatriate adjustment published in last two decades. The model provides that Management of organisation, colleagues and government labour laws are supportive factors at work place, while family, social support of working country's colleagues and home country's Colleagues are supportive factors at social and personal level. The study suggested for a multilevel action plan at the organizational level to support expatriate adjustment.

Arthi R (2015) studied the strategies and initiatives of Indian Government and Corporate and their strategic effectiveness in attracting and retaining expatriates. The study recommended for corporate initiatives with realignment to a global expat compensation strategy, addressing agency problems through knowledge contracts, HRD strategies for expatriate Development by expatriate monitoring, along with governmental initiatives like developing infrastructure, improving standard of living etc.

Vijayakumar P. B., Cunningham C.J.L. (2016) examined relationship between motives for expatriation and cross-cultural adjustment in Indian expats working in US IT industry. The result shows that, those with stronger financial motives for expatriation were reported to have less positive cultural adjustment, while those with stronger exploratory motives for expatriation reported more positive cultural adjustment.

Mojca Filipic Sterle,Johnny R. J. Fontaine, Jan De Mol and Lesley L. Verhofstadt (2018) revealed that the culture identity formation and the impact of home country and host country culture secondly the majority of studies paid little attention to define the concept of family or failed to take into account the cultural aspect of relocation. Third, there is a call for more longitudinal studies including all family members as adjustment is a process that unfolds over time and therefore cannot be sufficiently explained by cross-sectional studies.

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

The study has been conducted with the following objectives:

1. To determine which factors impacts the most regarding family adjustments of expats in India.
2. To study challenges expats and their families face in adjustment in India.
3. To know/determine the views of expats regarding India as nation for expats.

### **Research Methodology:**

The present study involves detailed analysis of expatriates experiences settled in India. For this purpose, in-depth interview of 25 expatriates has been taken who are settled in India. The sample includes expats from about all the occupations like self-employed, businessman, service class, housewife etc. The semi structured interview covered factor like Family adjustment, social, cultural, religion, Economic and work culture adjustment issues of expatriates. Further, the experience of expats towards public utilities and safety issues were discussed.

### **Discussions and Findings:**

#### **Expatriates Family Adjustment**

Family adjustments can be divided in two categories i.e., Specific Challenges and Resources consists of partners' individual characteristics.

#### **Specific Challenges are as follows**

Lack of preparation of expatriates still find themselves transplanted to international business cultures with little training in utilizing management tools common to U.S. based firms that may or may not fit with the host country business culture, such as: setting goals and targets, just- in -time planning and management, performance and production measures, employee performance reviews, and communication practices. The time, design, and budget designated for such preparation and orientation range from the mediocre to the very sophisticated, with the majority of MNC approaches probably located in the middle to lower middle of this continuum. What many training programs have in common is that they prepare expatriates on an assumption-based model with little, if any, solid research to support their hunches. Relocation of the expatriates is another challenge because certain websites allow prospective expatriates to access extremely detailed information on locations, housing and the moving process meaning that the information that is provided in HR or Relocation Company welcome packs sometimes can appear to be too basic.

#### **Resources are another challenge faced by families of expatriates**

The first category of resources consists of partners' individual characteristics. Intercultural personality traits—emotional stability, social initiative, and open-mindedness- were found to be important resources for expatriate partners (and the expatriate employees') psychological and socio cultural adjustment. High motivation, favorable opinion about the overseas assignment, previous expatriate experience, pre-move visit, cross cultural training and/or language training, host country language proficiency, social efficacy, self-efficacy and certainty about the duration of assignment proved to be positively related to partner's adjustment (Black and Stephens, 1989; Shaffer and Harrison, 2001; Copeland, 2004). The second category of resources includes identity reestablishment and feelings of psychological security. Thirdly, and at a more social level, company assistance prior and during expatriation, support from families, and support (e.g., network size, breadth of support, depth of support) from host country nationals, but also contacts with other expatriate partners, and time with old friends as well as new acquaintances were found to be essential to partners' adjustment

#### **Children's Education**

If expats have school aged children, their education is the one thing that they will be most concerned about getting right: Children's education is an emotional touch-point for most expatriates. When they may already be wondering if they are doing the right thing for their children, nothing hits the button of parental guilt more than the thought that relocation might have a negative impact on their education. This means that by

the time they've made the decision, they've probably already done some detailed research on schools. They may even have talked to the schools and registered their children for places. Family members' inability to adjust to a foreign assignment has been identified as one of the most critical causes of expatriate failure.

### **Other Challenges faced by the Expatriates in India**

We have discussed above, the main aspect of our research which remains family adjustment. In our further discussion we shall find out the other aspects influencing an expatriate's settlement in India. We shall explore briefly, the additional challenges expatriates come across with respect to social, economic and cultural realms. We shall take a look at the work culture and enlist the public utilities they could dispense.

### **Social Adjustment in India:**

The local people are very friendly and welcoming. Most of the expats felt that people of India are most positive in all aspects of living in India. Since, it is easy to mix with the locals both at place of work and their society, where they live. They find people here are very accepting. Help is readily available for the expatriates in terms of family adjustments whenever needed.. Most of big cities have expat associations. Few expatriates go for weekly meeting of expatriates associations and this is helpful for new expats, as it give them a chance to meet other expats. However, the expatriates like to mix with Indians as they feel Indian people are very friendly and quit inquisitive in the world. There are some organisations which organise many social events for the same. However, expats felt that there is some discrimination towards women and they are treated secondary to men, for their families, there are day centres and mother- baby groups to attend and socialise with people. However older children miss their friends from home country and took longer time to settle in and mix up with locals. But, once they made new friends they gelled well. Generally after three months the expats as well as their families seemed at home in their new country.

### **Cultural Adjustment in India:**

According to the expatriates, the culture and traditions of India are also very appealing and they enjoyed them. They love the festivals they experience across India. The expatriates in India found the culture of country quite different. Most of the expatriates said that, almost everything came as a cultural shock, including water, weather, language, and customs and so on. They missed the traditions followed in their home countries, especially the festivals. They find Indians are open to speak and also helpful. Hence, it is easy to adjust in India as far as culture is concerned. However, expats found some cultural or religious discrimination with women regarding their clothes while similar discrimination regarding clothes of males is not there.

### **Economic Adjustment in India:**

India as a whole has a very full-bodied economy and is not terribly affected by the global economic downturn. There are many jobs available in India- especially jobs in IT, software development, automobile and banking sectors in big cities of the country. There are also good business opportunities in these sectors as well as in fashion industry etc. However some of the expatriates suggest that the compensation rate is stumpy in India. Hence starting own work or business is a better option. The expatriates from Mumbai and Hyderabad cities found the cost of housing is bit higher than their home country as rents and property prices are high. However in other cities like Delhi, Chennai, and Bangalore etc. it is low in comparison to their home country. On the other hand cost of food, transportation is low in all cities, so overall they have rated the same cost of living at home country.

### **Other factors related to general adjustment of expatriate**

Expatriate adjustment is also influenced by cost of living, housing, climate, cuisine, entertainment, recreation and healthcare facilities (Haslberger 2008). Other factors which play an important role in success of an expatriate assignment are: prior preparation for

assignment and previous work experience in a foreign country. Lack of proper orientation and training to expatriates in helping them cope up with overseas assignment has been cited as another important reason of expatriate failure (Minter 2008)

### **Work Culture in India:**

The work in offices starts at 11am and continues till 7pm and it also depends on their jobs. The expatriates have reported that the work culture is very time-consuming and laid back. Almost nothing runs on time. The manner and move towards work and meetings etc. is completely different in India. The expatriates doing businesses have reported that, your day is not dictated by scheduled meeting as most of the meetings happen impromptu. Basically the work week is of 6 days and not of 5 days. Generally, the work pressure is less and work environment is less structured.

### **Civic Utilities in India**

#### **Public Transportation**

There are many options of public transport available in big cities of India like trains, taxis, cabs, auto rikshaws etc. Using cabs to travel within the city is second good option. However, public transport is good for long distance; especially train services can be used. Expats should reserve first class tickets- it's a small price to pay for comfort.

#### **Public Health Care**

The expats feel that public healthcare is not very good. Further they add that doctors are skilled and good at their work. Visiting a specialist is quick and cheap but hospitals standard of hygiene is not good in comparison to their home country. There are few good hospitals like AIIMS, Apollo etc. that maintain good standard of hygiene and services and expats recommended these. The expats found healthcare in India is cheap. The expats from Australia are unsatisfied from Healthcare and prefer to travel to Australia for anything major. There are some cultural and legal issues which people should be aware like it is illegal to know the gender of your baby before delivery since female abortions still happen in the country.

#### **Challenges for Expatriates in India**

The expatriates have reported that, there is a lot of bureaucracy that one has to put up with in India. The expatriates said that they faced problems like foreigners registration, visa extension etc. as it took lots of time. The people who had to apply visa themselves found it difficult to get visa, however the people who migrated in India through companies and businessman did not face any problem regarding visas. Secondly, expatriates experienced the presence of poverty and unclean environment in India, which is disliked by the expats. The low standard of sanitation at public places is one of the major problems faced by them. Third, the hot weather of India is another challenge faced by expats specially the expats settled in northern India in cities like Delhi, Chandigarh, Jaipur etc., however the weather is different and little cool in southern Indian cities. Fourth, sometimes expats have to face the political tensions at various regions in the country, which generally leads to several protests with some violence. Due to which people sometimes have to face lot of hassle.

#### **Conclusion:**

India's expatriate community has a wide range of different people, which includes teachers, artists and spiritualists as well as CEOs and executives of international corporations. The number of expats is continuously increasing in India. India has very diverse culture and traditions which give rise to many adjustment issues in the country. Family adjustment, though it might seem slightly difficult in the beginning, most expats mix with Indian socio culture with ease within a few months. When the pay, allowances and utilities fail to meet that of their home country, it might be discouraging. The expatriates' experience has shown that social and economic adjustment is very easy in India, due to its friendly and welcoming people. The country also has lots of job and business opportunities. The work culture in India is very slow and unstructured due to which expats face some difficulty in working

environment. The public utilities were also rated as good and very cheap by expatriates except some issues like unhygienic environment in hospitals. The cost and standard of living is rated similar to their home countries. Overall they felt India to be good for settlement as expat.

**1. References:**

- Aycan Z. (1997), "Expatriate Adjustment as a Multifaceted Phenomenon: Individual and Organisational Level Predictors, *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 8, No. 4, pp. 434-456.
- Arthi R (2015), "A Study of the Strategic Initiatives and its Effectiveness in Retaining Expatriates in the Indian Context", *Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 18, No. 6.
- Kim J. P. M. van Erp, Karen I. van der Zee, Ellen Giebels & Marijtje A. J. van Duijn (2014), "The importance of one's own and partner's intercultural personality for expatriate's and expatriate spouse's successful adjustment abroad", *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 23:5, 706-728,
- [J. Stewart Black, Gregory K. Stephens](#) (1989), "The Influence of the Spouse on American Expatriate Adjustment and Intent to Stay in Pacific Rim Overseas Assignments", Volume: 15 issue: 4, page(s): 529-544
- Shaffer, M.A, Harrison, D. & Gilley, K. (1999), "Dimensions, Determinants, and Differences in the Expatriate Adjustment Process", *J Int Bus Stud* 30, 557-581
- Shaffer, M.A, & Harrison, D. A. (2001), "Forgotten partners of international assignments: Development and test of a model of spouse adjustment", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(2), 238-254.
- Pranav Naithani, P. & Jha, A.N. (2009) "Model of expatriate adjustment and framework for organisational support", *Journal of Mgmt. Studies and Research*, 8 (1), 34-41.
- Benedek Olivia J. (2016), "Selecon and Cross-Cultural Training and Their Relevance on Women Expatriates in India, *Center for International Human Resource Studies*, Research Paper Series 1- 2013. *Journal of International Business studies*, Vol. 19, pp. 277-291.
- Brynningsen Gitte (2009), "Managing Expatriates on International Assignments", *Otago Management Graduate Review*, Vol. 7, pp. 1-17.
- Chew Janet (2004), "Managing MNC Expatriates Through Crises: A Challenge for International Human Resource Management", *Research and Practice in Human Resource Management*, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 1-30.
- Naithani P. & Jha A.N. (2009), "Model for Expatriate Adjustment and Framework for Organisational Support", MPRA, Paper No. 67423.
- Shaffer M.A., et.al. (1999), "Dimensions, Determination and Differences in the Expatriate Adjustment Process", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 3, pp. 557-581.
- Silbiger Avi and Pines A. M. (2013), "Expatriate Stress and Burnout", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 25, No. 8, pp. 1170-1183.
- [https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/67423/8/MPra\\_paper\\_67423.pdf](https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/67423/8/MPra_paper_67423.pdf)