

Some Solutions to Project Management Challenges in India

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Abstract

While discussing the project management challenges in developing countries like India with respect to western developed countries it was revealed that standard PMBok based project management may not be entirely suitable as well as applicable to a large diverse country like India. The built-in complexities require accounting many local factors. These factors force a developing nation like India to remain way behind the western countries for the ease of project management and execution. This paper intends to highlight the approaches which can bring more comfort in execution of projects and their management closer to the developed nations.

KEYWORDS – *Project Management, PMBok, Political, Religious, Cultural, Challenges, Quantitative Factors, Computation, solutions*

I. INTRODUCTION

In our study, we had concluded that political, economic, operational, social, religious and physical difficulties in a developing nation like India either seriously hamper the projects and/or cause them to fail. PM practices under Indian situation mostly face challenges due to cultural, political and social-religious traditions. There is a significant level of discomfort in standard project management and execution following traditional PMBok methods in India with respect to the western developed nations because so much of diversity in a single nation is non-existing except India. More specifically, PMBok or standard PM methods were not jotted down considering the Indian situation as a base line.

Now, the question arises, whether we can improve this situation, and should we do so, what are the areas to be addressed? Many would wonder how we can change the complex social structure, religious faiths and the prevailing political environments. From a realistic perspective, it's more or less impossible to initiate any significant change in these areas, especially in the largest democracy of the world.

In our earlier study as well as in the computational model we had considered a few facts like in developed nations have approximately 75% of the population live in the urban areas and 25% in the rural areas, the reverse is true for the Indian context. We also observed in rural areas that there is no fast change and as such not much necessity for social adaptability, adaptability to suit ever changing fast life is the way of living for urban people. Pure deep rooted local culture is part of rural life, however the urbanization does not preserve any such deep rooted 'pure local culture and heritage'. In the rural society, everyone loves culture and cultural heritage above everything else. Where urbanites are more materialistic, countrymen are God fearing ones, hence religious influence almost negligible among the urban people. From the political perspective, urbanites tend to become more liberal and democratic with more or less centrist ideology, whereas countrymen to remain much less centrist [1][2].

We also mentioned earlier that while we bring the rural and urban distribution into consideration, the process of general education in a country like India and western countries needs to be accounted for. Though the tertiary education level is increasing in India in almost every year, its vast population is way behind in terms of percentage of total population with respect to the developed nations. A tactical tertiary education can foster the sense of real economy & development among the population of a country, India may be way behind to implement those thus indirectly causing obstacles to practice the western methods.

II. SOLUTIONS

We don't need to do any impossible changes in the sensitive areas like complex social structure, religious faiths and the prevailing political environments. Rather should we try to address factors like rural, urban and tactical tertiary education, it may produce better results.

Again, here we cannot change hundreds of rural areas into urban. What we need to do is to upgrade the living standards of rural areas as well as bring them closer to urban comforts so that a rural mind-set gradually turns into an urban mindset. Along with this initiative, tertiary education needs to be expanded in the form of an orderly outreach program so that more people could be covered especially in the areas of their own interests. A low cost and effective education program affordable by all the sections of the rural society would be the key to attract millions of our countrymen.

Once we are able to bring change in the rural mind-set, we create a large pool of folks with more liberal and democratic thoughts with more or less centrist ideology who would have a lesser influence from socio-religious, political as well cultural issues.

The Western developed nations are not fully immune from the social-religious, political as well cultural issues. These factors were there in the past, present and will be there as long as mankind exists. The question is in the magnitude. In our earlier studies, we have pointed out that the magnitude of such issues together are much lesser in the developed world than India.

So, we are more or less convinced that either in a developing country like India or in the western developed countries, socio-religious, political as well cultural issues are the part of life though varies in magnitude.

Keeping this important point in mind, we restrained ourselves to presume any direct change in the socio-religious, political as well cultural areas. That means the magnitudes of impacts out of these issues directly as calculated in the earlier study remain same. These are the very sensitive areas and any direct attempt to change the same in federally administered multi-tiered India may cause disaster for the country itself.

The change we talked about is in the areas of rural & urban mind-set as well as tertiary education. This is something achievable as the country makes progress as well as implements different orderly programs with well-defined goals through a multi-tiered administrative system at the grass root level. Government policies and continual support will be the key to reach the destination.

In the next section we shall show that in our identified areas of changes can bring excellent improvement without altering the current base-line of socio-religious, political as well cultural mixes.[3]

III. THE QUANTITATIVE APPROACH

In our earlier quest to quantify the challenges for practicing Western PM Practices @India, a few closely related parameters are carefully considered.

Let us take TE index for India as n_i and n_d for developed nations. Rural and Urban population distribution for India as m_{ri} and m_{ui} . Rural and Urban population distribution for developed nations as m_{rd} and m_{ud} . We also assume that political factors for India as p_i and that for developed nations as p_d , Cultural factors for India as c_i and c_d for developed nations, religious and other traditional factors for India as r_i and r_d for developed nations [3].

Table 1 : The Factors

Factors	India	Developed Nations	Value
Tertiary Education	n_i	n_d	$n_i = 0.25, n_d = 1$
Rural Population Distribution	m_{ri}	m_{rd}	$m_{ri} = 0.75, m_{rd} = 0.25$
Urban Population Distribution	m_{ui}	m_{ud}	$m_{ui} = 0.25, m_{ud} = 0.75$
Political	p_i	p_d	$p_i = 0.1, p_d = 0.5$
Cultural	c_i	c_d	$c_i = 0.033, c_d = 0.33$
Religious & other Traditional	r_i	r_d	$r_i = 0.02, r_d = 0.5$
Composite common factors	cf_i	cf_d	$cf_i = p_i + c_i + r_i$ $cf_d = p_d + c_d + r_d$
Total Favourable factors	tf_i	tf_d	$tf_i = (m_{ri} \times n_i + m_{ru} \times n_i) \times cf_i$ $tf_d = (m_{rd} \times n_d + m_{ud} \times n_d) \times cf_d$

Tertiary Education

India(n_i)	Developed Nations(n_d)
0.25	1

Rural Urban Distribution: Developed Nation

Rural (m_{rd})	Urban(m_{ud})
0.25	0.75

Rural Urban Distribution: India

Rural(m_{ri})	Urban(m_{ui})
0.75	0.25

A. Composite Index combining Tertiary Education @India

Rural ($m_{ri} \times n_i$)	Urban ($m_{ru} \times n_i$)
$0.75 \times 0.25 = 0.18$	$0.25 \times 0.25 = 0.06$

B. Composite Index combining Tertiary Education for Developed Nations

Rural ($m_{rd} \times n_d$)	Urban ($m_{ud} \times n_d$)
$0.25 \times 1 = 0.25$	$0.75 \times 1 = 0.75$

C1.Political factors

India(p_i)	Developed Nations (p_d)
0.1	0.5

Mainly two different political thoughts, conservative and Liberals in western world, 30 plus parties at state and national level in India. Political factor for India is derived considering 7 national parties as 7 plus 3 (for 24 regional and other parties) then we get $1/10 = 0.1$.

C2.Cultural factors

India (c_i)	Developed Nations (c_d)
0.033	0.33

Originals, early immigrants, late immigrants for Developed Nations, at least 30 different cultures considering the number of states & UTs

C3.Religious and Other Traditional Factors

India(r_i)	Developed Nations (r_d)
0.02	0.5

Broadly, atheist and devout in Western world. Number of religions as well as indigenous ethnically-bound faiths in India. At least 50 different influential sects [4][5][6][7]

Combining together (C1,C2 and C3)-the composite common factors

India (cf_i)	Developed Nations(cf_d)
$(p_i + c_i + r_i) = 0.153/3 = 0.051$	$(p_d + c_d + r_d) = 1.33/3 = 0.44$

Combining the rural and urban together as well A,B and C (C1,C2 and C3)

Total Favorable Factors:

India (tf_i)	Developed Nations(tf_d)
$(m_{ri} \times n_i + m_{ru} \times n_i) \times cf_i$	$(m_{rd} \times n_d + m_{ud} \times n_d) \times cf_d$
$(0.18+0.06)*0.051 = 0.01224$	$(0.25+0.75)*0.44 = 0.44$

So, what we see that the developing nations are $0.44/0.01224 = 35.94$ or approx. 36 *times better positioned* than India to practice the PM methods, what we got from our earlier study.

Should we assume that we are going to spread the tertiary education close to the level of western developed countries as well as our national programs successfully transform a good percentage of rural mind-set into urban mind-sets, then what happens?

Let's assume, our tertiary education achieves the 80% level of developed countries and we are successful in transforming at least 25% more rural mind-sets into urban while composite common factors remains unchanged, then we can see:

$$(m_{ri} \times n_i + m_{ru} \times n_i) \times cf_i = (0.5*0.80 + 0.5*80)*0.051 = (0.4+0.4)*0.051 = 0.048$$

At this situation, developed countries will be $0.44/0.048 = 9.16$ times better positioned than India in executing projects.

So, just augmenting the education system and bringing facilities to the rural areas, we can make India better positioned in project execution and practicing PM methods.

IV. LIMITATIONS

In the process of study, we have tried to quantify a number of factors based on some known sources secondary sources. However, the diverse and complex factors are more or less beyond any real life actual numbers which makes absolute quantification almost impossible. This paper intends to provide some idea through some analytical as well as a quantitative approach to show how the Indian context is more challenging than the developed nations for practicing project management methodologies. We also know that bringing 50% people under the urban level comfort to create the urban mindset as well covering 80% of the people under tertiary education is very challenging.

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