

A PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE OF CROSS-CULTURAL MANAGEMENT

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I propose to make here a brief statement about the cross-cultural management from a philosopher's point of view. It will be a purely conceptual exercise. Cross-cultural management literally means a skillful management of interactive but positive relationship between two different cultures whose cultural constructs, world-views, religious beliefs, sense of time and space, manners of thinking and speaking, habits of dressing, eating, and living, levels of education and exposure to others' cultures, etc. are substantially or even radically different from each other. From these facts, it appears as if two cultures are exclusive, closed, windowless, impenetrable, totally incommensurable, non-communicable, incomparable, and non-translatable. In this situation, any talk of cross-cultural management seems to be meaningless, and also any venture to enter into such exercise appears to be impossibility and thus doomed to be a failure. But history tells us that it is not so. Cross-cultural interactions and management have been made possible, despite differences in two cultures, simply because human beings, across the cultures, have the same cognitive constitution, reflective nature, desire, need, social emotions, etc.

The philosophy of cross-culturality or inter culturality starts with the thesis that no two cultures are totally incommensurable or totally commensurable and they have lots of overlappings which are the foundation of cross-cultural dialogue, understanding, and creative relationship. Another important thesis is: Creative harmony through cultural encounters of various world-views brings global order, peace, happiness, and prosperity. There are certain general guiding principles while executing this study on intercultural encounters. It is necessary and of utmost importance to recognize the global historical fact of the plurality of different cultures, which is a welcome and desirable situation, and to accept the variety of cultures as a beauty. In such a situation, intercultural attitude is not only lofty deal and philosophical conviction, but also a practical necessity for harmony, peace, prosperity, security, and solidarity. It is a device to resolve tensions and conflicts as it establishes mutual understanding and respect, mutual accommodation and enrichment, and makes us transcend dogmatic universalism and consensualism. It further creates an atmosphere for the extension of the self to the other (and *vice versa*) without assimilating other's identity. However, when the self desires to approach the other (or *vice versa*), the following feelings or situations may arise:

1. He may have a genuine desire to know the other.
2. He may have an intention to assimilate the other.
3. He may be afraid of being assimilated by the other.
4. He may find the other unresponsive.
5. He may have a desire to complement his own incompleteness with the other.

6. He may find the other equally interested to know him and eager to be complemented
7. Despite his desire the dogmas may not permit him to approach the other

There may be other possibilities also. But once the meeting of the two materializes and precondition less and non-committal dialogue is established, encounter, and no tension or conflict is generated by this meeting, the possibility is that both will be encouraged to know more and more about each other. This will enhance better understanding of each other and bring out overlappings as well as distinctness of their cultural elements. This will further bring the two closer and create liking, appreciation, and respect for each other. This also highlights the fact that, despite similarities, both have their uniqueness and in relation to each other they are incomplete and so to be complete they need to be mutually complemented. This analogical hermeneutic, as opposed to the hermeneutic of total identity and total difference becomes a methodological devise to put the interculturality on the right tract. Consequently, it is hoped, a happy and peaceful global situation of interculturality-cum-multiculturality will be created.

In the business world of today, the whole world with different societies and their cultures, is taken as a field of business transaction which requires expansion of business and movements of people across the cultures. A manager, who is brought up, educated, and cultured, and who has shaped his/her perception and manner of living within his/her own cultural context, is required to interact and do business with the people of an alien culture. And this is not an easy task. That's why he or she is required to be transformed comprehensively. In other words, he or she is required to undergo orientation and training programme which includes knowledge of every aspect of a foreign culture, change in attitude, motivation to transcend local interest to global interest, skill in communication, caring for and respect of the sensitivity of the people of the host culture, etc. In brief, cross-cultural management has methodological, epistemological, psychological, semantic, hermeneutic, ethical, social, cultural, political, and global dimensions.