# Identifying Factors Supporting Effective Performance of Expatriates in Host Country: A Perceptional Analysis

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#### Abstract

With Globalization and expatriate's increasing presence in global, environment it has become imperative to investigate and understand the expatriates concerns for their effective performance. The study tries to bring out all the aspects and factors that overall supports the success of the expatriate assignment. The expat experience has been investigated in the Indian context, using extensive literature review and expatriates interview. The various factors critical to expatriate's performance are qualitatively analyzed. The insights will facilitate better performance of expatriates in the host country, making the Indian assignment a favorable one. A unique three-dimensional (Organizational, Indian National, and Expatriate) model is proposed.

#### Introduction

Today, India has emerged as one of the fastest growing economies, as it has moved towards globalization in the early 1990s with major policy changes and economic reforms towards Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization. As per IMF (2014), India is the third largest Nation with regards to GDP contribution of \$7,277.2 billion. India is bestowed with cultural diversity having 29 states and 7 union territories with 122 major languages and 1599 other languages. Food and traditional clothing greatly differs in different parts of the country and is influenced by regional climate, culture, geography and rural/urban settings. Greetings and gestures also vary widely across different states of the country. All these mentioned elements influence expatriates compatibility and adjustment in India. Due to these reasons numerous researches were focused on in identifying the factors affecting the performance of expats covering individual (Sims, 2004), organizational (Sullivan, 2001) and national (Srivatsava) aspects. But there is limited or no research that identifies common factors and their combined impact on the performance of expatriates. Therefore, an attempt has been made in this study to identify the dimensions and their impact on expatriation in the Indian context.

#### Review of Literature

First and foremost factor in cross-cultural adjustment (Sappinen, 1993) are awareness,



understanding and acceptance of both the culture by the expatriates home and host cultures. He proposed wave curve model, which include three levels, namely Individual, Firm and the National levels showing the various factors interacting with each other and influencing the expat's behavior for adjustment.

A study on expatriate management by Abdullah and Jin (2011), found out the current issues and trends in expatriation. The findings revealed that some of the issues and trends that organizations face include non-returning of expatriates to home country, expatriation becoming an essential alternative, the high costs of expatriation, managing expectations, trouble in retaining global careerists, striving to realize work-life balance, the utilization of the home trip share to travel to other countries; increasing diversification of expatriates, increasing women strength, and requirement for adjustment of local employees towards changes of expatriates in the organization.

Liu and Shaffer (2004) investigated expatriate adjustment and performance in a social capital perspective found that opportunities (social networks, right to use information and resources), motivation (trust and norm of reciprocity) and abilities (host country nation's intercultural competencies and the expat's task performance). Koteswari and Bhattacharya's (2007) study on managing expatriate stress identified that the potential stress including cultural shock, language barriers, and separation from the family will eventually disturb the performance and productivity of the expatriates and thereby affecting organizational cost. Moreover, it was also predicted that the expatriate stress process follows a pattern resulting to both adjustment or failing in the assignment and thereby returning to home country.

However, Rose (2010) stressed the importance of dynamic intercultural competency of cultural intelligence and its dimensions on expatriate job performance. The study identified cultural intelligence to be a vital intercultural competency facilitating better job performance by expats in their international assignments. The greater the meta-cognitive and behavioral cultural intelligence possessed by the expats, better was expatriate's contextual performance. Greater the behavioral cultural intelligence possessed by the expats, greater was assignment specific performance.

Some of the studies that support the effective performance of expatriates are shown in table 1.



Table 1: Influencing factors from various studies

Author	Factors relevant for the study	Implication/Inference used for the study		
Sullivan (2001)	Organizations would likely look forward for the Return on their Investment (ROI) at the earliest.	Importance of Expat's performance		
Mitrovica (2001)	Expatriates recruitment includes 4 categories including Self- selection, Selection, Preparation, and Interpersonal and Intercultural Communication Individual factors (like expatriate's family presence and support, Knowledge, experience, interpersonal skills)	Importance of expatriate recruitment, Interpersonal and Intercultural Communication Importance of Individual factors on performance of expatriate on the assignment		
Hassan (2013)	Importance of expatriates recruitment process includes selection, preparation, management and repatriation, Technical competencies, family situation and personal characteristics of expatriate.	Importance of Personal factors with emphasis on training, awareness and adjustment.		
Woods (2012)	Cross-Cultural training and management – importance of personality, engagement or experience, attitudes, knowledge or awareness and skill or competencies	Importance of Culture, Language, personal factors–skill, attitude, experience.		
Sims (2004); Adler (2008)	Expatriates fail on reason regarding family	Importance of Expatriate's family support, condition and adaptation		
Mie Arndt Larsen (2010)	Standard of living	Importance of National Factor – tourism and infrastructure		
Lysgaard (1955)	Culture shock - four distinct phases: Honeymoon, Negotiation, Adjustment, and Mastery.	Importance of culture and adjustment		
Vianen and Johnson (2004)  The impact of surface- and deep-level cultural differences on the Cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates. Cross-cultural differences like dissimilarities between home and host countries and to dissimilarities in basic values.		Importance of Culture, Cross-cultural differences and adjustment.		
Kraimer and Jaworski (2001) Expatriate's perceived organizational support had direct influence on expatriate adjustment; leader-member exchange had direct effects on expatriate task and contextual performance spousal support had no influence on expatriates adjustment to work, the country, and interacting with foreign nationals		Importance of Interpersonal skills, importance of family and expectations in influencing expatriate's adjustment and performance		

# The Environment and the Proposed Three-Dimensional Framework

Considering the environment of expatriate, there are two groups or party involved in the contract the organization and the employee. The case of an expatriate is special, because the host country is a new entity, different from that of the homeland. In a normal employee-organization relationship, the country aspect is neutralized as the whole contract happens in the employee's homeland. Thus, the parties involved in the study are the Organization, the Host Nation - it is India in this study and the Expatriate.

The factors are categorized into three different aspects:

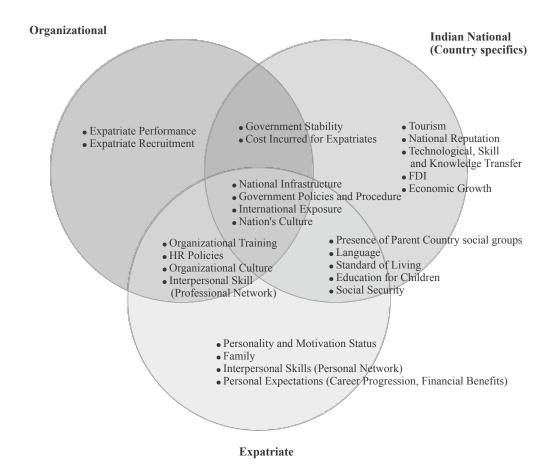
> By The Organization- The Organizational Factors



- By The Indian Nation The National Factors
- ➤ By The Expatriate The Expatriate Factors

A sphere represents each factor and they overlap each other in places of common grounds. Moreover there are factors common to the party creating an area of common scope, which is discussed later. The proposed model is a modified version of Adjustment Framework proposed by Sappinen (1993). The three-Dimensional Viewpoint is developed with reference to the three levels -National, Firm and Individual level mentioned in the Adjustment Framework. The below figure depicts the proposed model/framework of the study.

Figure 1: The Proposed Factors and Three-Dimensional Framework



# **Objective**

To identify the factors that support effective performance of expatriates in host country. The sub objective of the study is to provide a three dimensional framework highlighting the importance for improvement in expats' success which benefits all the party involved expat, organization and the host country.

## Methodology

The study is a qualitative analysis of the factors that supports the performance of expatriates in the Indian context. The questionnaire designed for interviewing the expatriates, helps to capture the concerns, expectations and the experience of stay in India. It helped in categorizing and identifying the underlying factors of each factors in the view of expatriate. The Organizational and the National view of factors are mainly captured from extensive literature review. The sampling population includes a diverse group of expatriates in automobile industry. Each expatriate have been met in person and interviewed.

#### Dimensions and Factors

The factors confined in the dimensions are identified, segregated and discussed in detailed in this section. The results of the interview on the questioner are carefully considered and analyzed. The 3 dimensions and the respective factors are tabulated in the table 2.

**Table 2: Dimensions and their respective factors** 

Dimension	Factors involved	
Organizational Factors	Expatriates Performance	
	Expatriates Recruitment	
The National Factors (Indian Environment)	Tourism	
	National Reputation	
	Technological, Skill, Knowledge	
	Transfer	
	• FDI	
	Economic Growth	
Expatriate Factors	Personalities and Motivation Status	
I	Family Interpersonal Skills     (PersonalNetwork)	
	Personal Expectations (Career	
	Progression,	
	Financial Benefits)	



**The Organizational Factors:** The affiliation is an association, beneficial to both the parties - the organization and the expatriate. These factors are very critical to the organization at any cost. The organization is the only one affected by these factors if they have adverse effects.

Expatriates Performance - The high cost of investment that the organizations incur in order to support the expatriates in a host country is huge. The organization's efforts to study the performance and effectiveness of expatriates have gained large significance in recent years (Mitrovica, 2001). In most occasions, expatriates are generally sent on special, high potential and critical assignments influencing organization's financial balance sheets. Organizations would likely look forward for the Return on their Investment (ROI) at the earliest (Sullivan, 2001).

Expatriates Recruitment -The recruitment involves in searching, identifying and selecting candidates (Mitrovica, 2001) with key skills and experiences that are mostly in high demand. Any mistake or wrong move in recruitment would cost more to the organization and would deter critical projects (Sullivan, 2001).

The National Factors (Indian Environment): The National Factors (Host country factors) are the Indian environmental factors solely influencing the benefit of expatriation. From the expectations of the expatriate, acceptance offer of expatriation depends on the prospects and status of the host country. Infrastructure including technology, life style, living standard, natural resources, economic condition and future prospects of the host country influence the opportunity of expatriation.

Tourism It is one of the major sources of income attracting foreign currency into a country, which is as a result of the spending of the tourists in the visiting country. In 2012, tourism in India has made 6.6% of the nation's GDP (The World Travel & Tourism Council) by embracing 39.5 million jobs accounting to 7.7% of its total employment. Expatriates expense and cost for their entire stay in the country will add to the tourism revenue of the country.

National ReputationA pleasant stay and a successful completion of assignment by an expatriate during the stay in India would have a huge positive impact on the individual in favoring an assignment in India in future creating an opportunity for further revenue to the country. Word of mouth by the expatriates regarding their stay would encourage more tourist visits, as the National reputation would increase.

Technological, Skill, Knowledge Transfer - During the stay for the assignment, technological or skill or knowledge transfer actually occurs in accordance to the nature of assignment. Moreover, time would enable and prepare expatriates for greater capability for



more in-house research and development.

FDI - India as the world's third-largest economy is one of the most preferred FDI destinations today. In developing countries' balance of payments, FDI tends to be greater. Unlike FDI, the remittance flow was resilience, which includes the value-driven nature of remittances, stability of many resident migrants in host countries, and with continuous demand for the services performed by migrants under crisis, which are not performed by locals either due to demographic change, or the unwillingness of locals to do them.

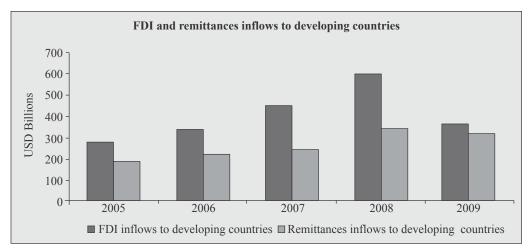


Figure 2: FDI vs. Remittance inflows to developing countries

Source: UNCTAD and World Bank Data (2010)

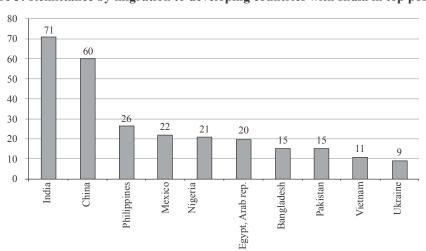


Figure 3: Remittance by migration to developing countries with India in top position

Economic Growth The Indian Economic growth was good, over the last couple of decades (The Expat Explorer Survey, 2011). With Asia, being the biggest remittance-receiving region, India finds its top position leading other nations. This growth of remittances is described by higher diversity in destination countries. For example, India received 27 per cent of all its remittances from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar in 2009. The above figure depicts the FDI inflows of developing countries in comparison to remittance.

The Expatriate Factors: Importance of family and Interpersonal skills are stressed in Mitrovica's model (2001) and Hassan's (2013) model. From the study on motivational factors influencing the expatriate through the expatriation cycle (Juhl, 2009), on the basis of the expatriation as a circular process encompassing three phases: pre-departure, expatriate stay and repatriation, it is found that the motivational factors influencing the expatriate throughout the whole process are crucial to their success of the cycle as a whole. Intrinsic factors are the expatriate's internal factors like personality, motivation, family, interpersonal skills, personal expectations etc.

Personality and Motivation Status - The personality type of an expatriate would have an impact on his/her performance during the stay in India. Though there are many motivational theories on expatriate's motivation and mood (Sappinen, 1993) over a period during his/her stays, motivation of an individual is highly unpredictable and subjective. The successful completion of the international assignment and surviving a different culture heavily depends on the personality type of the expatriate.

Family Families' support and situation reflects on the expatriate's success on the assignment and his decision to stay in India for a longer tenure (Tung, 1982). Expatriates should be supported by families and friends for the successful completion of assignment (Koteswari, 2007). Motivational factors influencing the expatriate through the expatriation cycle, identifies the importance of family on expat's performance (Juhl, 2009).

Interpersonal Skills (Personal Network) - The personal network of the expatriate overseas will help them and their family feel comfortable, which would indirectly reflect on the expatriate's performance.

Personal Expectations (Career Progression, Financial Benefits) - Expatriate's expectations on the onsite job roles, overseas compensation, exposure, climate and cultural aspects would influence the expatriate's decision to stay on a long-term tenure.

## **Analysis**

This section considers only the critical questions for discussion and detailing. The Question

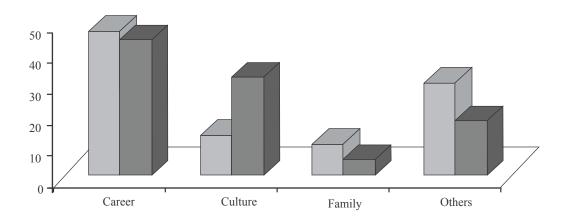


and its response are captured in a tabular format and the interpretation is depicted with a corresponding chart. The question why are you interested in working internationally? Concentrates on the reason for an employee to become an expatriate or motivation to move to India. The question is that one of the reasons to come to India? Confines the previous question to the Indian context. The responses on these two questions are shown in the chart 1. The pattern represents 47% with interest to work internationally and 44% show career as a reason for moving to India, similarly 13% with 32% reason culture, 10% with 5% reason family and 30% with 18% reason other factors for choosing to stay in India. The responses are grouped into 4 categories - Career, Culture, Family and Others (which include compensation, hygiene etc.).

It is clear the career aspect tops the priority for an expat to move internationally and the same reflects to the Indian context. Indirectly this states that the performance and success on the assignment overseas is important for an expat. Next independent factor found dominating is culture-influencing decision to select India.

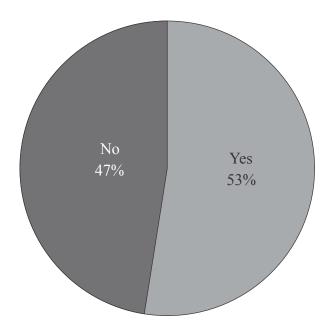
## Chart1: Reason for choosing the expatriate option

- Score for the interest in working internationally in %
- Score with the same interest as a reason to move to Indian in %



The Question before coming here, have you received any multi-cultural training to help you to adjust to your new environment? Concentrates if the expats have received any form of training before migration. Chart 2 shows the pattern of the response 53% responded yes, for having training to adjust to the new environment and 47% responded no, as they did not have

any specific training to adjust to the new environment. The Chart 2 below shows the pattern of the score obtained.

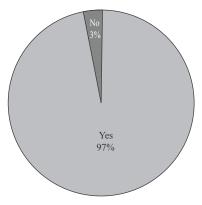


**Chart 2: Training Availability for Expatriate** 

## **Interpretation and Findings**

The interpretations of the questionnaire are discussed in detail in this section, helping in validating and concluding the analysis from the findings. The question is forming relationship with the local culture one of your goals? Focuses on the importance of culture to the expat in specific, by identifying the importance of culture for an expat as one of the goals in achieving success during expats Indian tenure. The response of the question was 90% of expats considered forming relationship with the local culture, as their important goal while their stay in India and 10% responded no. The 90% represents the importance of Culture as an important aspect for an expat. The Chart 3 below shows the pattern of response.

**Chart3: Cultural Importance** 



The Chart 3 makes it clear that the Culture factor is the key determinant for success for an expat on Indian National assignment. The question what are your expectations as an expatriate professional? Concentrates on the areas the expatriates are concerned about as their expectations. The individual factors of the Expatriate's Expectation are categorized and responses regarding expectations ware 47%, 8%, 17%, 20% and 8% for food and culture, people, language, infrastructure, and others respectively. The result clearly represents the Food & Culture as the top priority, followed by infrastructure and then followed by language. Food and culture is the factor the part of Convergence for all scope of importance. Infrastructure is also a factor that is the part of Convergence for all scope of importance.

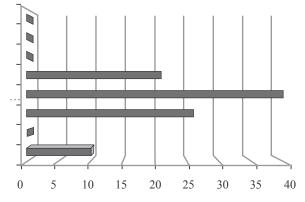
The results score high for a common scope of all the three factors followed by Organization vs Expat Scope followed by that of Expatriate factor in descending order. The Chart 4 below represents the pattern of response.

Chart 4: Expectations of Expatriate - Three-Dimensional View

■ Score of the expectations of expats falling in the category in %

Organizational Factor
Indian National Factor
No Expectations
Expatriate Factor

Organization vs. Indian National vs. Expat
Organization vs. Expat Scope
Organization vs. Indian National Scope
Indian National vs. Expat Scope





The question what are your expectations as an expatriate professional? Helps in concluding results. It makes it very clear that the scope of convergence - "A Win-win for all" region exists and focusing on these and implementing corrective action sunder this scope would have improved results for all the parties involved. Hence, the validation of analysis is proved true. As the questioner represents the expats point of view alone, results of the convergence region for Organization Vs. Indian National Scope is zero along with Organizational factor and Indian National factor as well resulting in zero. Thus, the above two questions discussed confirms culture fits only into the "A Win-win for All" scope/region another test of validation for the three dimensional view of analysis of the paper.

Hence, the findings highlight the importance of region of convergence, representing the significance of "Win-win "scope. It also depicts the crucial role of culture towards expatriates' concern, experience and expectations.

# The Convergence Scopes and the Win-Win Approach

The Convergence is the over lapping spaces or the common grounds that are shared between the groups. It is in these scopes the parties' interact/react to the other party or to all of them. These regions are Win-win region for the parties involved if they handle these forces appropriately adding value to each of them. There are four converging scopes and the respective factors identified are listed in the below table.

**Table 3: Converging Scopes and factors** 

S. No.	Converging Scopes	Factors			
1	Organization vs. Indian National Scope	1.Government Stability			
		2. Cost Incurred for the Expatriates			
2	Organization vs. Expat Scope	1. Organizational Training			
		2. HR Policies			
		3. Organizational Culture			
		4. Interpersonal Skills (Professional			
		Network)			
3	Indian National vs. Expat Scope	1. Presence of Parent Country social			
		groups			
		<ul><li>2. Language</li><li>3. Standard of Living</li></ul>			
		4. Education for Children			
		5. Social Security			
4	Organization vs. Indian National vs. Expat	National Infrastructure			
	Scope	2. Governmental Policies and			
		Procedures 3. International Exposure			
		4. Nation's Culture			

Organization vs. Expatriate Scope: It is composed of the factors influence both the expat and the organization irrespective of the causal action originating in any of the groups. By arranging organizational training (Ghafoor, 2011) to the expat on the foreign language/basic cultural awareness/pre-orientation program would help them to adjust to the new environment. Human Resource policies should support expat and their families in every way to make them feel at home. Organizational culture and the effective management of cultural diversity within organization (Garden Swartz, 1998) should allow expat to collaborate and build professional network, which you help them overseas assignment. Mitrovica (2001) stresses the importance of interpersonal skills and highlights that an individual holding professional, personal and interpersonal skills is more likely to become involved in the local culture.

Mitrovica's overseas effectiveness model comprises of three elements: professional expertise, adaptation and intercultural interaction. Koteswari and Bhattacharya (2007) explained organizations should implement appropriate human resource management strategy such as selection, training, compensation, etc. to curtail adverse consequences associated with expatriation. They also suggest that pre and post departure training, language training, cross-cultural training is critical and needed to be employed for the expats and should be regularly monitored.

A Win-win approach - Organization by supporting the expat on the mentioned factors, help them perform better, which in turn help expat recognizes the return on investment (ROI) from successful completion assignment.

**Organization vs. Indian National Scope:** The Organization is influenced by an external entity - the country, it operates. With globalization, today organizations have a global existence spread across boundaries and borders, extending their operations all over the world. However, it is the same organization present in different locations, but the policies, procedures and guidelines varies tremendously in accordance to the nation (host country).

A Win-win approach - The Indian Nation should encourage expat and overseas assignment with better foreign/migration policies fostering companies to spend and thrive and in turn enabling more FDI inflow in to the country. Government stability is one of the major advantages in attracting FDI, which a Nation should strive for forever, and India has a definite competitive advantage over other nations in this regard.

**Indian National vs. Expat Scope:** A Win-win approach Indians are good in collaborating with other culture as British, Germans, Portuguese and French ruled it. Today India has retained such colonies; their societies with people of different culture collaborate, which helps expatriates to have support, guidance and weekend getaways with their native



societies aiding them to feel at home. Language is a definite barrier for expats where government should conduct free orientation and language training programs for expats. Government should also set up better standard of living with policies for social security of expats regarding income tax, medical and school education for their kids. Thus fostering expats would help attract more FDI inflows, help collaborate different culture thereby enrich culture, build and improve India's own global reputation.

**Organization vs. Indian National vs. Expat Scope:** This is the region where Organization, the Host Nation and the Expat all share factors common to all of them. Every party is affected irrespective of the cause of the impact originating from any party. As a special mention, the Nations Culture plays the most critical role in this lot (Guidroz). The culture of a Nation is something existing and evolved through history spanning over many centuries. Though the culture could not be directly influenced or controlled by any of the party involve, conducting awareness programs could bring down any negative impact considerably. In a Nation's view point richer the Nation's culture, greater are the prospects. Thus, culture is a key aspect for any international assignment. Indian diversity though an advantage, diversity in people, geography, climate, language, culture, tradition, and religion poses an equal concern and complexity.

A Win-win approach - The impact of every party is huge though the corrective action is more on the part of the Indian Nation, less on the part of organization, and lesser on the part of the expat in a degree of comparison to each other. The corrective approaches prescribed to different parties include the following. All the parties gain from international exposure - Nation by fostering globalization, tourism and building infrastructure for the Nation's own benefit, organization aiding more FDI by expanding operations globally, expatriate by successful completion and striving for excellence, the expatriate by successful completion of tenure, international exposure, higher income. Etc. Hence, every party brings value to other party by achieving their own goal in this scope enabling a win-win approach.

# Recommendations and Scope for Future Research

A fourth dimension could be added in addition for further research to the three dimensions proposed. The fourth dimension is Living World and Global Economic View acting as the Superset as the environment variable in which all the three organization, Indian National and Expatriate exists. This additional dimension could bring in forces like economic recession, Natural calamities, and their impact on the three parties and on the converging scopes as well.



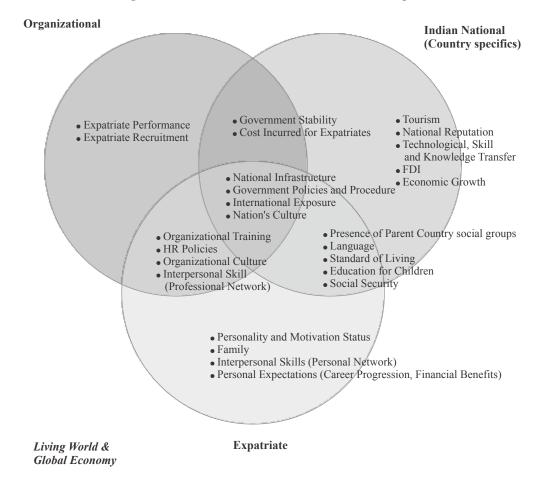


Figure 4: Four-Dimensional View of Factors of Expats

In this paper, factors of Living World and Global Economic View are considered neutral having no effect or considered not present. Below figure depicts the inclusion of fourth dimension as enclosing rectangle acting, as a superset, as the ecosystem for the three dimensions considered. In this study, the questioner represents the expats point of view alone, resulting in zero values for Organization vs. Indian National Scope the convergence region, Organizational factor, Indian National factor. Hence Questioner for future study could include interviewing people of the nation and the organizations.

## Conclusion

The three-dimensional framework includes Organizational, Indian National (Governmental), and Expatriate dimension and converges at a Win-win scope. Each party,

by concentrating on their own part of responsibility on the convergence scope adds value to the other party and in turn gains value for their own benefit making it an avalanche effect turning the environment into a healthy Win-win approach. Hence, the paper suggests focusing on the win-win scope and acting on them with high priority to realize efficient and effective successful expatriation. Focusing on the point of convergence will automatically have positive effects on the rest of the scopes. Moreover Culture remains the key factor and reinforcing cultural training and understanding would be the recommendation given from the analysis. A list of proposed action items for each dimension regarding the win-win scope would result in efficient and effective, successful expatriations depicted in the table on the following page.

Table 4: The Converging Effect: Action to be taken by the individual entities for mutual benefit Win-win action

	The Indian Nation (government) should	The Organizations Should	The Expat Should
•	Action towards nation  Build the National Infrastructure rapidly and match the demand of the economic development  Improve the standard of living with improved cleanliness and hygiene  Conduct various national programs, and educate the public with responsible behavior towards tourist, towards public property, towards maintaining hygiene and cleanliness, etc.  Improve tourism providing importance to heritage and historic sites enriching cultural festivals and promoting regional language programs  Build and provide 24x7 quality services on information, health, safety and security	the social and civil issues with Corporate social responsible programs  Organization should help with knowledge, skill and technology transfer to the Indian Nation  Organizations should commit to invest more in India with more FDI	respect and adjust the cultural diversity and cultural differences abide by regional legislations  • Learn new language

Action towards Organizations		Actio	n towards	Actio	n towards	
•	• Implement Organizational		Organizations		Organizations	
•	friendly and righteous reforms, policies and procedures Build ease of access transportation system and provide navigation support and guidelines Provide cultural, traditional guidelines and	•	Achieve its goal efficiently and effectively Build better organizational culture Enable diversification and globalization in business	•	Strive for excellence in their performance Adhere to human resource policies Improve interpersonal skills	
	ethical guidelines					
Actio	on towards expat	Actio	n towards expat	Actio	n towards expat	
•	Implement expat friendly income tax and social reforms, policies and procedures	•	Support expat family Should provide expats with cultural awareness programs, pre -	•	Should share, collaborate and exchange knowledge, skill	
•	Foster free language orientation programs for expat Provide better guidance and directions with signboards for expats		orientation programs and implement friendly HR policies for their easy overseas stay with their families.		and technology with the counterparts.	

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